

Question A - Please can you provide details of the maintenance regime and the financial implication of maintenance of the Borough's cemeteries? Please explain.

Maintenance operations for open and closed churchyards and cemeteries.

Trees;

All trees within the churchyard area will be assessed in accordance with the councils tree policy. Any trees that are identified as requiring work will be prioritized on a Health and Safety basis, with those considered to be a danger being regarded as High Priority.

Grass Cutting;

Grass cutting operations will run from approx. Mid-March through until late October, dependent on growth rates and weather conditions. The grass shall be cut on a fortnightly basis.

Areas of grass that cannot be mown in their entirety such as around obstacles or boundaries will be strimmed to ensure that a "finished" visual quality is achieved. Any undesirable arisings that are spread to paths, hard surfaces and memorials due to the mowing operation will be blown or swept to remove and tidy.

Litter/ Litter Bins;

Litter picking operations will take place based on the requirements of the site. E.g., a site that is deemed to have a "littering" problem will receive more visits as would be appropriate.

Litter bins will be emptied weekly with litter picking normally carried out on a weekly basis.

Litter picking will also take place during any schedule maintenance visits i.e., grass cutting or shrub maintenance.

Shrub Areas;

Shrub maintenance will occur during the winter period on an annual basis. Each visit will include pruning and weed control.

Remedial pruning will take place during the summer time to ensure sight lines, paths and windows are not affected by re-growth.

Hedge Cutting;

Hedge maintenance will be carried out to retain the form or shape as required. Cutting will be done outside of the recognized bird nesting period usually between October and February. All arising will be removed from site.

Footpaths/ Hard standing Areas;

Will be kept in a litter and detritus free condition Chemical treatments will take place as indicated below

Chemical Use/ Application;

The use of herbicides will take place annually to control weed species. Area to be treated will include hard standings, paths and walk ways. Also, if appropriate, applications will also be considered around building bases, boundary lines and memorials.

Tombs/ Memorials;

Headstones and Memorials will be inspected on a periodic basis to assess their stability, in consideration of the Ministry of Justice, Managing the safety of Burial Ground Memorial guidelines 2014, and the Contract Documentation.

Memorials will be checked by visual and “hand” means.

If a memorial is deemed to be of risk it shall be made safe.

Methods of work

In order to ensure that the delivery of the service is consistent, and to maintain safe working conditions, Enterprise has processes in place that the staff should work to.

Excavation of Graves

The excavation of graves shall be undertaken using the following process and procedures; -

- Upon receipt of the ‘Instruction for Preparation of Burial’, the Cemetery Management Team shall undertake relevant checks, which relate to names and location for interment, with any anomalies or concerns to be immediately relayed to the relevant Client Officer where necessary.
- Working in Partnership with the Client Officer, the relevant grave shall be marked out in full, ready for excavation, with all due steps taken to ensure spacing and alignment are precise. Care shall also be taken to ensure that sufficient additional measurement is allowed for the inclusion of grave shoring.
- Prior to the commencement of any works a Site Specific Risk Assessment shall be produced. As well as measuring the risk to carrying out the excavation, consideration shall also be given to the access to the grave, the safe method of operation, the positioning of the soil box, the creation of the burial platform and of course the safety of the public. Consideration shall also be given as to PPE, which shall include safety footwear, hard hats, gloves, overalls and where a mechanical digger is in operation – ear defenders.
- Where the excavation is adjacent to memorials, immediate steps must be taken to prevent damage to those memorials. In certain cases, this may mean seeking approval to dismantle a memorial; in such circumstances, this shall only be

undertaken with the express approval of the Client officer and arrangements must be made for the prompt return and safe repositioning by a qualified mason.

- Prior to the commencement of the excavation, all tools and equipment must be present and available for use. Furthermore, wherever shoring is in use it shall have been checked on a weekly frequency as to its condition and in particular the operational capacity of the hydraulic rams.
- Excavation shall be carried out to the centre of the grave space, ensuring a minimization of additional risk of collapse.
- Turf shall be lifted and re-used elsewhere within the cemetery.
- Soil boxes shall be erected, in line with the approved Risk Assessment and checked as secure. Soil boxes shall be located at a sufficient distance from the edge of the grave so as to minimize risk of collapse or fallback. Where a hand-dig, 'walk boards' shall be installed along either side of the grave.
- Heavy clay soil can increase the risk of collapse and where necessary additional wooden struts shall be used to protect the security of the soil box.
- Excavation shall be either by hand or by machine digging, depending upon whether access is available and safe, as well as, whether it is a new or re-opened grave. In any event, it shall be two-person operation, with care taken to ensure the safety of members of the public and the accuracy of the dig. All sides shall be square and vertical, with spoil deposited into the soil box (In certain unique circumstances, spoil will need to be completely removed from the location; in such circumstances, this shall be to the compound, taking care to ensure that there is no deterioration to roads and paths due to soil from tyres. Where this does occur it shall be immediately removed.).
- Any surplus soil shall be removed (as above).
- During the excavation process care must be taken to note any undue matter, such as the discovery of remains or a risk or actual collapse. In any these circumstances work shall cease and the matter should be immediately referred to the Relevant Client Officer for guidance. During this time an operative must remain at the site for safety purposes.
- As the excavation progresses, grave shoring shall be installed by trained operatives.
- Once a depth of 90mm has been reached (during a hand dig) access and egress must only be made using a ladder. All ladders must be regularly checked for suitability or deterioration and replaced as necessary. In no circumstances should an operative use the shoring as an aid to climbing out of, or descending into the grave.
- As the excavation approaches the prescribed depth, regular checks must be undertaken so as to ensure the preparation is accurate. Should an obstruction arise, which prevents the full preparation of the grave this shall also be referred to the relevant Client Officer for a decision on how to progress.

- Once the excavation is complete then the grave shall be fully covered by suitable boards to prevent risk for the public. If for any reason, during the excavation, the grave is left unattended, then the grave shall also be fully covered and all tools removed from site.
- At the completion of the work the entire surrounding area shall be fully cleaned and made safe.

It is important to note that the usage of a mechanical digger, the installation of grave shoring and acting as banks-man are key activities, which must only be undertaken by properly trained and accredited employees.

Excavation of Re-Opened / Reserved Graves

All processes and procedures shall be undertaken, as detailed in ***Excavation of Graves*** above, with the following additions; -

- Mechanical digging shall not be a consideration.
- Care shall be taken when approaching the depth of the previous interment, ensuring an avoidance of damage to previously interred remains.

Exhumation

All processes and procedures shall be undertaken, as detailed in ***Excavation of Graves*** above, with the following additions; -

- Work shall only progress with the relevant paperwork in place; i.e. the license issued by the Home Office or the Faculty issued by the Church Authority.
- Work will only commence following the erection of suitable and approved screening, which is used to prevent public view of the exhumation site.
- Suitable lifting equipment shall be engaged as necessary to remove the coffin/remains from the grave. Excess soil shall be cleared from the remains/coffin.
- Freshly ground lime and disinfectant shall be used as required.
- The removed remains shall be carefully placed in a container supplied. All other items, which are removed from the grave, shall be treated and disinfected.
- Should any other remains require removal (to attain access) then such remains shall be returned to the grave in the same position.
- All operatives involved with the process shall be supplied with specific PPE (goggles, disposable coveralls, gloves, etc. all of which disposed of following the completion of the procedure).
- Wherever possible, the procedure shall be arranged outside normal hours, seeking to achieve completion, outside the view of the general public.

Cremated Remains

Cremated Remains shall be treated in various manners, dependent upon into which medium the interment is going to be made. This will include into earth, vault or graveled areas; or indeed scattered.

Finance

We are unable to calculate a meaningful figure for the cost of cemetery provision by the council.

The costs of the different functions within the service are contained in the costs of other service areas. For example, the grounds maintenance costs for cemeteries are included in the overall cost of grounds maintenance for the whole contract.

Also, as the environmental services contract is one contract covering both Daventry District Council and Northampton Borough Council, the cost related to each authority area are not separately identified.

As such, there is no figure within the contract price that can be used as the cost of cemetery maintenance.

Question B - Please can you provide details of the health and safety requirements and the financial implications within the Borough’s cemeteries? Please explain.

Health and Safety

The most significant health and safety risks are related to the excavation of graves and the stability of headstones and memorials.

Enterprise has Risk Assessments and safe systems of work in place for all operations that are carried out in the cemeteries. Copies of the Risk Assessments are kept onsite in the cemetery buildings used by the staff.

As an example, a copy of the grave digging risk assessment can be seen below. This format is used for all risk assessments produced by Enterprise.

The management of health and safety, by the contractor, is monitored by the Partnership Unit and the NBC Health and Safety Advisor.

All costs related to health and safety management within the current contract, are included within the overall contract costs. There is no specific cost for health and safety management within cemeteries.

The council fulfills its role in ensuring that health and safety is adequately managed by the contractor, through audits and inspections carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Department.

Activity Description:		Grave Digging Operations								
ID	Hazard	Adverse Effects	Persons Affected	Control Measures	Con	A	S	L	R with controls in place	T

ID	Hazard	Adverse Effects	Persons Affected	Control Measures	Con	A	S	L	R with controls in place	T
1	Poorly trained operatives	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	<p>1. All Operatives must attend the Company's Health and Safety Induction prior to commencing work on behalf of the company.</p> <p>2. All Operatives must be briefed on the use of the any hand tools or machinery they are using</p> <p>3. All Operatives must be issued with the GM SIP</p> <p>4. Operatives MUST be made aware of potential risks associated with the use of hand tool and machinery particularly in relation to manual handling issues.</p> <p>5. All persons engaged in grave digging activities must receive the appropriate training before any work commences.</p>	Y	I	U	3	Y	
2	Excavation	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	<p>All excavations in excess of 0.9m in depth shall be conducted by a minimum of two operatives. If ground conditions are of running sand then two operatives must be present at all times.</p> <p>All excavations shall be suitably supported / shored; the type of shoring will be enforced by the relative clients.</p>	Y	I	U	3	Y	
3	Manual handling	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying distances must to be kept to a minimum • Heavy items to be lifted by two operatives. • Ensure that the working area is clear of debris etc. before lifting commences. 	Y	I	U	3	Y	
4	Materials / Spoil too	Major / Minor	Employees / Public	All material and spoil must be kept within the	Y	I	U	3	Y	

I D	Hazard	Adverse Effects	Persons Affected	Control Measures	Con	A	S	L	R with controls in place	T
	close to the side of the excavation	Injuries		working area but away from the excavation. The spoil heap and box must be a minimum of 600mm from the grave edge.						
5	Injury to Third party	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	Operatives must maintain a safe working distance from third parties (e.g. Members of the public and colleagues) Distances will be determined by ground conditions or weather conditions.	Y	I	U	3	Y	
6	Hypodermic needles & Risk of infection	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	Should hypodermic needles be discovered within the working area, NO attempt must be made to pick them up. If the hypodermic needles are so positioned as to be hazardous to the individual Stop Work and advise your supervisor Always carry out good hygiene practice e.g. / Washing hands before eating drinking or smoking in order to avoid infection – Toxicariasis and Leptospirosis. Teams MUST always be in possession of a First Aid kit and at least one person within the team to be trained in emergency first aid at work.	Y	I	U	3	Y	
7	Flooding	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	Pumping equipment installed and used as required, water discharge must be far enough away from the excavation as not to flood other graves.	Y	I	U	3	Y	
8	Biological Hazards	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	1. Operatives are to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene whilst at work. 2. Operatives are to wear gloves where ever	Y	M	U	2	Y	

ID	Hazard	Adverse Effects	Persons Affected	Control Measures	Con	A	S	L	R with controls in place	T
				possible to prevent cross contamination. 3. Operatives are to be briefed in the content of the Bio-Hazard section of the GM SIP.						
9	Excavation collapse	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	The excavation shall be shored by a suitable method either of timber / hydraulic support. Should a collapse be evident then work must be stopped and the client and supervisor informed.	Y	M	U	2	Y	
10	Access to excavated grave	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	All ladders (Aluminium) must be fit for purpose (EN131 Class 1) they must be longer than the excavated grave by a minimum of one meter; operatives must not use the shoring to climb in or out of the excavations	Y	I	U	3	Y	
11	Open graves	Major / Minor Injuries	Employees / Public	All excavated graves must be boarded over when left, this should be achieved with a minimum of a 2.43m x 1.21m x 20mm exterior ply or with 2.43m x 300mm x 38mm soft wood planks strapped at both ends, and closed boarded. A lockable frame and lid may also be used constructed from aluminium.	Y	M	U	2	Y	
Assessor Name:		Sector Consultative Lead – Grounds Maintenance	Signature :		Date :	May 2015				

Key: A=ALARP insert Y or N, S=Severity (T / M / I / S / C), L=Likelihood (HU / U / L / VL / C), R=Risk Classification (1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5), T

Question 3 - Please can you provide details of the financial implications around amenities and facilities within the Borough's cemeteries? Please explain.

Currently, there are minimal costs to the council for the provision of amenities in the cemeteries. If the capital costs of the maintenance of items such as footpaths, chapels, walls etc. are accepted as being unavoidable costs, the only amenity cost would be the cost of providing water via the standpipes.

Should amenities such as toilets be provided in the cemeteries, not only will there be the construction and building maintenance costs, but there will also be the costs for staff to replenish consumables (toilet roll, soap etc.) and clean the toilets, seven days per week. There would also be the cost of purchasing the consumables, as well as water and electricity charges.

Question 4 - In your opinion, are the Borough's cemeteries easily accessible? Please provide details. If not, please can you provide suggestions for improvement.

The council's main operational cemeteries are easily accessible to the public, by car or public transport. All of the cemeteries are accessed via main roads and have bus routes that go past them.

However, the locations of the cemeteries within the town, does mean that residents in Eastern side of the town do not have a cemetery local to them.

The current open cemeteries are located in the South (Towcester Road, Great Houghton), West (Duston and Dallington) and North (Kingsthorpe) of the town.

When looking at the future provision of cemetery space, it would be worth looking at the option of a cemetery in the East of the town

Question 5 - Are you aware of the location and the provision of amenities in the Borough's cemeteries? Please provide details.

There are minimal amenities in the town's cemeteries.

At one time, there were toilets in both Kingsthorpe and Towcester Road cemeteries, but due to continued vandalism, the toilets had to be closed. There are now no toilet facilities in any of the cemeteries.

Towcester Road and Kingsthorpe cemeteries both have chapels, which are available for hire for funeral services. There are no toilets associated with the chapels.

All open cemeteries have stand pipes where visitors to the cemetery can obtain water.

Question 6 - Do you have any other information you are able to provide in relation to the Borough's cemeteries?

Since June 2011, Enterprise Managed Services have managed the cemetery service on behalf of Northampton Borough Council. Enterprise is responsible for all aspects of the service, including both the management of funerals and the maintenance of the cemeteries.

The list below shows all of the cemeteries and burial grounds that the council is responsible for.

All Saints Churchyard
All Saints Churchyard Little Billing
Billing Road Cemetery
Collingtree Cemetery
Dallington Cemetery
Duston Cemetery
Great Houghton Cemetery
Holy Sepulchre Churchyard
Kingsthorpe Cemetery
Notre Dame RC Burial Ground
St Andrews Churchyard Great Billing
St Edmunds Churchyard Hardingstone
St Georges Churchyard Wootton
St Giles Churchyard
St John the Baptist Churchyard Kingsthorpe
St Katherine Memorial Square
St Marys Churchyard Dallington
St Marys Churchyard Great Houghton
St Michaels and All Angels with St Edmunds Cemetery
St Peters Churchyard Marefair
Towcester Road Cemetery
Vicarage Lane Burial Ground Kingsthorpe
Weston Favell Cemetery

Although the council is responsible for the maintenance of the above cemeteries and burial grounds, there are only 5 Operational cemeteries. These are Kingsthorpe, Towcester Road, Dallington, Duston and Great Houghton cemeteries.

The management of cemeteries complies with the standards set out in the Code of Practice as described by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities. Grave digging and related works are carried out in accordance with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) "Code of Safe Working Practices for Cemeteries".