

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, and ensures they will never be forgotten.

Our work commemorates the war dead, from building and maintaining our cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries to preservation of our extensive records and archives. Our values and aims, laid out in 1917, are as relevant now as they were 100 years ago.

The Commission's principles are:

- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

Since our establishment by Royal Charter we have constructed 2,500 war cemeteries and plots, erected headstones over graves and where the remains are missing, inscribed the names of the dead on permanent memorials. More than a million burials are now commemorated at military and civil sites in some 150 countries.

Within the United Kingdom there are over 300,000 Commonwealth burials and commemorations across some 12,500 locations.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION (CWGC) RESPONSE TO NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL CEMETERIES REVIEW

- a. Please can you provide details of the maintenance regime and the financial implication of maintenance of the Borough's cemeteries, please explain.

The CWGC has an interest in the following sites in Northampton:

NORTHAMPTON & COUNTIES CREMATORIUM

14 Casualties listed on a bronze panel within the Chapel.

NORTHAMPTON (BILLING ROAD) CEMETERY

149 Casualties on 2 Screen Walls Memorial. This CWGC memorial is inspected and cleaned by CWGC staff on our cycle maintenance programme. The turf area in front of the memorial is maintained by the CWGC under a contract.

The CWGC Cross of Sacrifice is inspected and maintained by CWGC on our cycle maintenance programme.

NORTHAMPTON (DALLINGTON) CEMETERY

30 Casualties buried at this site. These headstones are inspected, cleaned and maintained by CWGC staff on our cycle maintenance programme.

NORTHAMPTON (KINGSTHORPE) CEMETERY

55 Casualties buried in a plot with planted borders maintained by the CWGC's contractor. A further 61 war graves scattered across the site and maintained by Northampton Borough Council.

The CWGC Cross of Sacrifice is inspected and maintained by CWGC on our cycle maintenance programme.

NORTHAMPTON (TOWCESTER ROAD) CEMETERY

130 Casualties buried in a plot with planted borders maintained by the CWGC's contractor. A further 11 war graves scattered across the site and maintained by Northampton Borough Council.

The CWGC Cross of Sacrifice is inspected and maintained by CWGC on our cycle maintenance programme.

- b. Please can you provide details of the health and safety requirements and the financial implications within the Borough's cemeteries. Please explain.

The CWGC provide its teams with task bask risk assessments and, in broad terms, site risk assessments highlighting potential risks such as slips, trips and falls. These relate to the areas our staff might work in only and are not full site risk assessments for public use. Our staff assess any potential risk in respect of the CWGC headstones as part of our inspection programme. We assume the Borough undertakes tree risk assessments twice per year and assesses all other headstones in its sites.

The CWGC bears its own costs in respect of our internally used risk assessments.

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

The CWGC does not utilise amenities and facilities within the cemeteries other than to advise cemetery managers of our presence and occasionally to make enquiries on grave locations.

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

Our Regional Teams have no concerns with regards accessibility.

- e. Are you aware of the location and the provision of amenities in the Borough's cemeteries, please provide details.

Our Regional teams are aware of the locations of amenities.

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

The CWGC is appreciative of the support the Borough provides to ensure the upkeep of the Commonwealth War Graves from the two world wars.