

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – CEMETERIES

BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISITS TO A VARIETY OF CEMETERIES
IN NORTHAMPTON AND KETTERING

1 SITE VISITS

1.1 On Thursday 3 August 2017, Councillor Brian Sargeant (Chair) Councillor Vicky Culbard (Deputy Chair), Councillor Dennis Meredith, Councillor Arthur McCutcheon and Councillor Andrew together with Mick Tyrrell, Contract Manager and Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer visited a variety of cemeteries to inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

1.2 TOWCESTER ROAD CEMETERY



1.2.1 The site visit walked around the cemetery noting:

- The cemetery was well maintained and very tidy
- Litter bins and seating is in situ. Most were in very good condition but one required replacing



- The paths and edges were very well maintained
- Some graves had conifers planted on them and other trees which would also grow very large.



- The area of the cemetery dedicated to war graves was immaculately kept.
- The natural area within the cemetery looked a bit over grown, but the Panel understood that it is a natural area.
- The Panel was very impressed by the condition and upkeep of Towcester Road cemetery
- Some of the graves comprised of eight plots and contained a number of monuments.
- The Panel felt that a number of trees in the cemetery at Towcester Road should be removed as soon as possible so that the land could be used fully as burial ground.
- The water tanks were in full working order.



- - The Chapel was locked. The Panel realised that this was due to anti-social behaviour previously taking place but felt it would be useful for consideration to be given to the issuing of a pass or key to visitors to the cemetery.
 - There are areas within the cemetery for burials of those of different religions

1.3 **DUSTON CEMETERY**

1.3.1 The site visit walked around the cemetery noting:

- Duston is a small cemetery but is very well kept
- The original cemetery is now full but there is an extension of 800 plots

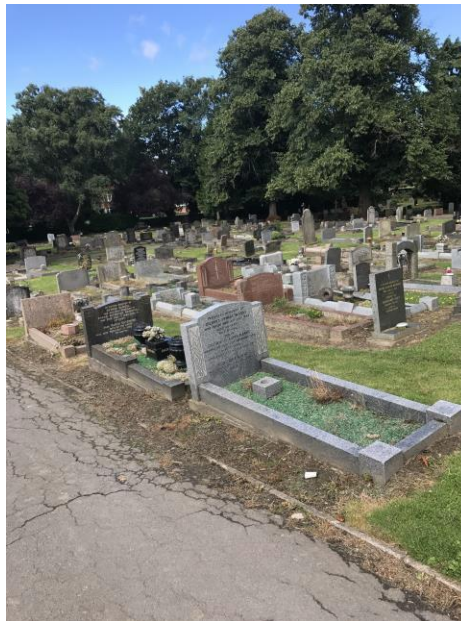


- The edging to the pathways is not as pristine as it was in Towcester Road cemetery
- The water tanks in the extension Duston Cemetery are not plumbed in



- The sign at the entrance to “Duston Cemetery” is obscured by tree growth
- The Site Visit felt that the architecture of Duston Cemetery is austere

1.4 KINGSTHORPE CEMETERY



1.4.1 The site visit walked around the cemetery noting:

- Kingsthorpe Cemetery is the largest cemetery in Northampton which opened in 1899

- There are 38,000 interments over approximately 19,000 grave spaces
- Approximately 1000 new designated grave spaces (not including possible Goat Field expansion)
- There are spaces for further graves in the extension
- There were toilet facilities in this cemetery but they had been vandalised and burnt down
- The water tanks are in working order
- Litter bins and seating is situated around the cemetery
- It is very tidy and well-kept cemetery
- The footpaths are in need of repair



- The grounds of the cemetery are pleasant with nice flowers and trees planted



- Vaults and the mausoleum is located in Kingsthorpe cemetery



1.5 CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERY - KETTERING

1.5.1 The site visit walked around the cemetery noting:

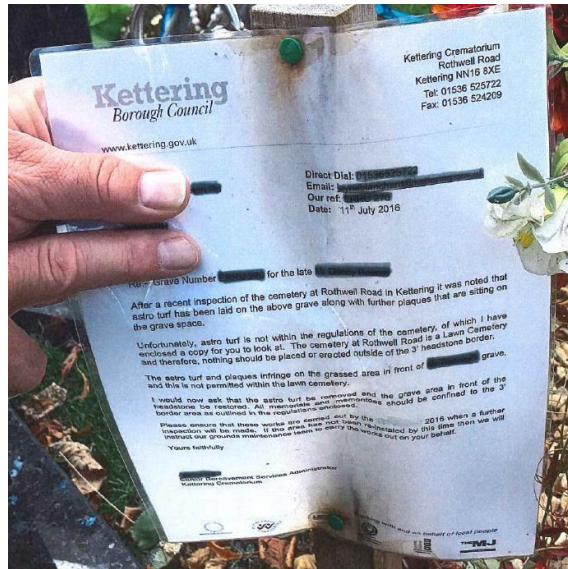
- Toilets are available on site but are only open when the crematorium is in use. The crematorium has full time staff employed.
- There is clear signage within the cemetery:



- Cemetery regulations are clear and on display



- Should plot owners not adhere to the rules a notice is put up next to the plot informing them of this



- Memorial testing takes place and visitors are informed of this



- Rules regarding the scattering of ashes are clearly communicated:



- The cemetery is very well maintained and is a fully functioning cemetery.
- There are a number of flower displays around the grounds of the cemetery. Shrubs were very well maintained with evidence of summer pruning

1.6 DALLINGTON CEMETERY

1.6.1 On Friday 24 November 2017, Councillors Dennis Meredith and Alan Bottwood, together with Mick Tyrrell, Contract Manager and Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer visited a Dallington Cemetery to inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.



1.6.2 The site visit walked around the cemetery noting:

- The cemetery was well maintained and very tidy



- Litter bins and seating is in situ. Most were in very good condition. There was a couple of different styles of bins. The bins looked as though they had been recently emptied with fresh bags inside. There was also a dog waste bin in situ.



- Some graves had conifers planted on them and other trees which would also grow very large. The planting of such trees is contrary to the cemetery rules and regulations.



- The water tanks located in the cemetery were in full working order.



- The noticeboard located at the entrance of the cemetery requires cleaning and fresh signage putting in:



- There is a lot of borough owned land that edges the cemetery. This land has been categorised as commercial land. The site visit felt this land would be useful to be re-categorised as further cemetery land.

2 CONCLUSIONS

2.1 The Site Visit concluded that:

- 2.1.1 The cemeteries visited were all of a high standard and were well maintained.
- 2.1.2 The paths and edges in Towcester Road Cemetery were pristine.
- 2.1.3 One of the litter bins, as located in Towcester Road Cemetery, as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of this briefing note requires replacing.
- 2.1.4 The Site Visit was concerned that some of the graves located in Towcester Road Cemetery had trees planted on them.
- 2.1.5 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – some of the trees in situ in Towcester Road Cemetery are removed as soon as possible.
- 2.1.6 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – consideration is given to the issuing of key passes to the Chapel in Towcester Road Cemetery.
- 2.1.7 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – the water tanks located in the extension at Duston Cemetery are plumbed in as soon as practicable.
- 2.1.9 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – the trees that are obscuring the sign at the entrance to Duston Cemetery are pruned as soon as possible.
- 2.1.10 Some of the footpaths and road way in Kingsthorpe Cemetery is in need of repair. A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested - those footpaths and roadways in Kingsthorpe Cemetery that are in need of repair, are repaired as soon as possible.
- 2.1.11 The Site Visit was impressed by the clear and well worded signed located at Kettering Crematorium and Cemetery. A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – Signage, similar to that located at Kettering Crematorium and Cemetery, as detailed in paragraph 2.5 of this briefing note is implemented in Northampton’s cemeteries. Signage to be made of similar material to that of the signage at Kettering Crematorium and Cemetery and be installed onto plinths for easy maintenance and cleansing.
- 2.1.12 Dallington Cemetery is of a high standard and is well maintained.
- 2.1.13 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – Some of the trees in situ, either on, or between graves, in Dallington cemetery are removed as soon as possible.
- 2.1.14 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – Officers are instructed to ensure the enforcement rules and regulations of cemeteries are adhered to such as the planting of trees either on or near to a grave.

- 2.1.15 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – The sign located at the entrance to Dallington Cemetery is cleaned and fresh signage placed behind the glass cabinet.
- 2.1.16 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested – Consideration is given to re-categorising the borough owned land (currently categorised as commercial land) that edges the cemetery as further cemetery land.