Agenda Item 12 – Scribe Cemetery Package

Introduction

Currently cemetery records are mostly kept in hardcopy paper format, ledgers and books – plot allocation, burials and ashes interments are all recorded in ledgers in summary format, and Grants for Exclusive Rights of Burial in a book with carbon copy pages. Forms and supporting documentation submitted by Funeral Directors and Stonemasons are scanned in and kept in electronic files by name if received by post or saved to an electronic file if received by email. Prior to the commencement of the current clerk most of the records were kept in paper format in a filing cabinet, including the printing of forms received by email.

There is no list of all the memorials in the cemetery and to find memorial information either the paper form has to be located or more recently the electronic file accessed. The Council does not therefore know how many memorials are in place at any one time, and this is only usually quantified when the 5 yearly memorial inspection (topple test) takes place.

It can be difficult and time-consuming to locate specific records, and some records are incomplete. When it is necessary to attempt to locate the original paper forms, this is not always easy and sometimes impossible.

There is a spreadsheet to record the transfer of plot ownership and a spreadsheet to record the plot numbers, who is interred in them and vacant plots. There is no mapping system.

The case for electronic records

Electronic recording in a cloud-based system would ensure that all the records are easily accessible in one place in the same format and dispense with the need for paper records, which take up space, both in the Clerk's office and archive storage, and if paper is destroyed it cannot be reconstructed. Electronic records have back-up and security systems in place.

Cross-referencing between grants, plots and those interred within the plots is readily available.

Geo mapping would provide an accurate layout of the cemetery plots and the space available.

As more of the cemetery plots are filled and the scattering of ashes is introduced an accurate and effective method of recording will become more important.

Scribe Cemetery

The Council already uses the Scribe Accounting Software and Scribe Cemetery is very similar in features and layout.

Each plot has its own individual record with ownership, transfer of ownership, interments and memorial information, which can be updated and amended as required, thus providing all information for each plot in one record with a full history.

It provides Geo-Mapping facilitating accurate cemetery layouts, enabling the plotting of current graves and vacant plots on the mapping system and shows the space remaining.

It links with Scribe Accounting to issue invoices and convert these to receipts when paid. The fee list can be added into the system allowing invoices to be generated automatically when the record is entered in the system.

Memorial inspections for each plot can be fully recorded with dates and identified issues/defects, and letters can be generated via the system to the relevant plot holders.

Template letters can be created and generated by the system as per the requirements of the Council.

Reports can be generated as required, including full and summary burial records, inspection records and records of defective memorials.

Transfer of existing paper records

As most of the current records are paper based they would have to be input manually and this will take time. There are 455 burial records currently plus transfer of ownership records. The 5 yearly memorial inspection is due imminently and this will clarify the number of memorials in the cemetery to assist with manual inputting.

The Clerk will need to allocate time for this work.

Cost

Scribe have put together a proposal, as follows:

Cemetery Plan - £26 per month or £312 per annum

One-off onboarding fee - £219 (set up and support)

Total - £531 year one and £312 per annum plus any inflationary rise thereafter.

There is a budget of £1,160 in the Cemetery expenditure cost code for sundry costs, £96 of which has so far been spent. In future years the cost would be built into the precept.

Debbie Bird, Parish Clerk On behalf of the Cemetery Working Group

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