Agenda Item 13 – Cemetery, Memorial Safety Inspection (Topple Testing)

The Parish Council is responsible for the safety of the Cemetery, including ensuring that the memorial stones are safe, and has these inspected once every 5 years.

The last inspection was in 2019 – 118 memorials were inspected and 3 were identified as slightly loose on the base but not any imminent risk and were passed in the inspection. The plot owners were written to and asked to have these checked and repaired as necessary.

The next inspection is now due. The previous company no longer undertakes these checks, and it is difficult to find anyone that does, typically Town and District Councils have staff trained in-house to do this. Via SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Devon members, the Clerk has found an ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) qualified person to undertake the inspection.

As highlighted in the previous agenda item, the Council's current records are not digitalised and there is no definitive list of memorials erected in the cemetery. The Clerk has estimated there to be around 150-160 memorials now.

The quote is £1.92 per memorial, and at the higher end of 160 memorials this will be a cost of £307.20. The fee will be more or less depending on the actual number. He can carry out the inspection in August/September, date to be confirmed.

If a digital system is implemented, then the Parish Council will have an accurate list of all memorials for future reference.

Work to undertake necessary repairs, where an issue is identified, is the responsibility of the plot owner. If they cannot be traced the Parish Council will have to make the memorial safe. If the owner fails to undertake necessary remedial work but can be traced the Parish Council may undertake the work and recharge the owner. If an imminent risk is identified the Parish Council will make the memorial safe immediately until remedial work can be carried out and recharge any costs to the owner where possible.

Debbie Bird, Parish Clerk

July 2024