

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Environment and Amenities Committee
Meeting date	5 October 2022
Report author	Tim Badcock
Agenda item	12c Ashes interments

Cemetery & Outdoor Services Managers Report

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To consider additional options for those using the ashes vaults in the Memorial Garden and a scattering area for ashes when the lease period has ended.

2. **Summary**

The landscaping of the ashes scattering area is now complete. The Memorial Garden is now ten years old with the first leases soon ending. The council has received a letter of concern and a number of comments in regard to the lease period of vaults.

3. **Action required and recommendations**

Members are requested to consider this report and instruct officers.

4. **Link to strategic plan and objectives**

KO3: To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.

5. **Background**

The memorial garden was developed in 2012 receiving its first interment in 2014. Since then we have had a further 55 interments with 28 vaults currently vacant of the 76 installed. There are foundations laid in another area of the gardens to receive around 200 additional vaults should they be needed.

The vaults, all of which can accommodate two caskets, are leased for ten years. The cost of the lease is £1,120. There is currently no option to purchase a longer lease period.

At the end of the lease period families are contacted and offered a lease extension, to take the ashes away with them or have them scattered in a garden within the cemetery for which memorial options have not yet been decided on by the council and therefore partly the purpose of this report.

It was intended that the decision to extend the lease would be made after ten years following advice from other cemetery and crematorium managers who found that at this time people were often happy with the scattering option whereas given the option in the earlier stages of grief they would certainly choose a longer lease period. In turn this would then free up space making vaults available to lease to new families. Hence only the one fixed period of 10 years was decided on and this is what we have been continuing with up until this point.

6. **Key information and options**

Leases

Option 1 –Continue to offer initial leases of ten years (£1,120) at the end of which a further ten-year lease period can be purchased at a reduced fee of £560.

Option 2 – Offer three lease periods of:

10 years - £1,120.

20 years - £1,680.

30 years - £2,240.

Scattering

When a lease expires families have the option to scatter ashes in the Memorial Garden and purchase a memorial plaque which can be installed within the shrub bed or on a central column in the centre of the garden.

10 years – £650.

20 years – £975.

30 years - £1,300.

Cost includes scattering of ashes.

7. **Climate change/green implications**

Establishment of an ashes garden has improved the biodiversity of the cemetery and increased carbon capture.

Longer lease periods and creating a final resting place by way of scattering negates the need for families to seek other options out of the town therefore reducing travel/carbon emissions.

8. **Financial/budget implications**

Offering extended leases and further memorial options will have a positive effect on income.

9. **HR implications**

Some additional admin time will be incurred in the setting up and ongoing management of this scheme.

10. **Supporting papers and appendices**

None.

Tim Badcock
Cemetery and Outdoor Services Manager
30 September 2022.