

# ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Finance, Governance and Asset Management</b>
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>16 December 2024</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Cat Mascord and Tim Badcock</b>
<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>8</b>

## **Exclusive rights of burial - proposed changes**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To propose the following changes to improve the cemetery administration and enable the renewal of lapsed exclusive rights of burial (ERB)

### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report refers only to full burial plots in Spring Gardens Cemetery.  
2.2 Many graves are approaching the end of their lease period and families wish to continue using their plots for future interments and memorialisation. There is no current mechanism for facilitating this.

### **3. Action required and recommendations**

- 3.1 Officers propose the separation of fees for interment and ERB. There is no proposed increase in fees.

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

- 4.1 The smooth operation of the cemetery administration impacts positively on the council's four key objectives.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1 Currently lessees purchase the ERB with a single, double or triple depth grave at point of use. Our fee includes the ERB and interment. ERBs are issued for 75 years as a hard copy Deed to permit the use of a burial plot for a determined period, including interments (space permitting), raising and altering memorials. ATC have never required lessees to extend renewal of the lease at point of expiry.

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5.2 The cemetery fee for ERB including burial is £865 for single depth grave, £920 for double depth grave, £965 for triple depth grave. The fee for further burials at a later date is £560.

### 6. **Key information and options**

6.1 The cemetery database will not permit interments, deed transfers or memorial permits once a lease has expired. Due to the age of Spring Gardens Cemetery the Deeds are now reaching their expiry dates and a manual override of the system has been required but this is becoming more commonplace, and a procedure is needed. The Town Council promotes additional interments in older plots to further extend the life of the cemetery.

6.2 It is officer recommendation that to enable the renewal/extension of a lease the current combined fee should be split. This will enable lessees to understand the breakdown of costs (in line with other local authorities) and allow us to charge for a further 75 year lease to keep the plot in use.

6.3 The new fees will be as follows:

ERB	£400.00
Burials	
- Single depth	£600.00
- Double depth	£700.00
- Triple depth grave	£800.00

### 7. **Climate change/green implications**

7.1 Utilising cemetery space more effectively further prolongs the life of the cemetery and negates the need to develop additional ground.

### 8. **Financial/budget implications**

8.1 Renewal of leases will have a positive financial outcome.

8.2 Fees will be itemised on the fees and charges list.

### 9. **HR implications**

9.1 Procedure will improve cemetery administration and efficiency.

### 10. **Supporting papers and appendices**

None.