

# Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 09/11/2023

## Cemetery Extension

**Agenda item 23/089 11. To receive an update and resolve to proceed with the cemetery extension design.**

### BACKGROUND

TGMS Ltd have been contracted to design a layout for the cemetery, to include technical specification and drawings, aid with the tendering process for works needed and monitoring the construction to project sign-off.

At the Fairground and Cemetery meeting on the 20th of July, the design for the cemetery extension was discussed and it was minuted:

#### **1. Cemetery Extension**

**To consider the draft layout and agree further actions to be taken.**

Cllr. Noonan gave an update. The draft layout was considered, and the number of new plots reviewed. It was agreed that the design, in principle, meets the needs for the extension but, if feasible, the 30m exclusion zone should be reduced to 10m to increase the number of burial plots. Along with information received from the Environment Agency regarding second burials in relation to Foudry Brook, Cllr. Noonan and the Clerk will provide feedback to TGMS Ltd in order that the design can be finalised. **Once design is formally approved by the Committee,** TGMS Ltd will seek contractors to undertake the landscaping/footpath work.

And, from the 21<sup>st</sup> of September:

#### **1. Cemetery Extension**

**To receive an update and agree any further actions needed.**

Cllr. Noonan reported that TGMS Ltd is liaising with the Environment Agency (EA) to establish, with a view to increasing the number of burial plots, if the 30m exclusion zone can be reduced to 10m. The EA have said that detailed site investigation of the underlying soil, geology and hydrogeology i.e. a Tier 2 assessment may be needed. A Tier 1 assessment was undertaken as part of the cemetery extension planning application process. This is being followed up with TGMS Ltd. **Once the exclusion zone has been determined the design can be finalised and specifications considered for the work needed.**

It was noted that the farmer has trimmed to extension hedge to 6 feet and has cut the grass. Cllr. Hill thanked the farmer.

Due to lack of other available information from the Tier 1 assessment undertaken as above, and recent communications from TGMS Ltd, it is looking highly unlikely that, unless a Tier 2 assessment is undertaken, it will be possible to get permission to reduce the 30m exclusion zone to 10m. As a Tier 2 assessment would cost £5,000 -£7,000 and further time, and may not be successful, it is thought it would be better to leave the exclusion zone for cremated remains.

## **DESIGN**

Document 23-089 11.1 Cemetery Extension Design - Layout Draft 1 shows the proposed design. Additional comments made by TGMS about the design are:

1. *We have broadly based the layout on the original planning document which gained approval, including observing the 30 m exclusion zone in the south-east (pink line).*
2. *In the south-eastern area we have 450 cremated remains plots (60 cm x 60 cm) with 1.5 m wide informal grassed paths.*
3. *With reference to the planning conditions, it is noted that no further culverting of the ditch will be permitted.*
4. *We have assumed that it will be acceptable to observe a 10 m exclusion zone in the north (taken from the top of the ditch bank) to take account of the unculverted section of the ditchline (pink line).*
5. *This northern area comprises curved memorial walls, a specimen tree, and a contemplation area, which can either be a wildflower meadow, a more formal memorial garden or a copse.*
6. *Alternatively, the central path can be extended into this area to enable it to be used for additional grave plots.*
7. *The two main grave plot areas are set out with back-to-back graves to assist maintenance (a large expanse of grass for mowing).*
8. *There are currently 145 adult grave plots in this area.*
9. *The access paths are 1.8 m wide to match the existing and to facilitate trafficking by a mini digger.*
10. *This arrangement potentially provides three access points into the adjacent field to facilitate a future extension, should this be required at some point.*
11. *An additional path could be included along the south-western boundary, but we would lose 22 grave plots.*

## **RECOMMENDATION**

As the next Fairground and Cemetery meeting is not until mid-January, formal sign off on the design is required in order that the project can move forward.

*Clerk 02/11/2023*