

Appendix 2: Hendon Cemetery & Crematorium

Process for implementing the re-use of Graves and engagement with users and stakeholders

1. Background

- 1.1. Hendon Cemetery is running out of new burial space.
- 1.2. Grave re-use will deliver in the region of a maximum of 150 graves per annum, which is insufficient to meet current demand, and will not address rising population needs, however will contribute towards increasing the running time of HCC.
- 1.3. Without grave re-use the Burial service income will fall from £850,000 to £212,500.
- 1.4. Grave re-use will ensure that Hendon Cemetery will remain financially viable, but will not fully address the demand for new graves (Appendix 1).

2. Grave re-use

- 2.1 The process of grave re-use is set out in statute and is supported by the policy document of the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management (ICCM) and London Environmental Directors Network (LEDNET) Technical Guidance on the Re-use and Reclamation of Graves in London Local Authority Cemeteries (2013).
- 2.2 The statutory process will be followed, and full regard will be taken of the ICCM policy and LEDNET technical guidance to ensure the process of grave re-use is carried out with full sensitivity to ensure Hendon Cemetery can continue as a working cemetery, providing much needed burial space for local residents for the foreseeable future.

3. Re-use methodology, safeguards and controls

- 3.1 The sensitivity surrounding the reclamation and re-use of selected private graves requires careful consideration of safeguards and controls. The word 'selected' is to be used in order to protect 'heritage' graves so as not to detract from HCC's heritage and communal value.
- 3.2 Good practice dictates that re-use takes place in the context of a well-developed Conservation Management Plan in which an assessment is made of the significance of the site in terms of its historic and cultural heritage alongside a consideration of architectural, ecological, arboriculture, landscape, townscape and amenity value. In

order to reclaim and re-use selected graves, certain conditions apply and these include:

- No human remains may be disturbed if the last interment was less than 75 years.
- Any disinterred remains found must be placed in another container and reinterred at a greater depth in the same grave (*otherwise known as 'Lift-and-Deepen'*) freeing up space to the required depth to create additional space for re-use.
- A notice must be served on the registered owner of the grave providing at least 6 months' notice of the intention to reclaim.
- The burial authority must publish notices of intention to reclaim in local publications.
- Notices must be displayed at the cemetery entrances, giving a minimum of 2 years notice, before any actions can be undertaken to reclaim graves.
- Objections from interested persons (owner, relative of deceased) must be taken into account and if not withdrawn the burial authority may not exercise its powers for at least a further 25 years.
- Excavation down to the last interment will take place with due care so as to ensure that all remains present may be collected and placed within a new container. Should multiple interments have taken place further excavations will take place to reveal, collect and re-containerise remains individually.
- Once all remains have been removed and re-containerised, additional depth will be excavated and the containers placed back within the grave. The new depth and position of each container so replaced within the grave will be entered in the cemetery records and registers.
- Military Graves are fully protected.
- As the Cemetery is not consecrated land, we are unable to reclaim the many common (formally known as paupers) graves. The solution here would be to build up the land above the graves.

4. Resources

- 4.1 Administratively the process is intensive; notices must be displayed on site for 2 years before any reclamation can take place and notices advising of the same in local media must also be published. In addition, efforts must be made to find living owners/relatives by contacting addresses contained in the burial registers using

registered mail. Where living relatives are identified and want to place a claim on the grave and purchase extended rights (lease of ownership), the grave cannot be re-used.

- 4.2 Additional resources and appropriate training will be required for staff to undertake the reclamation of graves and to excavate and prepare graves for re-use as required by the ICCM's policy on Re-use and LEDNET's Technical Guidance. The Council would need to commission a minimum of 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Bereavement Officer to administer the process.

5. Sensitivity

- 5.1 Clearly the re-use and reclamation of graves is a particularly sensitive issue and the process must be handled extremely sensitively and respectfully.
- 5.2 Whilst a 75 year rule applies, it is noted that this rule could be applied to graves as recent as 1941 or earlier. The approach for grave re-use and reclamation will work in chronological order; start with eligible graves from 1899 when the cemetery opened and proceed on a year by year basis.
- 5.3 Grave re-use is an established practice in the Corporation of London Cemetery where graves have been successfully reclaimed and re-used.
- 5.4 London Borough of Southwark is planning to create up to 4,845 new plots in Camberwell Old and New Cemeteries, which has had opposition from Save Southwark Woods Campaign, which wants to protect the area's green space.
- 5.5 These concerns are thought to be less relevant to Barnet as grave re-use will not fundamentally change the landscape of Hendon Cemetery, whereas in Southwark proposals include clearance of inner city woodland.
- 5.6 New Southgate Cemetery has recently put and had passed a private Bill through Parliament to enable them to re-use graves. This was necessary as this is a privately owned cemetery and the legislation referred to above only applies to Local Authority Cemeteries.