

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29TH MAY 2002

CEMETERY SAFETY PROGRESS

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on the progress being made on Cemetery Safety.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 Members agreed at the Community Services Committee on the 14th November 2002 to note the progress of a Memorial Masons Registration Scheme and to set up a cemetery safety squad, within existing resources.
- 2.2 The Institute of Burial and Cremation Association, Scotland and Northern Ireland Branch have adopted a document put together by East Ayrshire Council as a model document for the registration of Memorial Masons. A copy of the document is available in the Member's Lounge.
- 2.3 This document incorporated the guidance notes of the Institute and the specifications of the National Association of Memorial Masons.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the document is now included in the Council's Cemetery Management Rules. These rules shall be updated and shall then be subject to a 30-day consultation period.
- 2.5 Thereafter and pending any comments received the Registration Scheme shall be introduced, throughout East Ayrshire. Whilst this will not address headstones which have previously been badly erected, it should ensure that all future headstones are erected to a safe specification. The cemetery safety squad will carry out monitoring of the scheme.
- 2.6 A full survey of all cemeteries is underway and the North Area has been completed, with the exception of photographs. It is anticipated that the full survey shall be completed by June 2002.
- 2.7 The Cemetery Safety Team is now operational and the inspection of headstones has commenced at Catrine Old Churchyard as this site has been closed for a considerable period of time. Thereafter the inspection will roll out throughout the Council area.
- 2.8 Notices informing the public will be placed in each cemetery at least 2 weeks prior to the inspection and safety work commencing. It is also proposed that there shall be associated press coverage and public notices which will further inform the public.
- 2.9 The Outdoor Amenities Section, along with our colleagues in Education are at this time delivering a presentation to Primary 6 and 7 pupils throughout East Ayrshire.

This presentation is entitled 'Cemeteries are not Playgrounds' and informs the youngsters of the dangers that lie within a cemetery.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Nil

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Memorial Mason Registration shall be incorporated into the Councils Cemetery Management Rules.

4.2 Any instances of non-compliance will, in the first instance, be addressed through discussions with the memorial mason concerned. Persistent breaches may lead to an application to the sheriff court for an exclusion order in terms of section 117 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 As Members who visited the Kilmarnock Cemetery witnessed there is a need for action to ensure that the Cemeteries and churchyards of East Ayrshire are safe places to visit and work.

5.2 The introduction of the Memorial Masons Registration Scheme and the cemetery safety squad clearly demonstrates that East Ayrshire are taking steps to protect the public and employees who visit and work in our cemeteries and churchyards.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The committee are invited to:-

- i) Agree the introduction of an East Ayrshire Memorial Masons Registration Scheme; and
- ii) Otherwise note this report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services
RMcC/RR
30th April 2002.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. I.B.C.A. Scotland and Northern Ireland Branch Memorial Mason Registration Scheme – January 2002.

Any person wishing to inspect the background paper above should telephone 01563 576264 and ask for John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services.

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AGENDA