

**STRATEGIC CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM  
DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

**Minutes of Meeting of 29th January, 2018**

Members Present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson); and  
Alderman Sandford.

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Toland, Assistant Director, City and  
Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. C. Sullivan, Policy and Business Development  
Officer; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

**Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor O'Neill.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 7th December, 2017 were taken as read and signed as correct.

**Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of Interest were reported.

**Handling of Heavy Coffins**

The Assistant Director provided the Working Group with an update on the risk to cemeteries staff associated with the handling of heavy coffins and provided an overview of procedures to be followed by Funeral Directors to minimise the risk of injury to Council staff. She stated that, in instances where a coffins in excess of 25 stones in weight were received for burial, the procedure involved the hiring of a small crane to assist with the process of lowering the coffin into its allocated position. She highlighted instances where underweight coffins had resulted in the over provision of manpower with additional costs being incurred by the Council. She stated that this situation could be addressed through better communication and cooperation by Funeral Directors.

The Working Group was informed that all Council staff were trained in manual handling techniques and that, since September 2017, seven cases had been reported where staff had alleged that the coffin received for burial was significantly heavier than what had been communicated by the Funeral Director. The Working Group was advised that one incident had been reported where a coffin had been substantially lighter than had been reported resulting in the Council incurring additional cost through the over provision of manpower to undertake the burial.

In an endeavour to address the problem, the Assistant Director stated that the Bereavement Services Section had hosted a quarterly forum with Funeral Directors to discuss a range of issues and that the matter of heavy coffins had been discussed at these forums. The Assistant Director stated that the Bereavement Services Section were working closely with Legal Services to formulate a letter to Funeral Directors informing of their role and responsibility in the matter. She highlighted the importance in respect of Funeral Directors providing accurate estimation of the weight of heavy coffins presented for burial.

Noted.

### **Update on Water Infrastructure at Roselawn Cemetery**

The Assistant Director provided the Working Group with an update on the water supply issues at Roselawn Cemetery, including proposed interim measures to address the supply problem. She referred to a report in the matter which had been presented to the Working Group and which had identified those areas of the cemetery which had been most adversely affected, namely sections R, S and T. She reported that information on the water supply issue had been communicated to the public via the Council's website including the erection of public notices within the cemetery. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Working Group, expressed his concern that maintenance of the water supply needed be undertaken and that an upgrade to the existing water supply at the cemetery was required underpinned by funds provided through the Council's capital programme to provide a long term solution to the problem.

As an interim measure, the Assistant Director stated that the Bereavement Services Manager had investigated the possibility of hiring water bowsers to provide a water supply to the affected areas of the cemetery for a three month trial period, the cost of which would be minimal to the Council. She stated further that the water supply to the offices, toilets and the crematorium had not been affected and that the Property Services Section had undertaken to produce a report in the matter which would be available in the Spring of 2018. The Working Group stated a preference for a water bowser to be provided at each of the three affected areas of the cemetery, covering the trial period and beyond if necessary, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Noted.

### **Attendance**

The Working Group expressed its concern in regard to the lack of attendance at meetings of the Working Group by other party representatives and expressed the wish that this matter be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee. The Chairperson highlighted the fact that, Party Group Leaders might wish to consider appointing alternative Members to the Working Group in an endeavour to ensure cross-party participation at its meetings.

Noted.

### **Crematorium Development**

The Working Group reaffirmed its recommendation that its preferred option for a two chapel structure at the Roselawn site should be designed and constructed in such a way to ensure that each Chapel should be provided with a seating capacity of not less than 200. The Chairperson highlighted the need to ensure that the new crematorium facility should be provided with the capacity to enable it to accommodate any future increase in demand for crematoria facilities.

Noted.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 27th February at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson