

## **Hadleigh Cemetery Extension Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q – Why was the cemetery extended?**

A – The cemetery was extended because all guidance suggests it a good idea to look for burial space within 10 years of running out. At the time of the purchase of the land (2011) the then Town Council and its staff thought the existing burial space would run out within or shortly after 10 years and the land was being offered at a very reasonable rate by the landowner (a Hadleigh resident). The full plans for the cemetery were also taken to the public before planning permission approved, at the Annual Town Meetings in April 2014 and 2015, inviting feedback and comments.

### **Q – What public consultation was undertaken for this project?**

A – The cemetery is the responsibility of the landowner and administrator, in this case Hadleigh Town Council. The Council conducted public consultations over two years at the Living with Dying events, Hadleigh Show and by gaining anecdotal evidence during conversations with funeral directors, as well as at the Annual Town Meetings in 2014 and 2015.

A further public consultation on a couple of aspects regarding the operations of a natural burial area within the cemetery was undertaken via social media polls and the Hadleigh Community news during June 2021.

### **Q – Have any professional bodies looked over the plans and the extension project?**

A – The cemetery extension project has been endorsed by The Federation of Burial and Cremations Authority whom Hadleigh Town Council are a member. A letter from the FBCA is attached to end of the FAQs. Regular funeral directors who use the cemetery are also supportive and communications were sent to them for feedback regarding the plans.

### **Q – How many plots are currently available in the older cemetery burial area?**

A – There are no cremation plots available and 146 full interment plots remaining. The average per year is 42 interments, therefore there is a maximum of 3.4 years' worth of plots left.

### **Q – How do you know the capacity available in the extension?**

A – Pear Technology are the professionals we use to plot our cemetery. They have done the work to get a maximum number of plots:

- natural burial area = 969 plots
- traditional burials = 1,043 plots
- cremation burials = 1,784 plots

It is important to note that not all the above plots will be usable, but professional advice from Pear Technology and the FBCA is to plot as many as possible at the outset and remove plots off the plan over time – i.e. start with the maximum and reduce as necessary over time for things such as benches and plantings.

### **Q – Could the council at the time not have looked to re-use plots rather than buy more land?**

A – It is largely recommended that the re-use of graves only be done in extreme circumstances where no other land is available for purchase in the parish / region. There is a law passed for London which does not apply to the rest of the UK. In order to get approval to re-use graves, there is a large amount of work and cost involved: you have to gain permission from the owner (or descendants) of the plots in writing and they would have the opportunity to reply that they want it to remain – this can prove

time-consuming and difficult to trace in many circumstances particularly given the Hadleigh Cemetery dates back so far. Taking all the above into consideration, it is highly likely that the authorities would not have approved to re-use. York Research Group suggests re-use is low as the difficulties involved in establishing who owns the monuments and similar issues such as family approval for dousing rods, together with the complexity of administration of identifying grave ownership after so many years.

**Q – How long are exclusive rights valid for and why this length?**

A – Hadleigh set its exclusive rights for 99 years, many years ago, as there are several generations of Hadleigh people buried in the Cemetery with living relatives who are still aware of the plots and the people in them which might cause problems if they were used for someone else. It would only make sense to lower the number of years if we were at risk of running out of space which, now we have the new extension, we fortunately are not. It is also likely that a number of graves in the oldest part of the cemetery remain under perpetuity of rights therefore unable to be disturbed in any way. We are also aware that several graves are not permitted to be opened due to smallpox.

**Q - How much was the Public Works Loan for?**

A – The diminishing loan (approved by Full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017) for the groundworks to excavate earth and lay the roadways was for a principal balance of £500,000 with interest at 2.79% giving rise to total payments over the course of the loan's life of £672,190.52. The loan is paid back in six-monthly instalments over the 25-year term ending 2042, so correct at the time of publishing, payments have so far been made to the value of £142,081 (principal payments and interest).

Premature repayments may be made by agreement with the loan board and should be noted that a premium would be payable when the interest rate on the loan to be repaid is higher than the current interest rate for a loan repayable by the same method over the same period as that remaining on the loan.

**Q – Can you give back the loan or stop the payments in any way?**

A – No, the loan agreement made is legally binding and cannot be altered now. A loan may be repaid early attracting interest at the current rate at that time and penalties may ensue.

**Q - What would the saving be in maintenance and upkeep costs if we stopped the work on the extension until the existing part of the cemetery is full?**

A – Only just a little over £1k pa on the current contract (8% of the whole cemetery contract costs of £12k) so this is not a great saving to be had when the grounds should be generating income if operational, however we are in a contract. It is also not recommended to wait until the current part is full as you don't have to stop one area before opening the other. The two should work in tandem during these final years of the existing area and should complement one another providing multiple options.

**Q – Could you use the extension purely for green burial, possibly with a split between woodland and meadowland?**

A – A motion was agreed at a full council meeting that the area allocated for natural burials be used as meadowland. Whilst there is appetite for natural burials in the area they are estimated (by industry experts but no empirical evidence) at only 10% of total burials in the UK at present. As we have no more capacity for cremation allocations in the existing cemetery, it has already been decided to use some space for natural burials, and the allocation of full and cremated remains made.

**Q – What are the current non-domestic rates for the cemetery?**

A - The total non-domestic rates for the cemetery are £4.9k per annum. This is an additional £1.8k for the extension (compared to pre-works rates of £3.1k in 2019/20).

Council tax had not been put up for many years and that is ultimately the issue. Costs incurred by Town Council have been going up (inflation) every year and council tax hadn't been, so there was a large increase. Pre-2019 the rates for the cemetery were in the region of £600. The finance function of the Town Council will be looking into this further as it is expected (but not confirmed) that the current rates may be in excess for the cemetery.

**Q – Why was the precept increased by 13.3% in 2021 and is it solely because of the cemetery?**

A - The increase in the precept for Hadleigh Town Council is 13.3%. Although this looks like a large percentage increase in monetary terms this is a £1.25 per month increase for a Band D property. The precept amount is based on the council tax base rate (number of properties eligible to pay tax) and unfortunately due to the pandemic more people are claiming help with their so the collection rate has reduced which means the base rate has reduced, when usually it would increase. The budget for 21/22 was discussed at every Full Council meeting between November and January to ensure it was as accurate as possible. The overall cost of running the Town Council services has increased and therefore we must increase our income to cover our outgoings while also maintaining our reserves.

**Q – What is the budget for the rest of the works on the extension for it to become operational and begin providing income?**

A - £20,000, to be spent on soft landscaping to partition the natural burial area from the rest (by hedging) and provide the necessary features for a cemetery and signage. This includes the fees for the mapping technology. A further £1,000 has been provided by Councillor Fraser from his two locality budgets and the Hadleigh Society have promised £100 donation towards hedgerow planting.

**Q – How much of the project budget has been spent post-groundworks to date?**

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Budget                              | £20,000        |
| Plus Locality Budget Contributions  | £1,000         |
| Plus Donation from Hadleigh Society | £100           |
| <b>Total Budget available</b>       | <b>£21,100</b> |

| Spend title                    | Amount | Remaining budget | Spend txn date                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Signage                        | £2,475 | £18,625          | 25/03/2022                                          |
| Benches x 2                    | £950   | £17,675          | 25/03/2022                                          |
| Mapping of extension plots     | £600   | £17,075          | 24/05/2021                                          |
| Scattering roundabout          | £2,570 | £14,505          | 27/05/2022                                          |
| Signage                        | £70    | £14,435          | 24/06/2022                                          |
| Signage (SJA)                  | £280   | £14,155          | committed, not yet paid                             |
| Hedge                          | £1,625 | £12,530          | committed, not yet paid                             |
| pergola                        | £522   | £12,008          | committed, not yet paid                             |
| Memorial structure             | £8,000 | £4,008           | approved by council, not yet confirmed final amount |
| Road resurfacing               | £1,686 | £2,322           | committed, not yet paid                             |
| Water butts for extension area | £350   | £1,972           | request taken to council 04/08/2022                 |

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Underspend to budgeted works values | £1,972 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|

**Q – Can HTC extend the water supply to the additional area?**

Please visit the agenda page for Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022 for a report answering this question.

# THE FEDERATION OF BURIAL AND CREMATION AUTHORITIES

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Secretary & Executive Officer: Brendan J. Day



Sue Munson and Alicja Barnes

Hadleigh Town Council

The Guildhall

Hadleigh

Suffolk

IP7 5DN

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Alicja and Sue,

## Hadleigh Cemetery Extension

I should like to commence by thanking you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on the extension you are adding to Hadleigh Cemetery. The Town Council are to be commended for developing this facility in such a timely fashion. I have been involved with several new cemeteries and extensions where development was delayed risking reputational damage and additional distress to the bereaved.

Planning and making available the grave spaces on the new extension, whilst the existing cemetery is still operating, is both prudent and enables a seamless transition to take place between the two areas. I have no doubt that some members of the local community will take advantage of the new facility, enabling others who have particular family ties to the existing cemetery to be able to have their needs met by being able to use the remaining graves.

The working group have successfully delivered the extension with the groundworks having been completed in August 2019. The next step is to finalise the design and landscaping at the earliest opportunity so the planting can become established ready for the facility to be available for the community.

As you have reached the final phase of the development, I would recommend that the project is now passed from the working group to the full council in order that they may approve the final design on behalf of their community. In doing so you should consider providing the elected members with several options reflecting your current proposals and any points of interest which members of the working group feel are important.

In preparing the proposed layout focus should be on the primary purpose of the cemetery, the disposal of the dead from the local community. you have armed yourself with considerable research on the facilities to provide and how to apportion land. I would strongly suggest that you only 'designate' areas for different usage and not set out areas permanently. Over the life of the cemetery, it is extremely likely that local demographics and people's tastes will change. Just as there has been a national move towards cremation from burial, you may see a greater interest in natural/woodland burial. Through simply designating areas you are future proofing the cemetery against change and providing councillors and officers with flexibility to alter service delivery to meet service demands.

From the statistics you have gathered I am satisfied that by designating sections for:

Standard burial

Natural burial

Ashes graves

Ash scattering

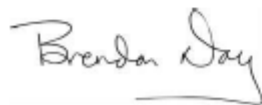
you have covered all the key needs of your local community and the indicative design you have developed sets the differing areas within an environmentally aware and pleasing landscape.

I shall be grateful if you would continue to keep me informed of developments and once the current lockdown restrictions are relaxed, I will be happy to meet with you on site.

When you reach the point of arranging the opening of the facility the President of the Federation would welcome the opportunity to attend.

If you should require any further information, or have any issues locally concerning burial or cremation please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brendan J. Day". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Brendan J. Day  
Secretary and Executive Officer