

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 7 December 2023

## Cemeteries Update – Support for Volunteer Groups and Cemetery Rules

Executive/routine  
Wards

Executive  
All

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 The Culture and Communities Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Agree that income described in paragraph 4.2 should continue to be distributed between the Friends Groups specified in Appendix 1 on receipt of an appropriate request from the organisation; and that said funding will be provided only for works within the relevant cemetery and must be accounted for by the recipients;
  - 1.1.2 Note the update on Cemetery Management rules; and
  - 1.1.3 Agree to discharge outstanding remits for these items.

#### **Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Andrew Mitchell, Head of Regulatory Services

E-mail: [andrew.mitchell@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.mitchell@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 4208

Contact: Jane Matheson, Operational Manager (Bereavement)

E-mail: [jane.matheson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:jane.matheson@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 664 4314

# Report

## Cemeteries Update – Support for Volunteer Groups and Cemetery Rules

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report updates Committee on two issues within the cemetery estate. It makes recommendations with respect to the management and funding of cemetery ‘Friends’ groups and provides an update since revised Cemetery Management Rules were agreed in August 2022.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The provision of space for burials is a statutory requirement upon the Council. The City of Edinburgh Council owns and operates 43 cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds across the city.

### 4. Main report

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#### ‘Friends’ groups

- 4.1 There are currently 10 ‘Friends of Cemetery’ groups in the city whose members volunteer to maintain and improve cemeteries. These groups cover cemeteries at Dalry, Grange, Greyfriars, Morningside, Mortonhall Baby Rose Garden, Newington, North Merchiston, South Queensferry, St Cuthbert’s and Warriston.
- 4.2 As reported to Committee in [November 2021](#), to support the establishment of these groups and their work to maintain and improve cemeteries, small scale funding was provided by the Council. Funding was also allocated to support two charities who support families following the death of a child. This funding came from a national scheme by which an organisation (‘Orthometals’) recycles metals recovered from the cremation process at Mortonhall Crematorium.
- 4.3 The November 2021 report does not specifically address whether the funding provided was intended to be a one off or on an ongoing basis. Additionally, the report did not specify what the funding provided to ‘Friends’ groups and other similar groups should be used for. Details of payments made in the last two financial years are included at Appendix 1. The payments are made directly by Orthometals to the groups based on instructions from the service, and the rate of exchange will vary.

- 4.4 The funding for Friends groups is intended to support the volunteer activity by providing funding for items such as:
- 4.4.1 Garden tools or equipment for use in the cemetery;
  - 4.4.2 Plants, bulbs or seeds appropriate to the cemetery landscape; or
  - 4.4.3 Small items, such as bird or bat boxes designed to support wildlife diversity in the cemetery.
- 4.5 It is therefore recommended that:
- 4.5.1 Funding received from income set out in paragraph 4.2 above should continue to be distributed between the groups specified in Appendix 1 on receipt of an appropriate request from the organisation; and
  - 4.5.2 Funding should be provided only for works within the relevant cemetery or equipment to support this. Each group should provide annual updates on what the money has been spent on and demonstrate that the group continues to meet regularly.

### **Update on Cemetery Rules**

- 4.6 As [reported](#) to Committee on 16 August 2022, revised Cemetery Management Rules were consulted upon, and Committee agreed that the Rules should be implemented from that date.
- 4.7 Since the implementation of the revised rules, the Council has received 10 complaints about breaches of the rules, all of which referred to dogs which were off-lead in cemeteries. The complaints were made by four individuals and one further anonymous complaint. The complaints refer to just four of the 43 cemeteries operated by the service. All complainers requested that the rules should be revisited, and that the Council should implement a total ban on dogs in cemeteries.
- 4.8 The Council's position is that a cemetery is a place of burial and reflection for the bereaved. It is acknowledged that the issue described above is of significance to those directly affected and who have been distressed by owners allowing their dogs off-lead within a cemetery. Members will recall that they previously heard directly from deputations illustrating these concerns.
- 4.9 Whilst acknowledging the significance of the concerns to the individuals, based on the relatively small number of complaints and the practicalities of enforcing a complete ban on dogs within cemeteries, it is not proposed to revisit or amend the current Cemetery Rules at this time.
- 4.10 Bereavement Services staff continue to monitor the situation and will engage with users of the cemeteries, including owners of dogs and local residents, to encourage respect for the rules.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 If agreed, officers will update the current arrangements with respect to the distribution and monitoring of income received from the Orthometals scheme.

- 5.2 Officers will continue to monitor compliance with Cemetery Rules and take enforcement action where appropriate.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 A review of current arrangements will be carried out with respect to the distribution and monitoring of income received from the Orthometals scheme.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 Not applicable.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 Not applicable.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 Council staff will continue to monitor compliance with Cemetery Rules and to take enforcement action where appropriate.
- 9.2 Council staff will continue to support Friends groups in their valuable work maintaining Edinburgh's cemeteries.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [Culture and Communities Committee – 16 August 2022](#) ('Cemetery Management Rules – Outcome of Consultation')
- 10.2 [Culture and Communities Committee – 16 November 2021](#) ('Cemetery Strategy')

## **11. Appendices**

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- Appendix 1 Income and donations made from the recycling of metals scheme  
'Orthometals'

## Appendix 1

Organisation	Funds paid (€)	Funds paid (€)
	2023	2022
Held in our Hearts	2,295.89	2,200.00
Simba	2,295.89	2,200.00
Friends of Grange	1,000.00	1,400.00
Friends of Greyfriars	1,000.00	1,200.00
Friends of Morningside	1,000.00	1,200.00
Friends of Newington	1,000.00	1,200.00
Friends of South Queensferry	1,000.00	1,200.00
Friends of Warriston	1,000.00	1,400.00
Friends of Dalry	1,000.00	1,400.00
Friends of Mortonhall	1,000.00	1,200.00
St Cuthbert's Kirkyard Heritage Association	1,000.00	1,200.00
North Merchiston	1,000.00	1,077.35
<b>Total</b>	14,591.78	16,877.35
<b>*Total in £</b>	<b>£12,694.85</b>	<b>£14,691.99</b>

\*Rate of exchange varies - as at 27 November 2023 €1 = £0.87