

MARGAM JOINT CREMATORIUM COMMITTEE

25TH SEPTEMBER 2015

JOINT REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND SUPERINTENDENT & REGISTRAR

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED - ALL

MEMORIALS OFFERING AND FEES AND CHARGES

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Member approval for the provision of Memorials and fees and charges.

2. Background

This report reviews the memorial offerings and fee levels provided at Margam Crematorium. At present the Joint Committee offers 10 year leases for families for Kerbstone Memorials with the option to renew at the end of that period.

Kerbstone Memorials

There are two dedicated areas for Kerbstones i.e. at the Horseshoe Path and Garden of Remembrance. There is also a dedicated Baby Memorial statue within the Horseshoe Path. The following table shows the current number of Kerbstones and vacant plaques available in each of these areas.

	Total Available	Total Vacant
Horseshoe Path (since 1994)	1,043	160
Garden of Remembrance (since 2002)	419	59
Baby Memorial (since 1996)	48	12

Benches

There are 17 wooden and 16 granite benches situated at various points on the grounds. These have been purchased and donated to Margam Crematorium by families. There is a responsibility on the Committee to ensure that the benches meet health and safety conditions and a small number of the wooden benches have already deteriorated and have had to be withdrawn from public use. It is

expected that the other wooden benches will also deteriorate over the next few years and will have to be withdrawn.

The Baby Memorial is placed in the children's section of the Garden of Remembrance and was first made available in 1996 for babies up to 12 months old

It has previously been agreed by the Joint Committee that all future benches will be of granite as this will maximise their life span and maintain the quality of benches within the grounds.

Other Memorials

The following memorials are also offered to families:-

- Books of Remembrance at a cost of £36 for two lines, £54 for five lines and £71.50 for eight lines. Additional inscription for a coat of arms, floral emblems or service badges at additional cost is also available.
- Altar and Window Vases. The weekly cost is £8.50 for altar vase and £7 for the window vase and this offer is fully subscribed.
- Miniature Book of Remembrance. Costs range from £55 depending on the number of lines of inscription. They hold up to eight inscriptions as chosen by the families are leather bound and contain photographs of Margam Crematorium.
- Memorial Card. Costs range from £18 depending on the number of lines of inscription and can be personalised.
- Triptych Memorial. Costs range from £50.50 depending on configuration and contains three panels for personal inscription and photographs.

Members should note that there has been no take up of the Triptych Memorial and it is proposed as part of this report to withdraw this offer.

3. Income from Memorials

The following table shows the income generated from new and renewal of Memorials since April 2009.

2009/10	£23,844
2010/11	£23,685
2011/12	£20,039
2012/13	£18,575
2013/14	£19,777
2014/15	£35,115
2015/16 to date	£23,300

The significant increase in Memorials income in 2014/15 is as a result of first and second anniversary renewals of 10 year leases taken out in and since 1994. New Kerbstone Memorials are currently averaging 8-10 per month.

4. Fees and Charges

The current and proposed fee levels for Kerbstone Memorials are as follows:-

Current Fee	Horseshoe Path	Garden of Remembrance	Baby Memorial
New 10 year lease	£428	£428	£428
Renewal of 10 year lease	£173	£173	£173

In order to improve the offering at the Crematorium it is proposed that alternative fee levels and lease periods be made available. In relation to lease periods it is proposed that 10 year and 20 year periods be made available.

Baby Memorial

At present families can have inscribed plaques placed on the Baby Memorial for babies up to 12 months old. To lose any child is a very traumatic experience for families. The current fee level is a substantial cost for, what is usually a young family, with limited financial resources. In order to reduce the financial burden for families it is proposed that Members reduce the fee to £180 per plaque for a 10 year lease with renewal fees of also £180 per 10 years. A 20 year lease, with a subsequent anniversary renewal, also be made available for £325.

Kerbstone Memorials

The Horseshoe Path was the first Memorial area opened in 1994. 2014 was the second 10 year anniversary for leases. There are currently over 160 vacant Memorials available in this area. In order to provide more affordable options for families to have Memorials for loved ones at the Crematorium and usage of the Horseshoe Path area it is proposed that vacated Kerbstones are cleaned and made available for use at a reduced fee of £325 for a 10 year lease or £585 for 20 years. The current renewal fee for maturing 10 year leases is £173. It is proposed to retain this for 2015/16 and increase it to £180 from 1st April 2016. This renewal rate will be available up until 31st March 2020. After that date it is proposed that the renewal fees at the end of the lease be provided at a 10% discount for 10 and 20 year leases.

The Garden of Remembrance was opened in 2002. It currently has 59 vacancies but the ability to be extended. The Kerbstones in this area are much newer and it is where all new Memorial Plaques are currently taken out. It is proposed that the current fee for 10 year leases of £428 (new) and renewal fee of £173 be retained for 2015/16 but the fee be increased by just over 2% to £440 for new and £180 for renewals from 1st April 2016. It is also proposed that 20 year leases at £800 be also provided and that from 1st April 2020 all renewal leases be provided at a 10% discount.

Granite Benches

A number of families have enquired as to the availability of placing/acquiring benches at the Crematorium. The Joint Committee has previously decided that only granite benches be placed on site. In order to provide availability to meet requests from families it is proposed 6-8 benches be purchased and located near the woodland area and Garden of Remembrance. In order to assist families with the payment for such benches it is proposed that each bench be purchased with spaces for 3 plaques. Families will be given the opportunity to lease a bench plaque for 10 or 20 year leases. The fee per plaque will be £600 for a 10 year lease or £1,080 for a 20 year lease. Renewal fees will be as per 10 or 20 year lease fees. These fee levels will include initial inscription on each new plaque. Amendments to inscription or plaques are subject to a new plaque fee.

Other Memorials

As mentioned in the background section to this report the Crematorium provides various Memorials. 4 of the Memorial offers are subscribed to but there has been no purchase of the Triptych Memorial. As such, it is proposed to advise the partner provider that the Joint Committee has decided to withdraw this offer. All other offers to remain at current prices for 2015/16 and prices reviewed for 2016/17 at budget setting stage.

Living Memorials

Consideration has also been given to making available Living Memorials such as Trees and Rose Bushes. As Members are aware the Crematorium Grounds are well maintained and include several areas such as woodland, mature lawns and Remembrance areas. The quality of the grounds must be maintained and whilst, in due course, some trees will need to be planted in the woodland area, to replace old and damaged trees, it is proposed that Members should not provide such Memorials at present. This should be reconsidered in future years when new burial areas are developed.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

The proposals relating to the Baby Memorial and Kerbstone Memorials will provide additional offerings in relation to lease periods of 10 and 20 years together with some lower fee proposals. This is available to all persons including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. There will also be an extended offer of leasing bench plaques.

Inscriptions can be in any language and the Crematorium Service and Memorials are available to the whole community.

6. Financial Implications

Section 3 of this report sets out the income generated to date since April 2009. As 2014 saw the second anniversary of initial memorial leases taken out in 1994 it is expected that annual income levels will be between £30,000 and £40,000 per annum over the next few years. The proposals set out in this report will increase the availability and affordability of Memorials to families. Reducing the cost of plaques for the Baby Memorial and Kerbstone Memorials on the Horseshoe Path will be of benefit to families and should make better use of that area.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve the following memorial offerings:

- Provide an option for 20 year leases in addition to the current 10 year lease
- Baby Memorial Plaques for babies to 12 months old at a reduced fee for new and renewal applications payable from 1st October 2015. Please see Appendix 1 for specific fee levels.
- A reduced fee for Kerbstone Memorials and Plaques be made available at the Horseshoe Path from 1st October 2015 at the fee level set out in Appendix 1.
- The fee levels for Kerbstone Memorials and Plaques at the Garden of Remembrance as set out in Appendix 1.
- The provision of Granite Bench Plaques for 10 and 20 year leases. Each Bench to have 3 Plaques per Bench.
- Continue to provide other Memorials including the Books of Remembrance, Altar and Window Vases, Miniature Book of Remembrance and Memorial Card at the fee level already set for 2015/16.
- Discontinue the provision of Triptych Memorials.
- The provision of Living Memorials be further considered when new burial areas are developed at the Crematorium.

8. Reason for Proposed Decision

To provide improved offer of Memorials at Margam Crematorium and to set the appropriate fee level.

9. Implementation of Decision

The decision is one for immediate implementation

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Table 1 and 2 fee levels

None

11. List of Background Papers

Working Files

12. Officer Contact:

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TABLE 1 - BABY AND KERBSTONE MEMORIALS

	Baby Memorial Plaques	Horseshoe Path	Garden of Remembrance
10 year lease – new (from 01.10.15)	£180	£325	£428
10 year lease – new (from 01.04.16)	£180	£325	£440
10 year lease – renewal (to 31.03.20)	£180	£180	£180
10 year lease – renewal (from 01.04.20)	£180	£292	£396
20 year lease – new (from 01.10.15)	£325	£585	£800
20 year lease – renewal (from 01.10.15)	£325	£526	£720

TABLE 2 - BENCHES

3 Plaque Benches	Price per Plaque
10 year lease	£600
20 year lease	£1,080
New and renewal fees as per above.	

The fee levels set out in Table 1 and 2 above are subject to annual review as part of budget setting proposals.