

# NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Environment and Highways Cabinet Board

3 March 2016

### Report of the Head of Streetcare

M. Roberts

#### Matter for Information

**Wards Affected:** All

#### Available Grave Spaces

#### Purpose of Report

- 1 This report identifies the situation with regard to available grave spaces in Council-owned cemeteries along with action being taken to maximise the spaces available.
- 2 This report does not deal with any implications that might occur as a result of a flu pandemic or other emergency.

#### Executive Summary

- 3 The report identifies that the Council complies with the national guidelines for making 10 years provision.

#### Background

- 4 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is responsible for the management of 9 cemeteries, namely: Cymmer, Goytre and Margam in the Port Talbot area; Carmel and Godre'r'graig in Pontardawe area; and Giant's Grave, Onllwyn, Llantwit and Ynysymaerdy in the Neath area.
- 5 Over the last 5 year's requests for new graves have fluctuated:-
  - 2010/11 - 88
  - 2011/12 - 69
  - 2012/13 - 79
  - 2013/14 - 88

- 2014/15 - 62

6 Should the number of burials per year increase then the projected timescales given below will reduce.

7 Cymmer

There are currently some 135 plots available with a further 12 plots available on removal of a superfluous pedestrian footpath. Based on an average of 10 interments in new graves per year over the last 10 years and on the completion of the aforementioned works, there is circa 14 years capacity at the site.

8 Goytre

No remaining capacity for new graves only for cremated remains or opening of existing graves (replaced by Margam in 1991).

9 Margam

There are currently some 424 plots available plus additional land for further expansion. Following policy adopted in February 2000 in respect of Margam and Llantwit cemeteries, this provision includes 14 spaces dedicated for Muslim burials with an area for a further 32 identified. At an average of two Muslim burials per year over the last 10 years there is approximately 23 years capacity available for Muslim burials. For other burials based on an average of 33 interments in new graves per year over the last 10 years there is approximately 11 years capacity without allowing for the available expansion.

10 There is a further 7.40 acres available for expansion (plus an area of woodland) which will require capital spend to bring into use but overall the area should provide for approximately 4,300 additional plots.

11 Margam – Children’s Garden of Remembrance: In 2010 a dedicated Children’s Garden of Remembrance was designed within the grounds of Margam Cemetery, this is for the internments of children from ages 0-13. There are currently 142 plots available. Based on an average of 8 internments in new graves a year since 2010, there is approximately 17 years capacity. An additional area has been identified which will allow expansion, but this will require some ground works and capital spend in due course.

- 12 Carmel  
There are currently some 158 plots available and based on an average of 1 interment in new graves per year over the last 10 years there is in excess of 100 years capacity at the site.
- 13 Godre'r'Graig  
There are currently some 120 plots available and based on an average of 1 interment in new graves per year there is in excess of 100 years capacity at the site.  
An additional area has been identified which would allow expansion and a further 500 plots, but this would require some ground works and capital spend.
- 14 Giants Grave  
Closed churchyard. No remaining capacity and no re opening of existing graves.
- 15 Onllwyn  
No remaining capacity other than for cremated remains or opening of existing graves
- 16 Llantwit  
There are currently some 376 plots available with a further 24 plots available on removal of a superfluous pedestrian footpath, and a further 31 plots available on the completion of some ground works including rock removal which will require capital spend. Within this capacity, further to policy adopted in February 2000 in respect of Margam and Llantwit cemeteries there are 6 remaining plots dedicated to Muslim burials with an area for a further 30 plots identified. Also, the former Neath Borough Council allocated dedicated spaces for Catholic burials of which there are 25 remaining. Based on 2 Muslim burials per year for the last 10 years there is 18 years capacity for Muslim burials, and based on 3 to 4 Catholic burials per year over the last 10 years there is 6 to 8 years capacity remaining for Catholic burials. For other burials then based on an average of 20 interments in new graves per year over the last 10 years, and on the completion of the aforementioned works, there is circa 19 years capacity at the site.
- 17 Within the cemetery there is an additional area of in-filled land which could accommodate 144 plots but again this would be

subject to ground conditions. This area would require significant work and as such the potential plots are not included in this report.

18 Ynysymaerdy

There are currently some 166 plots available with a further 90 plots available on removal of two superfluous pedestrian footpaths and a further 35 plots available on the completion of some ground works which would require some capital spend. Based on an average of 10 interments in new graves per year over the last 10 years, and on the completion of the aforementioned works, there is circa 29 years capacity at the site.

Summary

- 19 Port Talbot Area: There should be sufficient grave spaces in Margam cemetery up to 2028 within the existing areas laid out for grave spaces. Beyond that date there is additional land already earmarked within the site boundary for an extension which could possibly accommodate 4,300 plots but this will require capital investment in the provision of access roadways in due course as the site needs to be developed. In the longer term, Margam can also cater for burials from areas throughout the county borough when other cemeteries reach their capacity.
- 20 Afan Valley: Based on current burial levels the capacity extends beyond 2030.
- 21 Pontardawe Area: Based on provision in Carmel and Godre'rgrraig Cemeteries burial capacity extends beyond 2116.
- 22 Neath Area: Based on current burial levels the capacity extends beyond 2032, capital investment would provide further capacity.
- 23 Overall it can be seen that the Council can currently meet the national requirement of 10 years burial capacity at both a borough wide (based on Margam) and area level. However, an issue is that in some parts of the County Borough there has been a policy to make faith specific allocations of burial spaces. In due course it

will be necessary to take a decision whether to continue/discontinue such dedicated provisions in Council owned cemeteries, centred on Margam cemetery, as existing allocations are used up. Whilst this question is likely to arise in the first instance in relation to dedicated Catholic spaces, given any decision will need to be supported by a full equalities impact assessment it may be better that any issues concerning both Catholic and Muslim burials are considered together.

#### Investment Requirements

- 24 In the medium term, the Council needs to invest in the cemeteries at Llantwit and Ynysymaerdy through the Capital Programme to make available potential capacity. Early action on rock removal in particular is required to allow sufficient time for the ground to settle and consolidate before being used for burials. In addition, as Margam Cemetery has the highest demand for new internments, consideration will need to be given for capital investment for the removal of hedges, creation of access roadways and walkways in due course.

#### **Financial Impact**

- 25 There are no implications to the Council's revenue budget for the next ten years, although there will need to be some modest capital investment to develop capacity in due course. [These issues will be raised as part of developing the capital programme going forward].

#### **Workforce Impact**

- 26 None

#### **Legal Impact**

- 27 None

## **Risk Management**

- 28 Whilst the Council can readily meet the overall legal requirement for 10 years capacity with respect to grave space, provision is a sensitive matter around which there will be ongoing reputational risks.

## **Appendices**

- 29 Summary of available grave spaces

## **Officer Contact**

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## Appendix A

### AVAILABLE GRAVE SPACES JANUARY 2016

<b>Cemetery</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Average new interments per year</b>	<b>Possible years left</b>
Cymmer	135 Plus additional 12 plots after path removal	10	13 On completion of works will be 14 years.
Goytre	0	0	Full
Margam	424 Plus potential of additional 4,300 plots after expansion	35	11 Before extending
Carmel	158	1	100+
Godre'r'Graig	120 Plus potential of additional 500 plots after expansion	1	100+
Giants Grave	0	0	Full
Onllwyn	0	0	Full
Llantwit	376 Plus potential of additional 144 plots subject to Ground works.	20	On completion of identified works will be 19 years.
Ynysymaerdy	166 Plus potential of additional 125 plots subject to ground conditions and removal of path's.	10	16 On completion of all works will be 29 years.

Should the number of burials per year increase then the projected timescales will reduce.

All the potential additional grave spaces are subject to ground conditions being suitable at the time of works and expansion.