

**Committee:** MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD

**Date:** 14 July 2011

**Agenda item:**

**Wards:** Borough Wide Merton and Sutton

**Subject:** Cemetery Section B – bearer beams

**Lead officers:** Mark Robinson

**Recommendations:**

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- A. That the Board's members decide how to rectify the issue relating to replacement of the concrete headstone foundation beams on section B.
  - B. That the Board's members decide to agree to progress with the feasibility of a new the proposed new waiting room/office/toilets.
  - C. That the Board's members decide to agree to proceed with the feasibility of a new entrance layout of the cemetery.
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**1. Purpose of report and executive summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the rationale for replacing the concrete headstone foundation beams on section B, the feasibility of a new waiting room, the feasibility of a new cemetery entrance.

**2. Details**

**2.1 Replacing Concrete beams on section 'B'**

The concrete foundations beams on section 'B' have moved considerably since being installed (see appendix 1: Photographs of Section B) resulting in all of the headstones leaning very badly, which could cause a danger in the near future.

The cemeteries office is receiving considerable complaints regarding the state of the foundations from distressed members of the public and Members of Parliament (see appendix 2 of letters from the public). It is the cemetery's responsibility for the upkeep of the beams.

Memorial masons are now not willing to install headstones as they will lean excessively.

The condition of the section was brought to the attention of the Board in June 2009 when quotes ranged from £128,507 to £132,076.

To replace the beams will involve: contacting the grave owners, removing all the headstones, removing the old beams, replacing with new beams and then re-fixing the headstone. Any damage caused by the process would need to be rectified.

The Board's decision on how the issue should be rectified is requested.  
Appendix 7 shows current cost to replace the beams

### Do Nothing

As the Council is not under a statutory duty to provide a place for burials, one option is to do nothing. Failure to replace the foundation could result in a serious accident taking place and it will continue to distress the families visiting their deceased relatives.

### **3. Proposed new waiting room**

Long term a new waiting room will be required as the cemetery develops further into the land used by the stables. The current waiting room is in a poor state of repair and in previous meetings the Board had requested that a feasibility for a new waiting room to be investigated.

For the concept design see appendix 3. The design is contemporary being based on the shape of a cross which internally includes: an office, toilets, waiting area and an external canopy. Brick work and brick colours will match the existing chapel using recycled bricks from the demolished waiting room. Large areas of glass will be used to encourage natural light.

Appendix 4 shows the estimate rates for the build. When costs and timescales are further developed it may be necessary to re-base for inflation and market conditions.

Inside the waiting room memorial plaques will be made available. These plaques will be sold at an estimated price of £250.00 for a 5 year lease. See appendix 5 for photographs of similar concept used at the North East Surrey Crematorium. An estimated 900 plaques could be installed with a potential income of approximately £225,000.

A visual reference system could also be installed, giving the public access, at the touch of a screen, to the cemetery records.

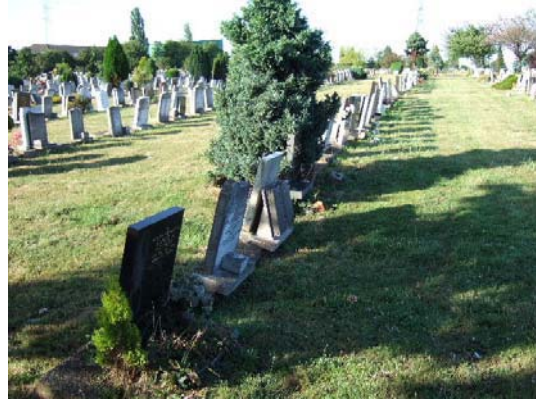
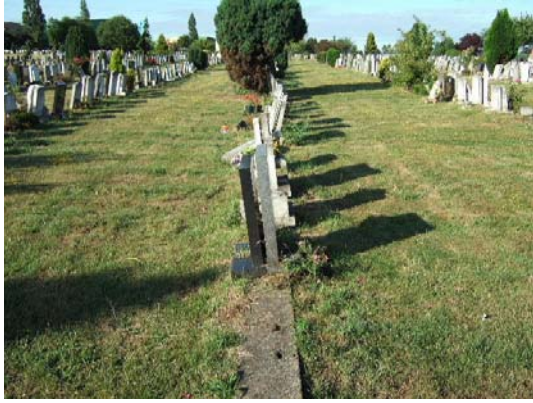
### **4 New cemetery entrance to the cemetery**

In the previous meeting the Board showed an interest in having a new entrance to the cemetery. The project is to improve the "kerb" appeal of the cemetery entrance. The car park will be removed and grassed over. The design will include: A new curved shaped road to reduce cars from speeding, footpaths either side of the road, an avenue of native trees or flowering trees, new low fencing around the area, removal of the existing height barriers, groups of low maintenance shrub planting. Appendix 6 shows a concept design with costs.

### **5. Legal and statutory implications**

The Board and the Council are not under any statutory duty to replace the foundations.

## Appendix 1: Photographs of Section B



Mrs Carole Addis attending her mothers grave

## Appendix 2: Complaint letters

**Mrs Carole Addis:**

Dear Sir,

These photos of my mother's grave were taken a few days ago. You can see that the headstone is leaning forward at quite an angle. This is due to the bearer beam subsiding. It is a very short beam and I would have thought it could be straightened quite easily. I first brought this to the attention of the Cemetery Superintendent 3 years ago and a few bits of broken stone were pushed under the front of the beam. This made hardly any difference and looked quite unsightly. Three years on and it's looking worse than ever. I would be very grateful if you could help put this right as I find it very distressing.

My name is Mrs. Carole Addis, at 44, Wharncliffe Road, Highcliffe, Dorset, BH23 5DE.

Tel: 01425 271003

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Mrs Susan Rubidge:**

**From:** David Rubidge [mailto:davidrubidge8@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** 21 September 2010 21:58

**To:** Cemeteries

**Subject:**

Hi

My parents are buried in Garth Road, Cemetery - Grave No 278 Section B. The family upkeep the grave regularly. I have noticed there is a subsidence with the concrete block that the headstone is located on, resulting in the headstone leaning backwards. This has also happened to the row in front resulting in one of the headstone coming completely dislocated from the concrete block and just laying on the grass. Obviously, I do not wish this to happen in my case. Could you tell me if you have any remedial repair work in place to reposition the concrete block to prevent this happening.

I look forward to your reply.

Kind Regards

Mrs Susan Rubidge

**Mrs Violet King:**

11<sup>th</sup> MAY

RECEIVED

13 MAY 2011

2. KINGSDOWN A.  
EAST ACTON  
LONDON  
W.3 7UA.

Dear Sir

I am writing about the poor state of my parents Head Stone, which is leaning backwards due to the concrete beam sinking in section B grave no 188.

This has been growing worse over the years, and nothing has been done to rectify the problem. Despite my requesting by phone and in writing for this to be attended to for a few years now.

I find it is disrespectful to allow this neglect to continue any longer.

Please will you reply to this letter, to inform me what action you will be able to take to put right this situation.

Mrs Violet Keny

Mrs Viking:

Received  
25.11.10

REF.

WAWW B188

2. KINGS DOWN RD  
EAST ACTON  
LONDON  
W.3 7U.A.  
23-11-2010

Dear Mr Napier.

I am writing about the very poor state of my parents grave stone, the way in which it is badly leaning over.

This has been going on for a few years now, I have spoken to the warden at the Cemetery, and twice to people at your location.

I am well aware that money is short, but I feel it must be time these Head Stone repairs were

near the top of your list.

I would appreciate a letter from you informing me what the situation is about getting this problem rectified.

If I can help by contacting anybody else to hurry things along please let me know.

Yours Mrs VIKING.

Mr John Bushell:

10. 8. 10

11 AUG 2010

Mr. John Bushell  
31 Charlock Way  
Southwater  
Horsham  
RH13 9GS.

Dear Sir

I have rang your office without any success many times. I have also left messages.

Last year I was told the head stones at Merton and Sutton Joint Cemetery, Grave No 900 Section B. would be put back vertically. Can you please tell me when it will happen.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely

J Bushell

Item	Description	QTY	Unit	£
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Prelims</b>			15,000
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Fees</b>			
	Architects Fees			0
	Structural Eng			0
	M&E Design			0
	SAP Calculations			0
	Building Control / Air test			0
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Build Costs</b>			
	Excavate Oversite, foundations & place concrete	90	m2	8,600
	Drainage		PS	2,500
	Beam & Block Floor	90	m2	4,500
	Structural Steels / Frame		PS	25,000
	External Brick / Block Cavity Masonry	100	m2	20,135
	Internal Masonry Walls	30	m2	2,150
	Timber Joist Flat roofs x 3.No	90	m2	9,500
	Aluminium copings, guttering & fascia & RWG's	100	Lm	14,600
	3 ply roof felt inc 140mm insulation with 20 year garentee	90	m2	12,800
	Windows, Screens & External Doors	17	No	25,000
	Insulation & Floor screed	90	m2	4,250
	Plasterboard to ceiling & skim	90	m2	3,250
	Plastering to internal walls	175	m2	5,250
	Doorsets	4	No	3,600
	Skirting's & Window Boards			925
	Wall tiling splashbacks	6	m2	500
	WC 3.No Cubicles, 2.No vanity, 3.No WC ducts	3	No	5,220
	Decorations			2,750
	Sanintyware - 3.No WC, 3.No whb, 1 DOC M pack			6,500
	Vinyl Floor Coverings throughout + Entrance matting			4,000
	External Works		PS	3,500
	Electrical - Mains, 20.No Lights, 15.No Power, Fire, Security, Phone			15,000
	Mechanical -5.No electric to WC's + 1.No A/C / Heat pump, Hot & Cold, 2.No water heaters, 3.No extract fans			10,000
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>204,530</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Contingency</b>			<b>20,000</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Total Exc VAT @ 20%</b>			<b>224,530</b>



## Appendix 5 – Photos showing plaques for inside of the waiting room



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