

Committee: MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD

Date: 11 February 2020

Wards: Borough Wide. Merton and Sutton

Subject: Contractor Report for June to December 2019

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1. That Members review the information and note the contents of the report.
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1. Purpose of the Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report to the Board reviews the activity from June 2019 to December 2019 and outlines work activity and service performance for this period.

1.2 This report covers the following areas.

- Key performance activity
- Complaints & compliments
- Income

2. Details

2.1 Key Performance Activity from June 2019 to December 2019

2.1.1 Grounds Maintenance

Scheduled works continued through summer months with a focus on key tasks such as grass cutting, burials, topping-up graves, hedge cutting and maintaining the planting and upkeep service.

2.1.2 Health & Safety Audit of Headstones

Signage was installed throughout the cemetery in May 2019 informing visitors that a health and safety audit of headstones was about to commence within the cemetery and outlining that those headstones identified as being in a potentially dangerous condition would be clearly marked.

The audit commenced in August 2019. Each headstone was inspected and data was recorded as per the Ministry of Justice Guidance. Headstone found to be unsafe are required to be made safe.

The project began on Section B followed by Sections T, FCR, M, MU, U and V in order. The table below shows the sections, religion, the total number of graves per section and the number of headstones made safe within each section to date.

Section (in order of audit process)	Section Description	Total number of graves	Number of headstones made safe
B	Church of England	1084	25
T	Roman Catholic	406	2
FCR	Cremated Remains	1134	20
M	Muslim	521	115
MU	Muslim	424	65
U	Muslim	407	4
V	Ahmadiyya Muslim	569	9

The process evolved throughout the audit period, for example, installing more signage throughout the cemetery when it became evident that some visitors remained unaware of the inspection programme.

The relatively high number of audit failures on Section M is due to a combination of the poor condition of the bearer beams and some headstones not having been installed as per the Cemetery Regulations. The latter is the main reason why the headstones in the other sections tested failed the audit.

Memorials that fail the audit are photographed and the grave owner is written to promptly informing them that their memorial has, unfortunately, failed the audit and temporarily been made safe. The relevant letter recommends that the family should contact their original stonemason to have the memorial installed as per the Cemetery Regulations.

At the present time the audit has been temporarily suspended whilst some matters of procedure are clarified with the Merton client team. The programme will recommence just as soon as these are confirmed.

Section (in order of audit process)	Section Description/ Religion	Total numbers graves inspected	Number of headstones made safe
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2.1.3 Burial numbers

See Appendix 1 for burial numbers at MSJC for the period 1st June 2019 to 31st December 2019.

The data reveals that the numbers of burials during this period are somewhat lower than for the same period during recent years.

2.1.4 Staff

Grave diggers in the SLWP contract are now more mobile to enable cover across the joint Merton and Sutton cemetery service.

2.2 Complaints and Compliments

2.2.1 A summary of the complaints and compliments received during the June to December 2019 period is summarized below.

Number	Nature of Enquiry/Complaint
Average of 4 calls per day between August & December 2019	Headstone safety audit (by telephone).
3*	Headstone safety audit (written) *One formal complaint is now at Stage 2 of Merton's Complaints Procedure.

Number	Nature of Compliment
	Various informal compliments have been received principally in relation to the advice & support offered by the cemetery office & cemetery staff.

2.3 Income

2.3.1 See Appendix 2 which outlines the total income from the range of cemeteries service for the period 1st June to 31st December 2019.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5. Timetable

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

6. Financial, resource and property implications

6.1 As contained in the body of the report.

7. Legal and statutory implications

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

9. Risk management and health and safety implications

9.1 Outlined within the client side report.

10. Appendices

1. Burial numbers for the period, 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019.

2. Merton & Sutton Joint Cemetery Income, 1st June 2019 to 31st December 2019.

Appendix 1

Interments Numbers at MSJC

Details of interment statistics are provided below.

DETAILS

1.1 Burial numbers at MSJC for the period 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019, including comparative data for the same period in recent years are provided in the table below.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
January	25	21	23	22	25
February	13	26	16	25	21
March	13	26	22	20	22
April	15	23	14	18	25
May	28	21	27	21	20
June	18	17	23	26	20
July	13	15	19	12	35
August	19	25	18	15	23
September	17	21	24	15	7
October	19	22	18	26	27
November	13	21	18	19	19
December	12	18	14	24	19
TOTAL	205	256	236	243	263

Appendix 2

Merton & Sutton Joint Cemetery Income, 1st June 2019 to 31st December 2019

MERTON & SUTTON	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Total
Purchase & Interments	61,690.00	40,995.00	40,090.50	42,865.00	54,415.60	46,827.00	38,363.00	£325,246.10
Memorials permits	2,992.00	2,319.00	4,716.00	1,487.00	5,772.00	3,480.00	2,198.00	£22,964.00
Transfer of ownership	400.00	1,300.00	909.00	309.00	515.00	409.00	309.00	£4,151.00
Planting and Upkeep	112.50	0.00	62.50	62.50	62.50	62.50	0.00	£362.50
TOTAL:	£65,194.50	£44,614.00	£45,778.00	£44,723.50	£60,765.10	£50,778.50	£40,870.00	£352,723.60