

Committee: MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD

Date: 13 June 2023

Agenda Item:

Wards; Borough Wide Merton and Sutton Subject: Contractor Report

Lead officer: Dan Jones, Executive Director Environment, Civic Pride and Climate

Contact officer: Mark Robinson, MSJC Registrar/Cemeteries Manager (idverde)

Recommendations

1. That Members review the information and note the content 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 January 2023 to May 2023 and details the work activity for this period. It is intended that a report is presented to each meeting of the Board covering key areas of activity.

1.2 The report will cover the following areas.

- Key performance activity
- Complaints and compliments
- Income

2. Details

2.1. Grounds Maintenance

Whilst burials and related tasks remained a priority during the period, a focus was maintained on uplifting the site aesthetics. Later in the period grass cutting became the main drive. Grass growth rates this year have been excessive but more machinery has been brought into the site to combat this and support from other sites deployed. It is anticipated that with the current arid conditions routine grass cutting protocols will be pack in place in the near future.

The last report detailed the following proposed initiatives –

- **The redevelopment of the entrance** – it is proposed that all metal work be repaired and repainted. All damaged brick work and bollards are to be repaired. The two lawn areas in front of the gates are to be renovated and regularly fertilised to allow the lawns to be striped in the spring and summer moths cleansing protocols. Contractors have been sourced and we are waiting a start date.
- **The redevelopment of the perimeter to the left of the main gates** – it is proposed that the initial 100 metres of trees and shrubs be removed, the railings repainted and a uniform yew hedge planted. This in tandem with the aforementioned works to the entrance will give the site a formal and traditional appearance. Contractors have been sourced and we are waiting a start date
- **Tree works** – a full site survey has been completed and all required remedial tree works scheduled. This will both improve the overall aesthetics of the site and safeguard against future damage. Works has now been scheduled to start in August 2023
- **Hard surfaces** – a close working relationship now exists between idverde and LBM in the progression of a programme of improvement. This will improve the appearance of the site and benefit the users of the site.
- **Waste bins** – these have now been installed. These are emptied each Thursday. The old bins are in the process of being removed.

There has been significant progression with these initiatives with the following work orders having been issued –

1. **MSJC Front Lawn:** Start now or wait Autumn / Winter 2023 due to irrigation requirements
2. **MSJC Tree Works:** Scheduled to start 1st week of august 2023 due to bird nesting season
3. **MSJC Yew Hedge:** This is planned for Autumn 2023
4. **MSJC Railings:** Autumn / Winter 2023 in line with grubbing out of the old cemetery perimeter

In addition 10 new 1100 litre litter bins have been installed on site and an emptying protocol agreed with Veolia.

Approval is to be sought to renovate the railings in front of the section of the perimeter to be planted with a new hedge. **The current project only relates to the front entrance railings and gates.** An indicative cost of circa £80K is envisaged

Approval is also to be sought this coming period to replace the broken piano in the chapel and replace it with a new electric piano. An indicative cost of circa £2K is envisaged

Customer care remains a key focus for families and funeral directors within the team at the cemetery and the cemetery office. This has proven successful with an increase in compliments received and the strengthened interface with the Muslim communities in both the borough and neighbouring boroughs. Burial schedules have been enhanced to offer greater flexibility in this regard.

The continued investment and support to increase the output and flexibility of the site team again demonstrates idverde's commitment to the MSJC.

2.2 Health and Safety Audit of Headstone Testing

The testing procedure has been agreed with LBM officers continues. Regular meetings with client officers are scheduled to ensure the management of expectation and the address of any ongoing issues

Section M: This section has now been completed. No further issues regarding this area have been raised.

Section MU: This section has now been completed. No further issues regarding this area have been raised.

Section B: This section has now been completed. No further issues regarding this area have been raised.

Section FCR: This section has now been completed. No further issues regarding this area have been raised.

In addition to this testing full audits of keys sections were undertaken to ensure the correlation between grave location and records kept. Plot owners were advised of this process.

2.3 Cemetery Boundary Improvements

Please refer to client side report.

3. Burial numbers

3.1 See appendix 1 for Burial numbers.

4. Complaints and Compliments

1.1 Complaints of detailed

Number	Reason
1	Over flowing bins
2	Long grass in May

4.2 Summary of Compliment

Number	Reason
1	Empathetic and supportive staff
2	Understanding
3	Family of N29 very thankful for the bollards and restoration of their family memorial
4	Valued assistance
5	Support
6	Speed of response
7	Helpful staff
8	Flexibility
9	Empathetic and supportive staff
10	Support
11	Clarification regarding reinstatements
12	Empathetic and supportive staff

5 Income

5.1 See Appendix 2: income figures January 2023 to May 2023

3. Consultation undertaken or proposed

3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4. Timetable

4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5. Financial, resource and property implications

5.1 As contained in the body of the report.

6. Legal and statutory implications

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8. Risk management and health and safety implications

8.1 Considered within the Client Side Report.

9. Appendices

1. Burial numbers for January 2018 to May 2023
2. Income for December to May 2023 inclusive

Appendix 1

MSJCB Monthly Interments from 2018-2023

Month	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
January	19	25	31	20	25	22
February	17	22	25	17	14	27
March	26	27	29	25	13	25
April	17	20	30	47	13	23
May	22	31	20	31	27	21
June		20	24	17	18	17
July		19	14	26	13	15
August		27	21	24	19	25
September		25	27	21	17	21
October		28	25	21	19	22
November		22	22	11	12	21
December		14	27	20	13	17
TOTAL	101	280	295	280	203	256

Appendix 2

Merton & Sutton Joint Cemetery Income January to May 2023 inclusive

In providing this data, it is necessary to caveat the fact the logged amounts have in some cases not been reconciled against the bank and as such may change once reconciliation has been completed

MERTON & SUTTON	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Income to date:
Purchase & Interments	£89,086	£56,973	£88,327	£57,415	£79,455	£371,256
Memorials permits	£1,997	£1,450	£3,994	£3,669	£4,446	£15,556
Transfer of ownership	£748	£400	£1,705	£839	£375	£4,067
Planting and Upkeep	£0	£225	£0	£16,868	£6,469	£23,562
TOTAL:	£91,831	£59,048	£94,026	£78,791	£90,745	£414,441

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