

APPENDIX A			
Recommendations from the 2008 Peter Mitchell Associates Review	Actions and Changes 2010-Present	Future/Potential Development	Comments
Burial Space Provision			
<p>1 Investigate the potential to use space remaining above old interments in un-purchased graves. This may be for coffin burials or the burial of cremated remains in Family Gardens.</p>	<p>The purchase of known empty space above 'corporate' grave plots will be offered to customers firstly as an option for those seeking burial within the cemetery but outside of the main remaining unused section and at a later time as the only or one of the few remaining options for burial within Thorpe Rd Cemetery. This will have to be offered at a lower price than the full rights currently offered</p>	<p>An investigation/exploration of the older parts of the cemetery is proposed to identify any other empty space suitable for grave plots.</p>	<p>Subject to members resolving this reports' main recommendation the proposed option to use space above old corporate grave plots will be introduced and offered to customers from 1/4/2014. The proposal to investigate the older parts of the cemetery will be started in 2014 and will be carried out as an on-going intermittent basis.</p>
<p>2 Investigates the potential to extinguish rights of burial in graves purchased in reserve 75years or more ago, but never used for burial. The Council could then use these graves for burial.</p>		<p>Undertake a programme to establish contact with the owner of the rights to the plot, failure to identify an owner and the subsequent understanding that no person or persons owning the rights is living or within reason not expecting to use the right, will be made available for purchase .</p>	<p>All graves purchased over 75 years ago were sold with an in 'perpetuity' deed of grant. If living relatives seek use of the plot, they will be permitted to use it and will be issued with a 100 year deed of grant. A programme to establish if any persons remain with rights to use a grave plot with the right issued over 75 years ago will be commenced during 2014</p>
<p>3 Ceases granting exclusive rights of burial in advance of need, i.e. cease selling graves in reserve.</p>			<p>The level of pre-purchase agreements for vacant plot sites is low and removing the policy that permits this is highly likely to be seen as inequitable, be contentious</p>

			and be of minimal benefit in regards to extending the working life of the current site
4 Uses paths in the older part of the cemetery in a sensitive manner to provide space for new graves, if availability of new graves otherwise expires before a cemetery extension can be developed.	In line with this recommendation two existing underused main paths have been removed which has created a small amount of additional burial space .One of these areas has settled sufficiently and is now in use	There remain 2 or 3 more paths where removal will be carried out in due course to provide additional burial space. This work is likely to be complete at that point as the remaining path network needs to be retained	A basic network of site access paths is an essential and practical requirement to meet DDA and equalities issues as well as a basic Health and Safety requirements for those working in as well as visiting the site
5 Maintains awareness of the issues relating to the reuse of graves, but does not rely upon this as a means to solve the shortage of space in Thorpe Road Cemetery.	There has been discussion and consideration given to reusing graves however deeds were issued 'in perpetuity' up to 1974 and from that date issued with a 100 year burial right .	The reuse of graves remains contentious and under discussion, the moral and in some cases legal issues are currently considered significant enough to have held back any such move by the funeral industry as a whole	The current situation is little changed, awareness to the possibility of reusing graves after a set period 75 to 100 years is likely to be possible at some time in the future but at this time there are all but a very few examples of this being done and when it has occurred it is usually with graves hundreds of years old and is usually accompanied with significant publicity and media interest
Cemetery Administration			
6 Considers the options available to computerize its cemetery records to improve efficiency, security and public access.	This has been carried out, it has identified a number of errors within the electronic records which are being amended as they are identified on an on-going basis	Further electronic data is being built up to increase the accuracy of the records as well as increase the number of uses that accurate electronic data can offer	
7 Introduces a formal system to recognize that memorials are erected on graves pursuant to a right granted by the Council.	A dated photo log database of all the grave plots showing erected memorials is currently being built up. This will be used to ensure all		

	permissions have been applied for, paid for, and granted		
8 Grants memorial rights are granted subject to specific terms and conditions, such as a requirement for periodic testing to provide evidence of continued stability of the memorial.			The on-going requirement to be minded of headstone safety issues, periodic visual and more detailed inspections is an integral part of the service, with the cemetery to a great extent already used up many hundreds of memorials erected and in place with a corporate responsibility to ensure the safety of those memorials. Introducing a customer requirement as part of granting the right to have a memorial with a condition attached that they need to ensure period testing may be more onerous in terms of administration than beneficial.
9 Instructs the Cemetery Superintendent, rather than the officiating minister, to sign Part C of the Registrar's Certificate for Disposal once the burial has been completed.	A council representative discreetly attends all burials and scatterings and now signs the required documentation in place of the officiating minister.		
Cemetery Operations			
10 The ground conditions at Thorpe Road Cemetery are not ideal for grave excavation. In addition to a high groundwater level, the ground itself is very variable. In spite of these ground conditions, the personnel responsible for excavating graves do an excellent job. They use the appropriate equipment with care and present	This perception of efficient grave digging and use of plant was challenged by a new management regime who took over the service in 2010. It was soon determined that the way the space had been used or not used was at least in part due to the work being done mechanically Following a tender		

<p>graves well for each funeral.</p>	<p>exercise to identify a competitive grave digging service a traditional hand gravedigger was engaged. They came extremely well recommended as they provide the grave digging services to numerous local and Parish councils. Together we will be reassessing the whole site to determine usable empty spaces , to understand why spaces marked as 'no grave' on the records have been given that designation, it does seem from initial investigation, that some plots were not suitable for mechanical grave digging for a range of reasons, but are suitable for hand digging. This investigation is ongoing and will be given greater priority and impetus as the need to identify remaining spaces increases.</p>		
<p>11 Thorpe Road Cemetery is generally maintained to a high standard due to weekly grass cutting, with collection of arisings, combined with strimming. The use of strimmers is labour intensive compared to the annual application of herbicides; however, the result is value for money.</p>	<p>The Cemetery is maintained in much the same way as described in 2008, for a number of reasons, environmental, bio diversity, quality of appearance herbicide use is kept to the absolute minimum and only in extenuating circumstances</p>		
<p>12 These standards are very evident to cemetery visitors. Thorpe Road Cemetery is a beacon of excellence and the Council should continue to support the staff responsible and ensure the long term maintenance of these standards.</p>	<p>The high standards set for the Thorpe Road Cemetery are maintained by applying a high level of resource input, they are being maintained at this level as the importance of the facility remains evident with its general high profile as a Town facility together with</p>		

	large numbers of visitors and general footfall		
13 I recommend that Melton Borough Council reviews its arrangements for cemetery service delivery during periods of absence by the Cemetery Superintendent.	The Cemetery Superintendant post was deleted from the Council's establishment in March 2012. Alternate ways of managing the service were implemented at that time with a positive outcome i.e. the well received cemetery service remained well received.		
Cemetery Service Policies			
14 In contrast with many dilapidated cemetery chapels, there are many that are well maintained and in use for funeral services and Thorpe Road Cemetery chapel is one of these. The fabric of the chapel is well maintained and it hosts a significant proportion of funerals prior to burial in the cemetery.	Since 2008 the chapel has been kept in good condition with regular maintenance and upkeep as required. It is still available for use upon request with that option frequently taken up by funeral parties usually immediately prior to a burial		
15 I recommend that Melton Borough Council reviews the heating of the cemetery chapel and considers the installation of halogen heaters.	The Chapel is currently heated with free standing electric convection heaters. This appears to be sufficient for most chapel users.		More efficient fixed heating of various kinds may increase the effectiveness of the heating but with the short amount of time the heating is on together with the low frequency of chapel use its installation would be of limited benefit to the service.
Choice of Graves			
16 Melton Borough Council offers a choice of graves that is not available at all cemeteries. For example, many local authority cemeteries do not offer	The wide range of choices remain on offer. Much of the site has graves adorned with memorabilia and personal trinkets		

<p>graves upon which full kerbed memorials may be placed. Whilst Lawn graves facilitate care and maintenance for both the bereaved and the Council, it is commendable that there is a wider choice available.</p>	<p>Despite this greatly increasing the care needed for maintenance the provision of choices for customers is seen as important part of the cemeteries success and popularity</p>		
<p>17 There is one burial option not currently provided at Thorpe Road Cemetery, namely mausoleum. Mausoleum are above ground chambers for coffin burial that are common in Mediterranean Europe. They were fashionable in the UK in Victorian times and are currently enjoying a revival in response to the needs of ethnic minorities.</p>	<p>There was a brief investigation in 2010 into the possibility of creating a Mausoleum within the cemetery , however it was not certain how much demand there would be for such a facility and therefore how economically viable/beneficial it might be, accordingly this was not progressed and at this time any construction would most likely be consuming limited traditional burial space</p>		
<p>Ground Conditions</p>			
<p>18 There was an appendix attached to the Peter Mitchell review which considered using a small plot of land just inside Melton Country Park close to the cemetery as a possible extension site, which included geological and hydrological investigations, and this option was to be further considered.</p>	<p>The site that was investigated is within the Country Park area that has been proposed and is due shortly to receive the QEII Fields in Trust status .Accordingly this area is no longer a suitable site.</p>		
<p>19 There is clearly a high water table in the cemetery and the Cemetery Superintendent has Installed successive drains to enable burials to take place. So far, a number of these drains have been installed</p>	<p>Two further 'French' Drains have been installed since 2008 and the burials have taken place in the areas served by them. The hand grave digger has since challenged the supposition that further drains were needed to make the areas</p>		

	mentioned useable and as a result those area identified within the 2008 report are now being used successfully without any further drains being required		
20 I recommend that the current system of trench drainage is continued as required into the remaining Lawn sections of the Cemetery.		Further concrete rafts will be installed across the remaining empty lawn areas on the surface of the lawn as these divide up the remaining empty space in a an optimum way and can accommodate a headstone monument if the customer elects to have one installed	The report incorrectly describes the drains as Trench drains, they are in fact French drains
Fees and Charges			
21 Reviews its policy regarding cemetery fees with a view to progressively raising them to levels comparable with neighbouring authorities over the next 3 years.	Since the report was published charges have been increased and are roughly in step with neighbouring authorities they currently remain competitive without being overly cheap and are in general kept that way with annual adjustments that match inflation		
22 Considers offering a choice of period of exclusive rights of burial, with an appropriate fee structure.	This is currently under discussion as offering a choice of burial right lengths may offer a degree of increased sustainability as unused spaces with shorter burial right timescales are more likely to come back into the Councils' control for resale and use.		
23 Reviews its policy regarding fees for Sanctum Vaults with a view to progressively raising them to levels	This choice of burial has varied in its popularity since 2008, at this time charges are set so as not to		

comparable with other authorities over the next 3 years.	discourage vault usage whilst with the limited number available its set at a level that offers it as a realistic alternative for those wanting something different from the more standard below ground options		
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