

Project & Amenities Committee 29th March 2022

Cemetery Mapping Project Update

Summary

This is the last update before the project is concluded and the final report is submitted and progress is good, 72% complete and on track for all data to be entered by 31st March. Although it looks like we will need the anticipated extra 3 months to complete the work and that the best use of this time might be not as a block but over 4 months or so.

During the project, it has become clear that using the Epitaph system for managing the cemetery in future will ensure that we are collecting and have all of the necessary data in one place to comply with the law and regulations governing the management of the cemetery. E periodic inspections and records of the safety of headstones. As well as a definitive map and a database of every grave, along with a handover to other staff on its use.

Report

Allocating the resources to buy data inputting from Edge has worked effectively and As of 14th March, we are at this stage:

Total records: 5,155 Complete: 3,716 72 % complete

The Edge information shows that there was only 14% of the oldest Burial Book to input. We are now in the short period where Edge is checking and uploading ALL of the records, which will be accessible in 1 week. For sample checking by Lynn, the Project Worker.

On this basis, it was agreed to conduct a general series of spot checks after 31st March. However, records covering the last 30 years would be thoroughly checked using our local knowledge. Lynn has also inputted all records from 2007 to the present day (other than the last 2 months, which have been left for other staff. as training material). Having already checked 1990 & 1991

At the last update to the Council, we estimated a total project time of 12-18 months. The time estimate for the work left to do now, is the 3 months. There is also an external time factor re the Pear Mapping Company, who will take around 8 weeks to make corrections to their first draft and produce draft 2. On this basis, it may be prudent to agree that the remaining 3 months of work be split into 2-time sections e.g., 8 weeks, gap, 4 weeks – in essence, the time adapts to the external factors. It is not yet clear if we will need a third iteration of the Map.

Edge

- The Edge inputting team had fallen behind their schedule and, having chased them, they have now put more staff onto our job and state that they are confident that they are still on track to complete the job by 31st March.
- I had diarised the original time frame and on checking which records had been input onto Epitaph and also, their accuracy – had liaised with Edge with my concerns re accuracy as well as significant shortfall in expected amounts of input records.

- As well as Edge adding additional staff to the job, they have confirmed that they will be checking the inputting, during the last week of March and from 31st March, the records we can see on Epitaph will have been checked.
- I was anticipating having to check all records, but on that basis, agreed with the Parish Manager that a random spot check may suffice. This will reduce the time required for The Project significantly, keeping us within the extra 3 months.

Whilst Edge have been inputting the human records, I have been plotting and inputting the non-human plot usages (paths, water butt, trees, pre-purchased plots, hard ground etc) and ensuring that those records are available and searchable.

For the last month or 2, I have been planning a training session with staff who manage the cemetery on a day-to-day basis about various aspects of the cemetery and existing records. This is creating more records/training material e.g., adding in information re non-usable plots e.g., 'boggy ground'. Tina's knowledge of the cemetery is very useful. This means that we will also be able to record non-usable plots. The age of tree roots will also mean that previously non-usable plots may now be available.

During the next 2 months, I will be completing user friendly, useful reference documents that will inform and assist the staff maintaining/responsible for The Cemetery. I will be highlighting the areas where the Council could be fined for non-compliance.

I will be completing an 'end of project report' that will outline the project and any considerations for further layering re the use of computer records and Epitaph's capabilities. Also, in terms of future considerations re layout and signage.

Once draft 2 of the Map is returned, I will check that. If it needs further amending it will be returned to Pear for that. Pear states that the average amount of drafts, for projects such as these, is 3. I would recommend, that after the reports etc (mentioned above) are complete, the time remaining on the project is used flexibly around the completion and verification re accuracy, of the Pear Map. Once the Pear Map is agreed, the map will be linked to the records.

As the Burial and Grave books only record human uses of plots, I have input all non-human uses so that there is an accurate record of the space available. I have entered those records in a format that allows searches to be made (and reports created) for specific uses e.g., planting/do not use etc. In addition, I have added all graves that are purchased, but yet unused. I have checked those plots to ensure there are no special issues.

At the current time, I am liaising with staff and crosschecking that my findings reflect their records. This period of liaising is creating a bridge between the Cemetery Project and the maintenance of the Cemetery and its records, with a view to seamlessly handing over the knowledge gleaned from The Project to those who will be utilising it.

Lynn Tredell
Cemetery Mapping Project Worker.