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**Briefing Note for councillors: An update on the Burial Service and maintenance of the cemeteries**

**Issued to: Burial Committee 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

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**Purpose of Report**

To provide an operational update on the burial service and grounds maintenance

**Burial Service and COVID-19 –**

We have received further guidance from the Institute of Cemetery & Cremation Management. The Government announced that their imposed legal limit of 30 attendees at a funeral ended on 17th May, and is replaced by a maximum number that the venue can support both inside and outside. Currently, social distancing measures will remain in place, however it is the authority's requirement to enable social distancing as opposed to ensuring social distancing. The Risk Assessment has been updated to reflect this change. People are allowed to make informed, personal decisions on close contact, such as hugging, with their friends and family.

**Staff changes –**

The staffing structure within the cemeteries has been reviewed and operational changes made. The changes took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> April and will be reviewed in July. The Caretakers from Highbridge and Burnham Cemetery are now employed as Town Rangers. The Caretaker at Brent Road Cemetery now oversees the three cemeteries and supervises the two grounds maintenance staff, which is working very well. During times of staff absences or/and increased number of burials, the Town Rangers will provide support to ensure help is available when deemed necessary by the Caretaker and authorised by myself.

**Brent Road Cemetery**

There has been a noticeable drop on either side of the bridge which has created a step and mobility scooter and wheelchair users are unable to get across the bridge unaided, it is also a trip hazard. A contractor has been instructed to construct a slope on either side in concrete and will also repair the tarmac. *See attached photos.*



## Trees at Burnham Cemetery

Councillors will be visiting Burnham Cemetery prior to the meeting so I have included the photos of the area of the fallen trees that were noted at the last meeting to help members see the work that has been completed to make the area safe and the general repair work to a kerbset memorial and how much the area has already settled.

**New trees** - This is item 6 on the agenda.

The Committee had asked me to look into providing suitable trees to be planted in the cemeteries. The preference from the committee was native trees and being good pollinators.

Information source [www.urbanbees.co.uk](http://www.urbanbees.co.uk) this also links to the RHS website.

*Trees are an incredibly important source of food for bees and other pollinators. In part due to their large size which contains thousands of flower heads giving the pollinators their important source of food in one place.*

*Pollinators, especially bees, require forage from early spring through to late autumn, and native trees, including hazel, alder and pussy willow can provide early sources of pollen when few plants are in flower.*

*The advantage of planting native wild flowering trees is that the larvae of many native butterflies and moths rely on tree foliage. However, there are some late flowering non-native trees, such as Chinese privet, the bee-bee tree and loquat, which can provide a valuable source of autumn nectar. So it is important that a proportion of non-natives as well as natives, are included in a selection of pollinator-friendly trees.*

Other good pollinator trees include:

Fruit Trees – apple and Cherry

Wild Black Cherry

Tulip Trees

Lindens

*The Rowan – is a small tree so good for gardens. It is slender tree, with creamy-white, spring flowers and clusters of bright red, autumn berries - a favourite food of birds, such as visiting Waxwings, Redwings and other thrushes.*

Report author: Lorna Williams - Deputy Town Clerk



**Burnham-on-Sea  
& Highbridge**  
TOWN COUNCIL

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Report Date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021

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