

West Rainton Parish Council – 19 May 2016

Agenda item 6: Cemetery update

Report by: G Keedy, Project Officer

At its' meeting held on 21 January 2016, Parish Council resolved to proceed with proposals put forward by Cemetery Development Services (CDS) to address a range of issues affecting West Rainton Cemetery.

Since then, site visits have taken place - with a topographical survey carried out on 24 February by a north east engaged specialist surveying company to identify site contours and features; and a "ground truthing" exercise on 15/16 March by CDS to gain a true and accurate representation of the current site.

Project Officer has been on site on both visits for liaison purposes.

Combined, these aspects have led to the initial production of a comprehensive site plan showing numbered burial plots gleaned and cross referenced from Parish Council records.

This has identified some anomalies in the historic numbering of burial plots which requires further investigation by Project Officer. The outcome will determine if complete or partial renumbering is required for the purposes of accuracy and consistency.

The next stage of work involves identification of the availability of any additional burial space. In the absence of any Parish Council records showing the existence of utilities and drainage on site, formal searches are now required to provide a clear position.

Enquiries by Project Officer with Durham County Council and the Land Registry on this aspect have not proved fruitful. (An incidental outcome of these enquiries has been the establishment that the cemetery site is not registered land – this is not problematical, although at some stage Parish Council may wish to register the land).

CDS have advised that it will be essential to carry out formal searches with the utility companies. A letter from CDS is shown as an appendix to this report outlining reasons for so doing and identifying costs.

Once utility information is obtained CDS can draw up a separate plan which will include any additional burial plots available. Subject to agreement from Parish Council, proposals for revamped cemetery design can then be developed. An estimated timescale for completion of these aspects is now end June / early July.

Parish Council is asked to:

Note the content of this update report;

and

Consider approval of additional costs to identify the existence of utilities and drainage within the cemetery site.

GK 19 May 2016