

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLLR M RAJA – BROOKWOOD CEMETERY BURIAL CHARGES

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Raja

“The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a massive increase in deaths across the country, with 20% more deaths registered from March 2020 to the end of the year than would be expected under pre-pandemic conditions.

Since Woking Borough Council has taken over Brookwood cemetery, the effective costs for burials have gone up, putting further strain on families who’ve lost loved ones in these difficult times. We are not offering local residents discounts on burial charges, a scheme that is common in many local authorities.

Due to the high death toll from COVID and the consideration that many families have lost multiple family members, this council will

- i) Reconsider the burial charges it has introduced to the cemetery
- ii) Introduce a system offering a discount to local taxpayers, as is common among many parishes.”

Officer Comment

“The fees and charges for interment at Brookwood Cemetery have not been increased for 6 years following the purchase of the site by Woking Borough Council. Members will be aware that over that period the Council has invested significant capital and revenue funds to restore the Cemetery and make it a cemetery of choice for local residents.

The fees and charges are determined by Brookwood Park Limited and its Board and not the Council. Later this year it is proposed that the all burial charges are reviewed by the Cemetery Board and this process will include an understanding of costs charged at other cemeteries to ensure that the pricing structure remains appropriate. Fees and charges must be seen and understood in the context of the whole operation at the Cemetery with an ongoing need to invest in the site and progress the excellent work completed to date.

In response to the discount available to local tax payers, the Cemetery’s fees and charges vary depending on the chosen location, but there are plots identified on the Cemetery’s price list for Woking residents (within a 15 mile radius) at a lower rate. Within the South Cemetery, plot 42 is identified and within the North Cemetery plot 130 is identified for residents, but families do have a choice, and can select a location elsewhere on site at the cost as indicated within the approved fees and charges.

The examples shown below show the published fees, still current today for 50 years Exclusive Right of Burial which have remained the same for nearly 6 years.

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Plot purchase & Interment fee incl.	Costs Pre- 2015	Costs 31 Jan 2015 to present day (held for the last 6 years)	% of increase/decrease from rates prior to 2015
New High Ground	£3300.00	£4000.00	21.2% increase
Resident Infant grave	£1375.00	Free of charge	100% decrease
Plot 119	£4100.00	£4000.00	2.4% decrease
M1/M3 Terraces	£3750.00	£3850.00	2.6% increase
Woking Resident Ground Plot 42 & 130	£2550.00	£2500.00	1.96% decrease

Interment fee only	£950.00	£1200.00	26.3% increase
Interment fee for Burial of Cremated remains	£550.00	£575.00	4.5% increase

Background Papers: None.

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