

**Committee: MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD**

**Date: 21 February 2023**

**Agenda Item:**

Wards; Borough Wide Merton and Sutton Subject: Contractor Report

Lead officer: John Bosley, Assistant Director of Public Space

Contact officer: Mark Robinson, MSJC Registrar (idverde) Cemeteries Manager

Recommendations

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1. That Members review the information and note the content of the report.
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## **1. Purpose of the Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report to the Board reviews the activity from January 2022 to May 2022 and details the work activity for this period. It is intended that a report is presented to each meeting of the Board covering key areas of activity.
- 1.2 The report will cover the following areas.
  - Key performance activity
  - Complaints and compliments
  - Income

## **2. Details**

### **2.1. Grounds Maintenance**

Whilst burials and related tasks took sovereignty, scheduled works continued with a later focus on autumn and winter works.

The current drive to increase the aesthetic appearance of the site continues with current discussions regarding –

- **The redevelopment of the entrance** – it is proposed that all metal work be repaired and repainted. All damaged brick work and bollards are to be repaired. The two lawn areas in front of the gates are to be renovated and regularly fertilised to allow the lawns to be striped in the spring and summer moths cleansing protocols.

- **The redevelopment of the perimeter to the left of the main gates** – it is proposed that the initial 100 metres of trees and shrubs be removed, the railings repainted and a uniform yew hedge planted. This in tandem with the aforementioned works to the entrance will give the site a formal and traditional appearance.
- **Renovation of welfare facilities** – it is proposed these be fully redeveloped to both update the facilities and to assist in the maintenance and cleansing of these. Quotations for 3 standards of renovation have been sought.
- **Tree works** – a full site survey has been completed and all required remedial tree works scheduled. This will both improve the overall aesthetics of the site and safeguard against future damage
- **Hard surfaces** – a close working relationship now exists between idverde and LBM in the progression of a programme of improvement. This will improve the appearance of the site and benefit the users of the site.
- **Waste bins** – as discussed at previous meetings the current bins are not fit for purpose. It is proposed that these be replaced by 1100 bins painted black. These will be visually more attractive than the current bins and far more functional. The ingress of litter will be massively reduced by the installation of these bins

In addition to these works a robust ongoing grounds maintenance programme was put in place in February 2022. This has aided the uplift in the appearance of the site and increased flexibility in resource deployment. The site is supported by other teams if required to ensure this programme is followed

Customer care remains a key focus for families and funeral directors within the team at the cemetery and the cemetery office. This has proven successful with an increase in compliments received and the strengthened interface with the Muslim and Afro Caribbean communities in both the borough and neighbouring boroughs. Burial schedules have been enhanced to offer greater flexibility in this regard.

The continued investment and support to increase the output and flexibility of the site team again demonstrates idverde's commitment to the MSJC.

## **2.2 COVID 19 – Modification to working practices**

Following government guidance, there are no restrictions to the number of mourners in the chapel or at grave side.

Hand sanitiser stations are in place at the entrance of the chapel. A Bluetooth speak is provided to the family to play music. Staff are still advised to remain diligent and social distance where possible.

## **2.3 Health and Safety Audit of Headstone Testing**

The testing procedure has been agreed with LBM officers and has now resumed. Regular meetings with client officers are scheduled to ensure the management of expectation and the address of any ongoing issues

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Please refer to client side report.

## **2.4 Cemetery Boundary Improvements**

Please refer to client side report.

## **3. Burial numbers**

3.1 See appendix 1 for Burial numbers.

## **4. Complaints and Compliments**

4.1 Complaints of detailed

Number	Reason
1	Concern over repeated damage by visitors to a memorial
2	Alleged damage to memorial

## 4.2 Summary of Compliment

Number	Reason
14	Various compliments from Funeral directors and families for empathy, flexibility, care during services and assistance with arrangements

## 5 Income

5.1 See Appendix 2: income figures April 2021 to May 2022

## 3. Consultation undertaken or proposed

3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 4. Timetable

4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 5. Financial, resource and property implications

5.1 As contained in the body of the report.

## 6. Legal and statutory implications

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 7. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 8. Risk management and health and safety implications

8.1 Considered within the Client Side Report.

## 9. Appendices

1. Burial numbers for January 2017 to December 2022
2. Income for June to December 2022 inclusive

**Appendix 1**

**MSJCB Monthly Interments from 2017-2022**

<b>Month</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
January	25	31	20	25	22	23
February	22	25	17	14	27	16
March	27	29	25	13	25	22
April	20	30	47	13	23	14
May	31	20	31	27	21	27
June	20	24	17	18	17	23
July	19	14	26	13	15	19
August	27	21	24	19	25	18
September	25	27	21	17	21	25
October	28	25	21	19	22	18
November	22	22	11	12	21	18
December	14	27	20	13	17	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>237</b>

## Appendix 2

### Merton & Sutton Joint Cemetery Income January to December 2022 inclusive

In providing this data, it is necessary to caveat the fact the logged amounts have in some cases not been reconciled against the bank and as such may change once reconciliation has been completed

Type of Income	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total 2022-23
<b>Purchase, Interments and Grave Lease Extensions</b>	46,449	49,368	80,102	89,988	97,085	64,671	34,376	<b>462,039</b>
<b>Memorials permits</b>	2,127	8,017	2,525	1,819	7,674	5,266	3,981	<b>31,409</b>
<b>Transfer of ownership</b>	632	1,133	1,835	574	348	632	284	<b>5,438</b>
<b>Planting and Upkeep</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,208</b>	<b>58,518</b>	<b>84,462</b>	<b>92,381</b>	<b>105,107</b>	<b>70,569</b>	<b>38,641</b>	<b>498,886</b>