

Lancaster Cemetery

Quernmore Road, Lancaster

Management Plan

2022-2023



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Introduction

Lancaster Cemetery is managed and maintained by the Cemeteries Office, located at Morecambe Town Hall.

This management plan has been produced to improve the development of Lancaster Cemetery with the needs and expectations of the public and our cemetery users. The Cemeteries Office recognises the importance of meeting the conflicting needs of the bereaved and the local community and will aim to ensure a balance between different user groups and the environment.

The Cemeteries Office will be able to refer to this working document to focus on future strategic aims, and to implement recommendations and comments from the Friends Group and the public. This document shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect developments and changing priorities.

Through this Management Plan, we intend to develop Lancaster Cemetery to achieve the overall aim of the Cemeteries Service, which is:

"Our primary objective is to provide a cemeteries service that meets nationally recognised standards and is delivered in a caring and sensitive manner."

The previous Management Plan outlined our plans and actions for the upcoming years. This updated version addresses:

- Our Achievements: Displays our commitment to improve, and recognises our accomplishments
- Our Current Status: Identifies the areas in which we are doing well, and those to be developed for improvement
- Our Ambitions: Ensures that the Cemetery evolves and is managed with the needs and expectations of the cemetery users at its core, meeting the needs of the bereaved

Executive Summary

Historically, the Cemeteries Office was included in the responsibilities of the Health and Housing Service, with the Grounds Maintenance tasks being managed separately by Environmental Services. However, following a full review of the management arrangements and grounds maintenance, the decision was made for the Cemeteries Office to integrate into Environmental Services. This transfer took place in early 2018 and was deemed beneficial to both services.

Following this transfer, the Cemeteries Office report to the Public Realm Manager but operate in much the same way-it is an independent service, however there is now an increase in communication and assimilation with the Grounds Maintenance department. The Cemeteries Office now benefit from the vast experience of Public Realm, and focus has returned to providing a high quality open space. This also means that we have greater prospects with regard to project management and making continuous improvements to our service.

Lancaster Cemetery is a working burial ground, and the Cemeteries Office will manage a number of interments each year, of which about 90% are ashes interments and the remainder are burials.

The cemetery grounds also contain three elegant chapel buildings – non-denominational, Church of England and Roman Catholic. There is also a mowing shed on site, which was originally a mortuary building. The chapel buildings are not currently in use by the public, and are used for storage.

As we begin to offer more facilities in the future, we hope that the cemetery shall be considered much more than a burial ground, and will be a destination for the community. It is a historical site and a vital green space for the local area.

Corporate Plan

There is a clear and distinct connection between Lancaster City Council's principles and the Cemeteries Office Service. It is vital to us that our service integrates with the wider council policy and principles and that we are contributing to the improvement of our district. The council wide policies are detailed below:

Lancaster City Council Principles

Community Leadership: We will engage with residents, businesses and other partners to understand their needs and views, and work with them to develop plans for positive change.

A Professional Approach: We are ambitious to see the district fulfil its potential, but recognise that we need to provide our services in an affordable way. Good financial management and stability are essential for our success.

Shaping the Place: We want to champion the development of the district as a prime destination for businesses and for visitors, as well as improving the lives of those who live and work here.

Valuing Distinctiveness: We recognise that our district is unique in containing distinctive City, Coast and Countryside locations. We will deliver our services to each of our neighbourhoods in a way that is flexible and appropriate to local needs.

The Cemeteries Office are also committed to contributing to Lancaster City Council's Ambitions as follows:

Ambition 1: A Thriving and Prosperous Economy

Funeral poverty is a national issue. According to the Sunlife 2022 Cost of Dying Report, the average fees involved with a death and funeral amount to £8,864. However this figure is down 4.3% since 2020. When we began monitoring these fees in 2018, they stood at £9,204. These figures represent the fees involved with a funeral which include professional fees, the funeral service and optional extras such as a wake or flowers. Despite the overall drop in costs, the cost of dying has still risen in a number of regions across the UK which include the North West, however the region still remains what Sunlife refer to as "one of the most affordable places to die".

The report also states that 66% of people made provisions to pay for their funeral, however only 63% saved enough to cover the entire funeral cost. This implies that either funeral costs are underestimated, or perhaps not communicated clearly. The remaining funds to cover the funeral costs were paid for using family savings, borrowing from friends or relatives, or credit cards. Some families even sold belongings or took out a loan to cover the costs.

Often we speak with family members who are arranging the funeral of a loved one. Aswell as discussing how our office plays a part in their farewell, it is important that we also discuss other elements of the funeral such as fees accrued elsewhere. We will have a frank discussion and explain that they are not obliged to commit to certain aspects which perhaps they were led to believe. For example, embalming is not always necessary and may be a family choice, wooden coffins are not a requirement and there are many options these days which vary in cost, funeral director fees can be managed either with a funeral plan or by paying in instalments, and flowers are not a necessity - we see many families no longer choosing flowers but instead donations to their chosen charities.

The Cemeteries Office continue to face severe budget restraints. Despite this, to avoid any further negative impact to our cemetery users, our Cemetery fees have not increased since April 2020. In addition, in 2021 we made the decision to remove lease fees from all our plots in our Neptune Baby and Child Memorial Garden. Work is retained "in-house" where possible, and outsourcing is kept to a minimum to reduce costs.

Our office has always been transparent with our fees, and will continue to be – we share our fees list on our website, or it is available upon request. Local Funeral Directors are also provided with up to date lists every year.

To help address the high costs involved with funerals, the Cemeteries Office are committed to keeping their fees and charges to a minimum. We pride ourselves in offering competitive fees compared to other burial authorities in the North West of England. We shall continue to review our fees annually with the same approach.

Ambition 2: Clean and Safe Neighbourhoods

The Cemeteries Office is consistently working toward improving our facilities for our users, to gain a financially self-sustaining cemetery. This, in turn should benefit our cemetery users as we improve our amenities and therefore our customer service.

We will routinely carry out litter picks, and the emptying of litter bins as standard – however we have very low levels of litter in Lancaster Cemetery.

All memorials within all of our cemeteries are routinely checked as a matter of public safety. They are individually assessed by a trained officer, and if the memorial is deemed unstable, it will either be stabilised at our expense, or laid flat for the grave rights holder to arrange repairs.

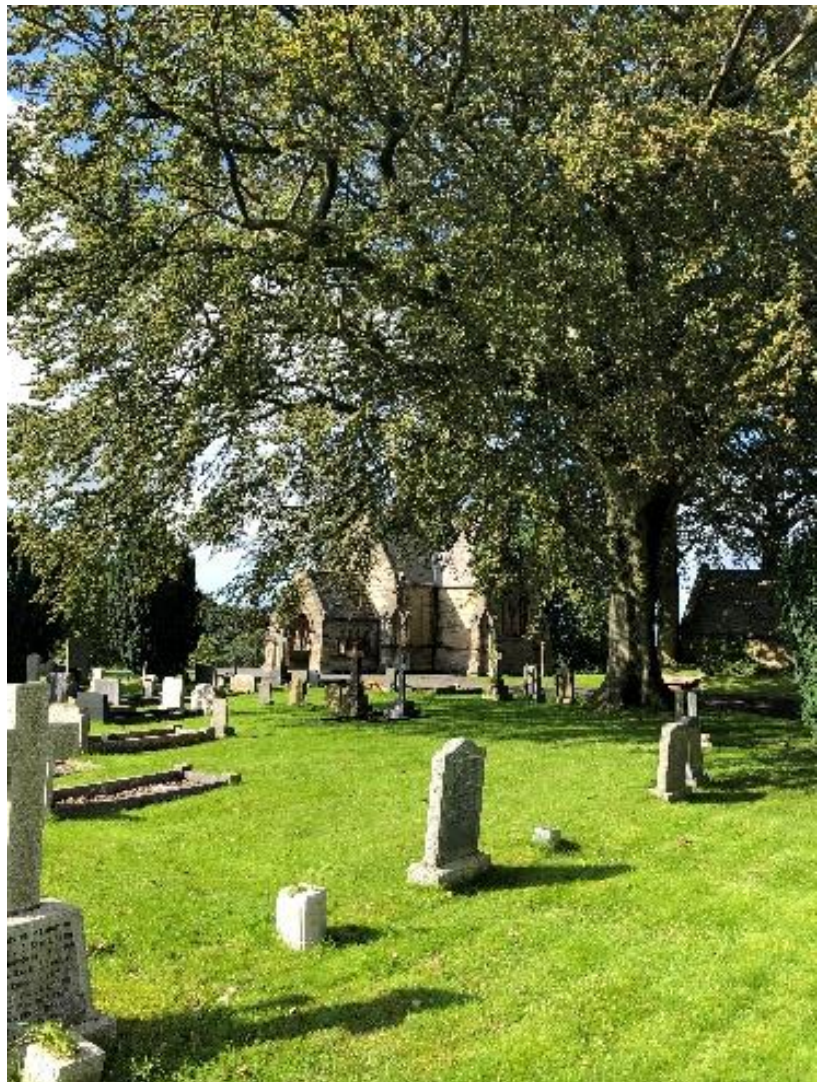
Cemetery paths and roads are also checked by our Operations Manager to ensure that they are safe and in good condition for our visitors. Any repairs are arranged as a matter of urgency so that cemetery access and funerals are not affected.

The creation of a Friends Group will help us reach a higher maintenance standard, providing additional hands on improvements and creating new projects with the aim of improving the cemetery aesthetic and facilities. In addition, they will also provide additional monitoring of the cemetery out of hours - an increase in on-site presence will be more welcoming for visitors, whilst also reducing the rare occasions of anti-social behaviour. Lancaster Cemetery is a rich source of green space and biodiversity within the Morecambe and Lancaster District. Our aims are to retain lawn, woodland, and wildflower areas, and we will only plant native trees and shrubs within our grounds. Our cemetery trees are well established and provide shelter and a food source for nature, as well as a feature within the space.

Ambition 3: Healthy and Happy Communities

We have an ambition that Lancaster Cemetery is seen as not only a respectful and beautiful burial ground, but also a green space for all to enjoy. There are many studies which show that being close to nature can help improve health, and we aim for the cemetery to be an area of quiet reflection, whilst also providing organised and appropriate leisure and community events. Such events will never overshadow our primary objective of providing a professional burial service and bereavement guidance.

National figures and our records show that the number of ashes interments are gradually increasing and are favoured over burials. Therefore, as there is currently no further grave space available in the cemetery our goal is to provide cremated remains interment space for the community now and in the future. The population of the Lancaster and Morecambe district is expected to increase by 4.41% to 147,505 by 2024, therefore we want to reassure residents that there will be available interment space now and in the future.



Ambition 4: A Smart and Forward-Thinking Council

Our office is dedicated to introducing progressive ideas, and are always looking at ways to improve. Channels of communication from members of the public are continually open so that we may listen and address any feedback-the introduction of our direct email address in 2017 has significantly facilitated this. We have established that visitors are particularly complimentary regarding wildflower sections in our other cemeteries and therefore this is something we would like to introduce to Lancaster Cemeteries. There has also been positive feedback regarding retaining the attractive historical aspects, and providing different focal points to create an attractive environment. The Cemeteries Office aim to continue this work, constantly evolving to the needs of our cemetery users. In the upcoming years, we hope to undertake major projects to utilise the cemetery chapel buildings to provide services to the wider public, projects to increase biodiversity, and to improve the appearance of the cemetery site.

We must consider the needs of our cemetery users now and in the future. Despite being a historic cemetery, it is vital for the success of the site that we anticipate how local residents see the site being used going forward. It shall always be a burial ground first and foremost, however we would like to offer local residents more facilities onsite. For instance, we are in discussions as to whether installing a Garden of Remembrance may be feasible and will be something the public would appreciate. In addition, there is a need for more wildflower sites to help insects and wildlife in general, and there is a potential space in which to sow a meadow within the grounds.

It is important to us that we adapt, manage our fees and charges fairly, whilst also becoming self-sufficient and being able to continue offering more services to those that require it.



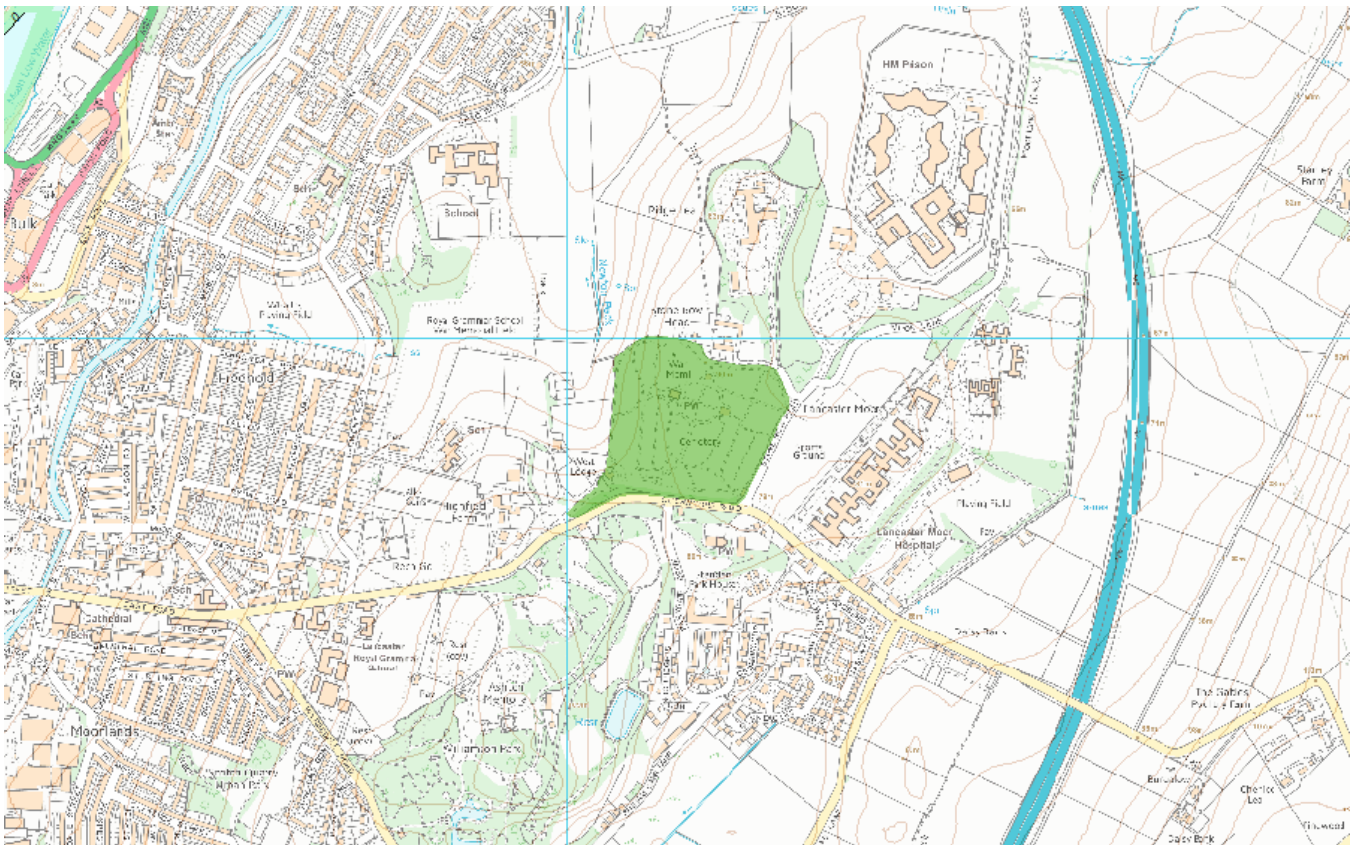
Site Description, location and specifics

Lancaster Cemetery was established in 1855, in order to provide additional burial ground for the local area as church graveyards were becoming increasingly full. There are no further grave spaces available to reserve, however it is still a working cemetery as interments continue to take place in reserved graves.

The total area of the cemetery is approximately 18 acres containing areas of consecrated and non-consecrated burial ground. The site is located approximately 1km east of Lancaster city centre, and is surrounded by further green space-mainly agricultural land, and Williamson Park. Located at the top of a hillside overlooking Lancaster, and boasts dramatic views of Morecambe Bay and the Lake District. Views of the former Lancaster Moor Hospital and Williamson Park can also be seen to the South of the Cemetery.

Lancaster Cemetery is located on Quernmore Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JT-well connected to both Lancaster and Morecambe Town Centres, as well as further afield by road, bus, train, bicycle or on foot. There is one main pedestrian and vehicular access to the cemetery. Please refer to Appendix 1 for travel directions.

The map below shows the location of the cemetery in relation to the local area.



The site is surrounded by a combination of residential properties, agricultural land, and is adjacent to the main road from the city centre - Quernmore Road.

In the immediate vicinity is Williamson Park, one of Lancaster’s most popular attractions; a Lancaster City Council managed property, with an ecological and visitor led ethos, mirroring what we aim to achieve with Lancaster Cemetery.

This demographic impacts on the cemetery and our management decisions-situated close to residential properties means that the Cemeteries Office have a responsibility to maintain a green community space whilst also offering benefits to all. It is also essential that despite there currently being no further space for new graves, that the grounds are still accessible, attractive and safe for those visiting the graves of loved ones both now and in the future.

The Cemetery is an important asset to the local community, and its location and ease of access is vital to providing the service expected by the public.

The Cemetery is signposted from Quernmore Road, which was installed at our request in 2020 and is maintained by Lancashire County Council.

In addition, there is a Cemetery sign and welcome noticeboard at the cemetery entrance. This sign displays a plan of the grounds, and basic cemetery information, including the Cemeteries Office contact details.

The cemetery grounds consist of 18 acres containing areas for Church of England, Roman Catholic and Non-Consecrated burials.

In addition to traditional grave plots, there are also military graves, and we are currently considering the viability of a Garden of Remembrance.

The cemetery serves residents of Lancaster and Morecambe, the surrounding villages, as well as wider afield. There are some significant memorials within the cemetery. Notably, there are also some beautiful Commonwealth War Grave memorials. Please see *Appendix 2* for a detailed Cemetery site plan.

Lancaster Cemetery is our largest and richest resource of green space, however at present, income from this cemetery alone is minimal from a low number of interments.

All 14,900 graves spaces within the site were reserved many years ago, and therefore the only interments that take place now are those within pre-purchased grave spaces. As the cemetery was established in 1855, many of the grave were utilised many years ago, and now families are not aware of their existence. There have been approximately 45,000-50,000 burials from 1855 to date. There are approximately 6,500 memorials in the cemetery.

Our aim is for Lancaster Cemetery to be financially self-sufficient, in order to provide an improved site and services for our customers. This plan will assist with our financial, social and ecological aims.

There is an increased societal and necessary demand for more green spaces available for public use. We are very proud that this site provides such benefits to our local environment - a large green space without use of pesticides, and that attracts foxes, stoats, badgers, rabbits, grey squirrels and roe deer. In addition, we choose not to close our main gates, allowing unlimited access to all, and we are aware that many local residents choose to use the cemetery as a pleasant route for their commute.

Our office will aim to sensitively restore the chapel buildings, whilst creating opportunities for energy saving, reducing emissions, and improving our environment.



Due to the historical aspect and links to the city, Lancaster Cemetery has the potential to be a highly frequented public space, however we feel that currently that this is not being achieved. Our office will continue to manage the interments within the grounds, with the addition of raising the cemetery profile and providing an additional green space for those who would not usually visit a cemetery. Ultimately, we would like to attract visitors who would not necessarily be visiting a grave, and provide them with facilities and services of use and interest. It is worth bearing in mind that Lancaster Cemetery may have regional and national interest and not just local value.

Cemetery Features

The Cemetery grounds are owned by Lancaster City Council and managed by the Cemeteries Office within Public Realm.

Creating and maintaining features throughout the site must be carried out sensitively-our aim is to create points of interest and activities without impeding on the serene nature of the cemetery. The requirements of the community are assessed and considered when making decisions regarding new features. As Lancaster Cemetery is well established, and most available space is already in use for burial ground, there is little scope for our office to create new areas or build upon our land. Instead, we intend to expand on our existing features, such as creating a wildflower meadow or making use of our existing cemetery chapels.



Examples of our current cemetery features are as follows:

Grade II listing: Lancaster Cemetery itself is listed as a Grade II site on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest run by the English Heritage. This is a status that we are extremely proud of. Our site is 18 acres in size, and we aim to provide cemetery users with a peaceful and serene space to remember their loved ones or enjoy nature. The site offers dramatic views over Lancaster, Morecambe and beyond. Lancaster Cemetery was planned and opened by Lancaster Burial Board, after the closure of Lancaster's remaining burial grounds, and the grounds were designed by the Registrar Henry Moore.

Lodges: There are two residential properties on site, adjacent to the main entrances, which were both formally the cemetery lodges. Built with the cemetery in 1855, they are of a Gothic Revival style. Both lodge buildings are also Grade II listed and are now privately owned and are subject to sensitive development agreements.

War Graves. The Cemeteries Office are proud to hold over 100 graves of those who died as a result of both World Wars within the site. The graves and their memorials are beautifully maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and they attract attention from curious visitors.

Crimea War Memorial. Constructed in 1860 to commemorate the casualties of the Crimean war from 1853-1856, this memorial creates a dominant focal point for the cemetery, and is located close to our chapel buildings in the north-west of the site. This monument is also Grade II listed, and was also designed by Edward Paley.

Chapels. Designed in a Gothic Revival style by local architect Edward Paley, all three of our chapel buildings are Grade II listed. Built in 1855, the chapels were originally designed to offer those using the cemetery a place for worship when attending funerals. There is a non-denominational chapel, a Catholic chapel and a Church of England chapel. There is also an additional building nearby which was originally a mortuary or hearse building. These days, the mortuary building is used by Grounds Maintenance staff and the left chapel is used for storage of cemetery equipment. The chapel buildings are maintained by the Property Services department of Lancaster City Council, but are currently unused. Research has begun into the viability of creating a community and event space within these buildings. We would like these buildings to be an integral part of the local area.

The chapel buildings are situated at the top of the hill, in the centre of the cemetery and are an attractive feature to cemetery visitors-and provides a focal point within the grounds. All three are wheelchair accessible.

The porches on the east and west chapels incorporate short stone pillars of crinoid limestone-carboniferous limestone largely composed of the fossilised remains of creatures which lived in warm, shallow seas over 300 million years ago, when the UK lay at the equator. As a result, the site is now featured as an Earth-Cache Site, whereby visitors may view a list of locations of interest, and are free to visit the feature on site.



Wildflower plantings. Wildflower seed was originally planted within historical grave pits, of those graves that were no longer visibly visited or tended to. This had 2 benefits-one was providing a habitat and food source for wildlife, and the other was creating naturally flowering greenery to improve the cemetery aesthetic. We believe that these additions are the reason that the Cemetery is a particularly good area to sight butterflies, bees, birds, and deer.

Significant Graves. Those familiar with the history of Lancaster will recognise a memorial in the name of James Williamson, otherwise known as Lord Ashton. Lord Ashton was born in 1842 and raised in Lancaster-attending Lancaster Royal Grammar School, and was the son of James Williamson I who was Mayor in 1864/65. He became the prominent business figure of the City in the late 1800's, after developing his father's linoleum business into the largest manufacturer in the UK. He was therefore one of the largest employers in the district.



Notably, Lord Ashton funded and arranged for the building of Ashton Memorial-the focal point of Williamson Park, which neighbours Lancaster Cemetery. It is rumoured that the prominent building was constructed in memory of Lord Ashton's second wife Jessie Hulme. Lord Ashton is buried in Section F – Consecrated, with Jessie and Lady Florence Maud Whalley – also known as Lady Ashton – Lord Ashton's third wife. Lord Ashton died in 1930, and was buried at the top of the hill, close to the chapels.

Edward Graham Paley, a prominent and highly successful local architect is buried in Section E – Consecrated. Mr Paley designed many significant buildings in the Lancaster District-notably all three of Lancaster Cemetery's Chapels, both cemetery lodges, Lancaster Priory, and Lancaster Cathedral. Edward travelled from his birthplace near York to work as a pupil of Edmund Sharpe, and later became his business partner. His contribution to the community extends all across the North West of England.

Thomas Storey, was a textile magnate, and another prominent businessman and employer of Lancaster. He was buried in the cemetery in 1898.

Local demographics

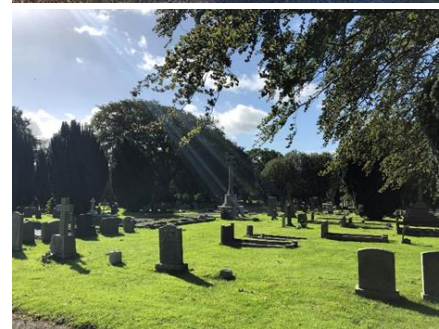
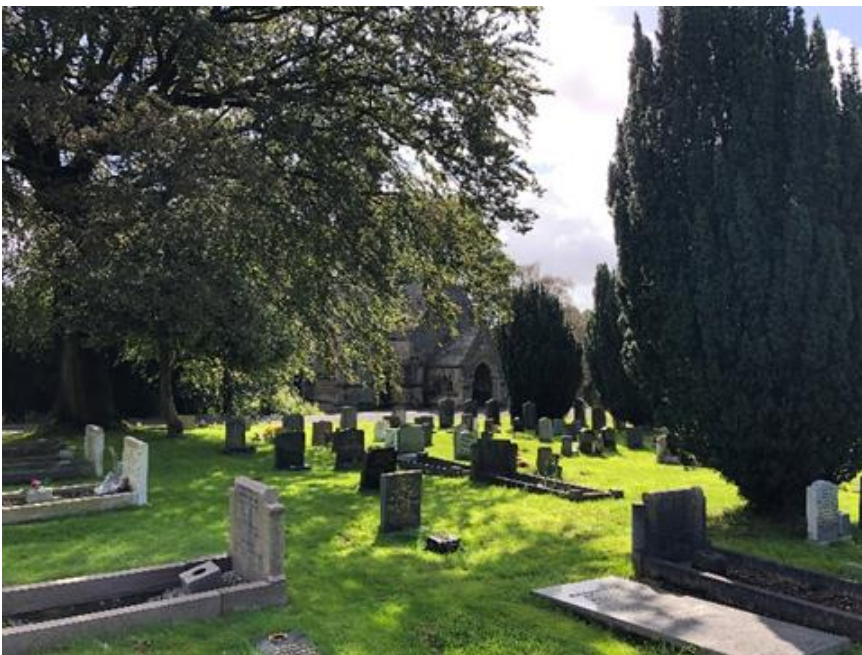
Based on the 2011 Census, the city of Lancaster has a population of 138,375. Lancaster Cemetery serves residents from all over this district, as well as attracting visitors from outside of the area due to the wide variety of wildlife, interesting architecture and the historical aspect of the cemetery.

According to the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, the number of deaths registered within the Lancaster and Morecambe District from April 2017-March 2018 was 2082. Of course, this does not account for those who did not live in our district, but may have passed away in the area and therefore were interred elsewhere. We also need to consider that those numbers have increased significantly due to the excess deaths related to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Whilst we did experience a higher than average number of interments in Lancaster Cemetery over the Pandemic period, this number was not significant. However, the interment numbers for our other cemeteries were substantial during this time.

The total number of annual interments within Lancaster Cemetery from April 2021 – March 2022 was 12, which is slightly higher than average for the site.

There are no longer any grave spaces to reserve within the site, and have not been for many years-all graves are either used or have been reserved for future use. Therefore, the number of interments within the Cemetery is relatively low. In order to encourage interments within the cemetery, we plan to raise the cemetery profile-those who may hold grave rights may not be aware, plus we intend to research the viability of a Garden of Remembrance.

Understanding who our visitors are is important in ensuring a professional and efficient service for those that require the use of our grounds. However, when referring to death, there are no clear-cut "typical" visitors to our grounds. Therefore, we carry out observation surveys of those visiting the grounds, we ensure that communication channels are open from members of the public, and we also rely on information provided by our operations staff. We have found that visitors may be of any age, from any cultural or social group, and of any religion as our cemetery caters for all varieties of beliefs. We also have visitors of traditional views, who favour burials, and those who lean toward modern cremated remains interments.



Our History and Timeline

- Once agricultural land, Lancaster Cemetery opened in 1855 to provide additional burial facilities for the residents of the Lancaster District, as space within church graveyards was diminishing.
- The first burial took place on 2nd November 1855, the year that the site opened as a burial ground – in the consecrated Section I, located on the main path leading to the chapels.
- Many burials took place of those that were patients at the neighbouring Moor Hospital, which officially closed in 2000. The hospital closed its own burial ground in 1855. The chapel at the hospital was also designed by Edward Paley, who is buried at the cemetery, and Alan Bennett describes his mother's stay at the hospital in his memoirs.
- In 1930, prominent local businessman Lord Ashton died, and was buried at Lancaster Cemetery. His grave continues to be a point of interest within the cemetery-as mentioned above, Lord Ashton was a prominent influence on the City and his portrait hangs proudly at Lancaster Town Hall.
- The Cemetery is surrounded by sturdy stonewalls around its entire perimeter. These walls once held iron railings, which were removed for the war effort during World War II.
- There are a number of war graves located throughout the cemetery sites. These are easily identifiable, as they are marked by Commonwealth War Grave memorials.
- The Cemeteries Office undertook a large-scale project of re-fixing unstable historical, large memorials throughout the cemetery during 2005/2006, carried out at the expense of Lancaster City Council.
- In 2006, the Cemeteries Office initiated a program that would increase the biodiversity of the site, whilst also improving the cemetery appearance. This involved the introduction of wildflower seed, and creating a grass strimming schedule that would allow the older areas of the cemetery to grow for longer periods, whilst keeping the grass short in the central and more visited areas.
- In 2017, a group of local students undertook general clearing of historic grave pits, clearing leaves/litter and turning the soil. The effect was dramatic and improved the cemetery appearance. The students gained a sense of fulfilment, and hopefully they were proud of helping to create a serene space for cemetery users.
- In 2018, Lancaster City Council renewed its website design for ease of use, and the Cemeteries Office now manage our own dedicated pages. This has allowed the Cemeteries Office to directly manage online literature and provide cemetery visitors with the relevant information
- Also in an early 2018 cabinet meeting, Lancaster City Council Cabinet Members made the decision to transfer the Cemeteries Office to Environmental Services.
- November 2018 also saw the introduction of wildlife survey forms, created to obtain a more accurate picture of the wildlife and biodiversity of Lancaster Cemetery, whilst also advertising those benefits to the wider public.
- September 2019: On site meetings with Property Group, including assessment of all three chapel buildings, to determine future use. One of the chapel buildings has been advertised as a commercial space to let, currently unoccupied.
- October 2019: Began establishing Friends of Lancaster Cemetery, accepting expressions of interest with first meeting taking place early 2020. Work was postponed due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, therefore a second meeting is intended to be held early 2022.



Our Current Status

Current Service Provision

Maintenance

The maintenance of cemetery equipment and landscapes is covered in the provisions made by the Cemeteries Office and Grounds Maintenance departments combined.

Gardening, equipment upkeep, and grounds maintenance are carried out to a high standard by the Public Realm department with additional assistance from our small team of multi-skilled cemeteries staff. This includes prestige mowing, amenity grass cutting, hedge pruning/cutting and bin emptying/maintenance. Repair and maintenance to the external parts of buildings such as the Chapels, are the responsibility of the Council's Property Services, whilst the internal parts are the responsibility of the Cemeteries Office. Our Operations Manager will monitor the buildings, reporting and responding to any issues should they arise on each visit.

There are no staff based on site at Lancaster Cemetery, however there is no vandalism or anti-social behaviour reported.

2019 shall see the Cemeteries Office carry out viability tests, surveys and benchmarking with a view to providing an event space within the site. Both the Cemeteries and Public Realm staff would implement alterations to the existing buildings in order to make it viable to use as venue. All additional work as a result of this venture such as signage and upkeep would be the responsibility of the Cemeteries Office.

Appendix 3 shows our specific Grounds Maintenance information.

Planting

Active planting shall continue where appropriate, and encouraging growth of native plants. Boundary planting shall be monitored and managed.

Spring flowering native trees and plants will be planted wherever possible-opportunities may arise from planning and asset management. Hedges will also continue to be cut less frequently to allow for extended and richer flowering periods.

Further wildflower sowing shall take place where, and if, necessary.

Resources:

Staffing

The Cemeteries Office comprises the following posts:

- Cemeteries Officer
- Cemeteries Support Assistant
- Cemeteries Operations Manager
- 3 x Gravedigger/Gardeners

The above staff deliver the cemeteries service to seven Council cemeteries and eight closed churchyards, and time spent within Torrisholme cemetery is therefore balanced against the needs and priorities of the service and each of our sites. The operational team are now based at White Lund Depot, but work within any of our sites throughout the day. The team are well trained, competent and multi-skilled, allowing flexibility in meeting the demands of the service and enabling value for money by undertaking many of the repair and maintenance aspects themselves.

In addition, staffing may also be sourced from other areas within Grounds Maintenance when needed and when available. *Appendix 4* shows our Cemeteries Staffing Structure.



Customer Service

There are three chapel buildings on site, none of which are currently in use by the public. Once building is used for Cemeteries Office storage. The chapel exteriors are in a good condition, which Property Services at Lancaster City Council shall maintain and repair work shall be carried out when needed.

Internally, all three buildings require some repair work, and they shall require complete redecoration before the buildings could be used.

Increased availability of our services have been made possible by operating a drop in session, with appointments if necessary at Lancaster Town Hall. This has allowed members of the public to more easily access our service. The introduction of a dedicated cemeteries email address has seen a huge increase in customer queries via email. We aim to respond to queries via email promptly, and we currently hold 100% response rate within the same working day (if received within office hours).

Facilities

Upon entering the cemetery, we aim for all members of the public to feel welcome, and to maintain this throughout their visit. This can be achieved through a number of aspects, such as ensuring that the site is easy to navigate and that we provide exceptional facilities.

An information board is situated at the entrance to the site, providing visitors with details on the grounds, including a plan of the cemetery and our contact details.

Our office will aim to implement different styles of planting and landscaping in order to create interest, which should provide the public with an innovative and welcoming space, whilst not neglecting the appreciation of traditional, historic and serene burial grounds.

Seating is provided throughout the cemetery, along the pathways to allow rest or contemplation. The seating areas are located strategically so that they may serve our users appropriately, and are monitored for maintenance by our Cemeteries Operations Manager.

Access and Signage

In 2019, the Cemeteries Office requested that Lancashire

County Council Highways installed a signpost to the cemetery which was installed on Quernmore Road. A prominently positioned sign at the cemetery entrance displays a schematic plan of the cemetery grounds and other relevant information, and a number of information boards and fingerpost signs are positioned throughout the cemetery.

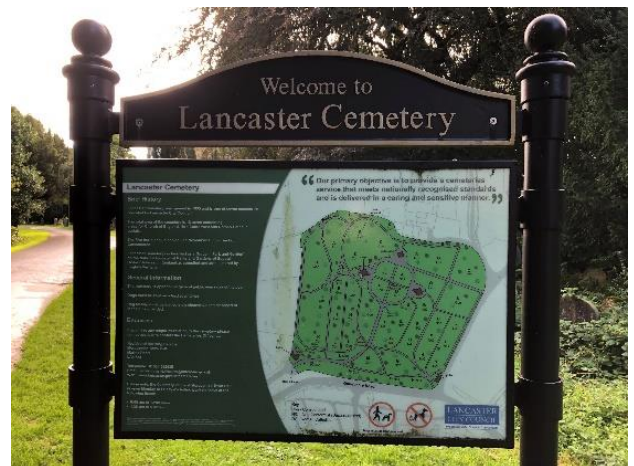
Paths and tight corners have been widened where possible to improve vehicular access and minimise damage to grave plot edges. Recycled plastic bollards placed at strategic points are installed to minimise further damage where absolutely necessary. Generally, we have very little damage to path side plots from moving vehicles.

A DDA audit was undertaken by an external consultant and a work programme completed to implement the report's recommendations. The Cemeteries Office will continue to allow easy access to the cemetery by all persons, including people with disabilities and will meet members of the public at the cemetery to discuss and assist with their particular needs.

The burials sections within the site are relatively small compared to other burial grounds, therefore there are numerous pathways and roads to allow easy access by all. This allows users to park their vehicles close to the areas they are visiting, whilst not causing access issues for others, as there are alternative routes available.

There are some steps within with grounds with alternative routes available by sloped surfaces or ramps.

Pedestrians and wheelchair users can be reassured of a safe visit, as there are numerous pathways, allowing the avoidance of vehicles.



Security

The Cemeteries Office believe that due to the proximity of the cemetery site to Lancaster City Centre, we experience very little anti-social behaviour in the cemetery.

With two lodges on site, this also possibly deters any unwanted behaviour.

The main gates are always open-we would never prevent cemetery users visiting the burial site of their loved ones.

As we manage seven cemeteries, our Operational Staff will be spending time on each site, depending on their workload. There is a frequent staff presence at Lancaster Cemetery, and all of our staff can be clearly identified by uniform, ID badges, and Council vehicle. We hope that this reassures members of the public.

At times when our staff are not on site, our contact details are clearly displayed on the Cemetery entrance sign. Each member of staff has extensive cemeteries knowledge, training, and are approachable and willing to help with any issues. Each staff member carries a mobile phone with them at all times.



Health and Safety

The Cemeteries Operations Manager and Public Realm Manager have responsibility for the Health & Safety function within the Cemeteries Service. In addition, each member of staff are also responsible for ensuring that they follow the Health and Safety Policy, to be aware of their own, their colleagues and the public's safety when on site.

All cemetery management have access to the Council's Safety Policy and Guidance Notes via the Council's Intranet and all necessary risk assessments have been completed and are reviewed annually.

Relevant extracts from Lancaster City Council's Safety Policy Statement is attached in *Appendix 5*.

All site risk assessments are discussed with staff, signed by them and monitoring is undertaken by the Cemeteries Operations Manager. Staff are mindful of the presence of site visitors when undertaking burial or grounds maintenance operations.

A memorial inspection programme is completed on a regular basis in the cemetery whereby all memorials are inspected and tested to ensure their stability. Any found to be dangerous according to the test criteria have been made safe either by laying them flat or staking and banding them as a temporary safety measure. All memorials are subject to a re-test at least every 5 years.

In addition - in 2006, The Cemeteries Office undertook an extensive memorial repair programme-addressing those large memorials which were proven to be unsafe and had been unvisited for many years. Rather than laying these memorials flat, they were instead repaired to their former glory and all work was done at the expense of Lancaster City Council. This project was met with widespread approval-cemetery users were pleased that the stones were cared for, and it prevented any distress caused to those visiting the graves of their loved ones.

The Council operates its own Memorial Masons Registration Scheme to ensure that all memorials in the future are installed or re-fixed to National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) current Code of Practice.

In such cases of an emergency on site, all of our Operational Staff are in possession of mobile phones and are certified trained first aiders. Main access is possible to all areas of the site for emergency vehicles.

Managing Dogs

The current Cemetery Rules and Regulations allow access to dogs provided that they are kept on a lead, and that owners immediately clear away any fouling in the bins provided. This is in line with our regulations for all our other cemeteries, and many around the UK.

There has been much debate nationally and locally regarding issues with dogs in cemeteries, our Cemeteries Office are willing to be guided by those needs of our cemetery users in order to uphold bye-laws that will welcome visitors to our sites.

In 2018, The Cemeteries Office launched a cemetery survey in which we asked for opinions on dogs within the cemetery sites-whether they would prefer that dogs were not permitted at all or permitted but restrained on a lead. The responses received have been overwhelmingly in favour of either banning dogs altogether or allowing them into the site on a lead but not on grassed areas. We are currently reviewing ways to enforce this whilst remaining fair to those that want to bring their dogs to the site.

In recent years, signage has been significantly increased to inform the public that dogs must be on a lead-these are located at both cemetery entrances and throughout the site. This information is reinforced on all cemetery literature, our webpage, and our social media channels.

Lancaster City Council Dog Wardens patrol the site on an ad-hoc basis, and our Operations Manager will attend any immediate issues.

In September 2019, Lancaster City Council issued a Press Release relating to dog fouling issues at Torrisholme Cemetery, but also refers to our rules and regulations in all cemeteries.

The Cemeteries Office is currently trialling dog waste bag dispensers in another of our Cemeteries at Torrisholme. The dispenser is installed at the cemetery entrance, and we will use it to provide dog walkers with waste bags so that they are never left without. Should this have a positive impact on Torrisholme Cemetery, we will look to install them on all of our sites.

Please refer to our Rules and Regulations document for more information on this.



Environmental Management

Sustainable Management of Resources

The principles followed in protecting the cemetery environment are to reduce, re-use or, if necessary, dispose of waste in a sustainable manner. These principles are adopted by staff and have resulted in actions, which deal safely and effectively with environmental issues. Procurement of resources is in accordance with the Council's policy. At all times, we try to minimise the cemeteries impact on the environment, whilst enhancing biodiversity. Each decision is considered and every measure is taken to improve the quality of the area-such as proactive planting, and hedge screening where necessary.

Use of Chemicals

The overall aim is to reduce to a minimum or eliminate the use of pesticides. The decision on which types of pesticide to use and their application is made by the Cemeteries Operations Manager.

Compliance with the Control of Pesticides Regulations and the Plant Protection Products Regulations together with implementing the requirements outlined in the DEFRA Code of Practice for using plant protection products will be strictly adhered to. Our Pesticide Policy can be viewed in *Appendix 6*.

Weed management and moss clearing on the main hard standing areas will take place in order to improve the cemeteries appearance and to ensure stable pathways. Our service prefer to clear pathways with a power cleaner containing only water, in order to remove moss, however this method is not effective on weed removal. Therefore, chemicals with a low impact on the environment are used-Grounds Maintenance will only use Glyphosate on such areas. Chemicals will only be used on instruction of the Operations Manager, by fully trained and educated staff, and will be carried out away from the public.

Use of Peat

Peat is not used by the cemeteries team in any of the cemeteries-peat free compost is used together with alternatives such as bark, wood chips and green waste. However, small amounts of peat are introduced through summer and winter bedding plants sourced from our local nursery who are not yet able to use peat free composts. Our local nursery is managed by Lancaster City Council, and is located in Morecambe-the close proximity is a huge advantage in minimising the negative impact on the environment. Current peat alternatives would result in delivery from further afield, and would not be beneficial to the environment, but other options will continue to be reviewed.

Materials

The use of recycled materials are always considered in projects and will be in the future when replacing existing materials and structures. The bollards placed in the cemetery are made from recycled plastic, but still serve the same purpose in preventing access to vehicles, and they look identical to metal posts, and are more hardwearing than wooden posts.

All wood used is sourced from either felled trees in the district or obtained from sustainable managed forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Materials and products are purchased from local suppliers wherever possible to reduce transport impacts.

Recycling

Grass cuttings from mowing the burial areas are not collected and are left on site, which naturally disperses. Prestige areas are boxed off, the grass collected and composted.

Previously, separate recycling bins have been trialed in other cemeteries, however items were not kept separate, and therefore could not be recycled when mixed. We will continue to review this option for the future.

Litter

There are plenty of Lancaster City Council bins within the cemetery, allowing for the easy disposal of litter, floral tributes or bagged dog waste. The Ground staff will collect litter on a regular basis.

There is a very small amount of litter within the site - we appear to have many considerate visitors and the litterbins are well utilised.

Water Efficiency

All water taps on site have been designed to provide the following benefits:

- Enclosed in a wooden structure to minimise vandalism, and to protect from dogs or wildlife interference
- Better insulation to protect from frost damage
- Individually valved for ease of maintenance
- Push taps are used to conserve water use and to prevent taps being turned on and left running

Cultivation, mulching and ground cover practices, which reduce the evaporation of water from soil have also been deployed.

Energy efficiency

Currently, none of our chapel spaces are in use, which therefore maintains our electricity use at low levels. However, should we begin to use these spaces more frequently, we will use energy efficient light bulbs, and be mindful of only using electricity when necessary.

Lancaster City Council is aiming to replace all of their fuel powered vehicles with electric alternatives. Our Operations Manager is already using such a vehicle which is proving to be a huge improvement as he travels between all 7 of our sites.



Conservation, Heritage and Increased Biodiversity

Biodiversity

We intend to undertake a largescale project of introducing a wildflower meadow on to the site. This will enhance the look of the cemetery by brightening the area, whilst also encouraging wildlife.

The wildflowers chosen are cornfield annuals comprising cornflower, corn poppy, corn marigold and corn chamomile, together with a perennial mix comprising red campion, wild carrot, meadow buttercup, ox-eye daisy and lesser knapweed. Sowing these species helps to conserve these rare flowers as well as birds attracted to the site. Cornflower (*Centaurea Cyanus*) is particularly important to introduce, as its occurrence had declined to such an extent that it was previously identified as a Biodiversity Action Plan species. Aesthetically, Cornflowers provide bright eye-catching colour and a point of interest to attract visitors-both human and insect. In particular- bees, some species of moth, hoverflies, and many birds species.

In January 2019, Lancaster City Council declared a Climate Emergency and as a local authority have committed to address this. The intention was to aim for net-zero carbon by 2030 by involving local residents, councillors, university experts, and young citizens.

This pledge has already been acted upon with the promise to plant trees within our district, the council owned vehicle fleet being replaced with electric vehicles and the introduction of electric taxis, creating wildlife corridors, carbon emission appraisals are submitted to Cabinet and appeals to local MP's.

Working in partnership with volunteer group Community Pollinator Patches, the council have designated and developed areas of grassland within the district to encourage wildflower growth. One of these areas is situated on Quernmore Road, neighbouring the Cemetery.

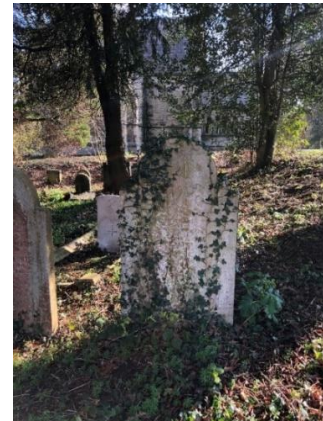
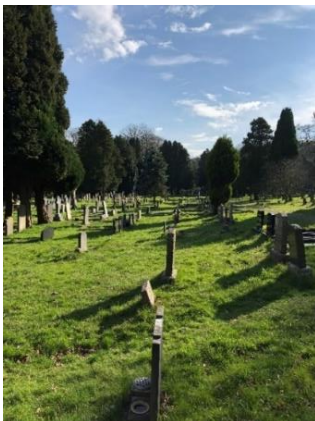
Management of these areas is also vital-once wildflower has established, it is important to take care to retain them whilst also ensuring that they are not causing obstructions on roads, pavements etc.

In 2013, Prof. Felix Wackers of Lancaster University concluded a 5 year research programme called Ecostac, which was a study into Functional Agro-Biodiversity. The purpose of this study was to prove how insects "provide important ecological services, including pest control and crop pollination" and which flowering plants assist the most effectively with this. This was something we were keen to encourage within the little space we had available at Lancaster Cemetery, and therefore our current projects were proposed.

These projects include the re-sowing of the Wildflower seed within grave plots, which will be a suitably maintained and promoted. Wildflower is a key element of a site such as this-it creates a dramatic increase in wildlife sightings, it is a vital point of interest and education for visitors, plus it offers a unique aspect to our burial grounds that many others cannot provide-therefore we are keen to reinstate this area.

You would struggle to walk through the cemetery without sighting grey squirrels, and various bird species. In addition, probably due to the large amount of green space in and surrounding the cemetery, deer are also sighted-often on the sections at the base of the hill. We have also had reported sightings of badger, foxes, rabbits, and stoats.

The cemetery has a mixture of evergreen trees including yews, and broadleaf trees including mature examples of beech, oak and sweet chestnut.

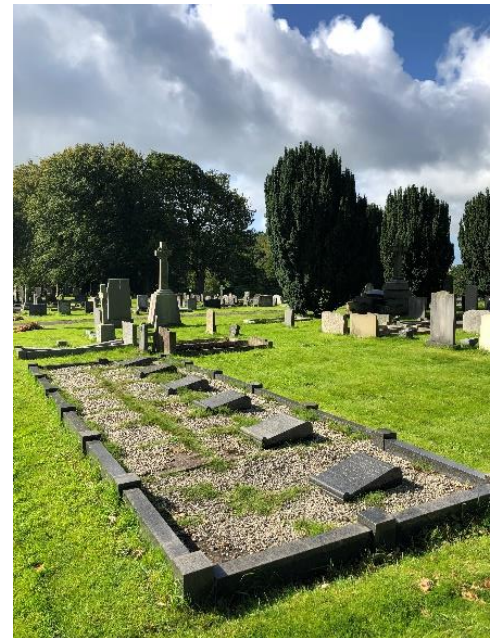


Attracting species and monitoring biodiversity

Different types of bird boxes have been positioned throughout the cemetery. These boxes have been occupied each year, and so much so that we are looking to renew them in 2019.

Wildlife survey forms were introduced in November 2018 to record different species observed within our cemeteries. These are widely available and we encourage visitors to return completed forms to our office in order to accurately monitor and record wildlife numbers. This information will assist when assessing the success of our biodiversity schemes and when considering ventures such as the viability of wildlife tours.

Typical wildlife sightings are: grey squirrel, roe deer, various bird species, Bat, Badger, Fox, and Stoat.

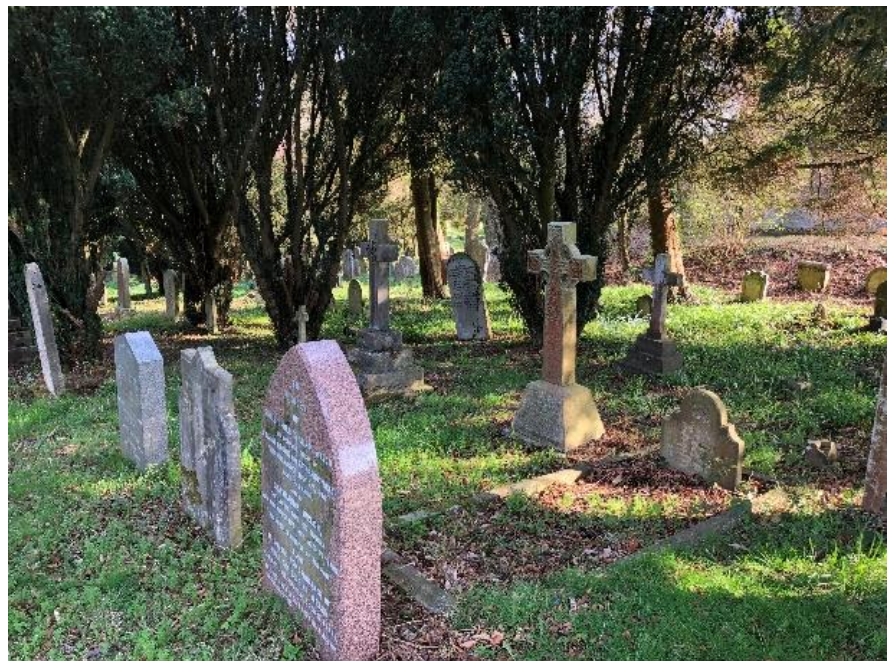


Local Stories

As general interest in genealogy and family history grows, so does the importance of cemeteries as sources of biographical information to the wider community.

In recognition of this interest, the Cemeteries Office permit guided tours conducted by Lancaster Civic Society, highlighting some of the significant graves and areas within the cemetery. In addition, Cemeteries Office staff are available to provide grave location details and guide visitors throughout the grounds if so required.

In addition, we are receiving an increasing number of family history searches from members of the public via telephone, in person, but mainly via email. We reply to all queries within one working day as we appreciate that members of the public may contact us whilst they are actually on site and require information quickly.



Memorials

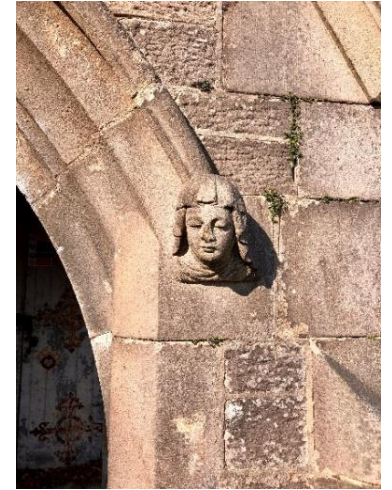
Lancaster Cemetery, as all of our cemeteries, is an important record of the social history of the area it serves. Its design and layout reflect the styles of the time when it was first opened and the inscriptions on the memorials contain important information about the people who are buried there.

The Cemeteries Office made great strides in preserving as many memorials as possible, by carrying out repairs to those deteriorated stones at the expense of Lancaster City Council. These were memorials which were located on particularly older graves, and were unvisited, meaning that it was unlikely that these stones would be repaired. This has significantly contributed to preserving the heritage and social history of the cemetery. Research will be undertaken by cemetery staff/Friends Group to ascertain further family history details of persons buried within the cemetery.

Historical assets and Conservation Management

We actively manage the conservation of assets through regular monitoring, planning, and prompt reactive measures when needed. It is necessary to consider future impacts to our cemetery. Such impacts may be a changing climate or even Eden Project North, which has recently been approved for construction in Morecambe Bay. Our office shall anticipate the impact to our cemeteries – such as traffic, pollution and visitor levels. Vehicular access is not currently restricted in the cemetery, however we will monitor local pollution levels and the impact to the grounds and our cemetery users.

Lancaster Cemetery Chapels are large and significant historical assets within the grounds, and are a focal point for those that visit our cemetery. Built in 1855 along with the construction of the cemetery, we have maintained their original features and in the future shall enhance the buildings sensitively by adding modern facilities.



The integrity of the building is monitored and recorded in conjunction with Lancaster City Council's Property Services. There are close relationships with a local construction and scaffolding company who are able to make a building safe in a timely fashion. The structure of the buildings have been maintained since they ceased to be used by the public, and continue to be monitored by the Cemeteries Operations Manager.

As an additional measure, we aim to create a Friends Group for the Cemetery, to therefore make regular use of the building, assist us with monitoring the building, and report any issues to our office.

There are many well-established trees within the grounds, and the Grounds Maintenance staff under instruction of the Cemeteries Operations Manager undertake tree management.

As the Operations staff are based in the cemeteries, tree growth can be monitored closely-therefore trees and hedges are well managed. Public safety is of course paramount, and we must also consider ensuring that these trees are still in situ and healthy for many years to come.

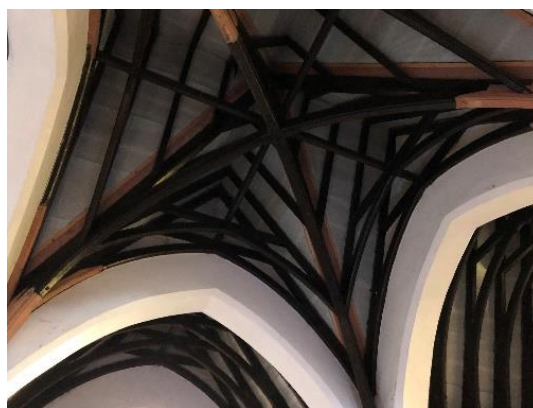
We manage all trees as sensitively as possible-we aim to strike a balance with managing excess tree growth with encouraging a lush green space and avoiding the disturbing of wildlife habitats.

An emergency response is in place to react to incidents such as sudden fallen trees, or building issues and staff are available to attend the site out of normal hours when required.

Lancaster City Council, and in fact any responsible land management authority must consider Sustainable Drainage Systems. This approach will assist us in attaining a self-sustainable cemetery, whereby the risks of environmental impacts are reduced. Lancaster Cemetery is located on a hillside, and therefore drainage is self-sustainable. Pathways and drains are cleared of leaf litter regularly during the appropriate seasons.

Heritage-Perimeter wall

Recently as part of regular maintenance checks, we had noted that the original stone perimeter wall had shown some signs of disrepair. This was immediately addressed and stabilised, and the work was carried out in 2021 to a high standard and in-keeping with the original design. It is important to us and our visitors that original features are well maintained so that we retain the local heritage.



Community Involvement

The Cemeteries Office actively encourage visitors new and old to the grounds. It is important to us to ensure the needs of the local community are met-where they are active and contributing to their local green space, and helping to maintain the burial space of their loved ones. It is also imperative to encourage those that may not usually visit the grounds, by advertising our green space, and the cemetery features. We aim to sensitively accommodate all visitors-providing appropriate activities and tranquillity in equal measure.

Friends Group

We are currently in conversation with volunteers in order to establish a Friends Group for the site. Following the success of our Friends Group at Torrisholme Cemetery, we felt that a similar group would also benefit Lancaster Cemetery. This would also provide local residents with the opportunity to be part of the improvements and maintenance of our historical site.

There are numerous opportunities for a local community group to participate and contribute to the overall aesthetic of the site, such as litter picking, general grounds maintenance, gardening, wildflower sowing, and we would be prepared to provide a small area for bedding plants. In addition, there are opportunities to hold managed events in conjunction with the Cemeteries Office including marketing, and also introducing improvements and new facilities.

A Friends Group will also assist our service greatly by being an additional on-site presence, whether that is to assist visitors or to report any antisocial behaviour.

Other benefits to volunteers would be the opportunity to work outdoors in a large green space, and interacting with others – both of which have been proven to help with maintaining good mental health.

In order to create interest in this group, we have placed temporary signs on site, and advertised on our website and on social media, which has generated a significant expression of interest.

It is hoped that the group will have autonomy in their tasks, and following discussions and consultation with our office will have the freedom to work and contribute unsupervised – helping us to create a welcoming and beautifully maintained ground.

Prospective volunteers first met with the Operations Manager and Cemeteries Officer on site in 2020, during which we toured the grounds and discussed potential projects. It was also an opportunity to answer any queries, giving a better understanding of the grounds. Unfortunately, due to restrictions surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, and the necessity to prioritise interments, meetings were put on hold temporarily. At the time of writing in 2022, our first meeting and inductions will be held, in order to allow volunteers to begin their projects on site over the more accommodating summer months.

Civic Society Tours

Lancaster Civic Society have been carrying out history tours of Lancaster Cemetery for many years. These tours are free, and the guides volunteer their time. The feedback from those taking the tours is extremely positive, and we feel that it helps the local community (and visitors) gain an insight into the local area and helps form a connection with those families buried within the site.

Tours take place on the third Sunday of every month during the summer, and the society advertise these tours by posters on the main entrance gate, and on their website.

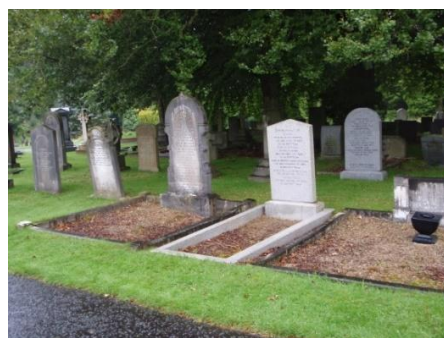
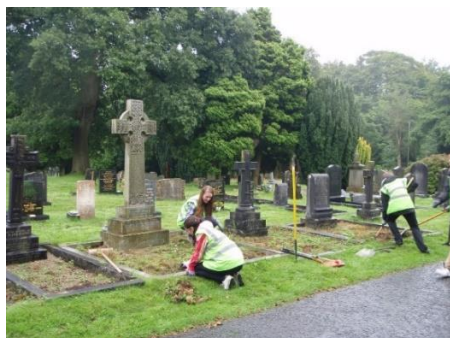
Events

In order to attract new visitors, and to change the perception of the grounds and its use, we will be encouraging and inviting members of the public for specific and appropriate organised events. This is most likely to take place upon the creation of indoor spaces within our chapel buildings within the next few years. It is vital that any event or gathering is organised with the Cemeteries Office in order to not interfere with our primary role of providing our cemeteries and burial service to the public. Any unauthorised gathering is subject to prosecution in order to protect our grounds and visitors - please refer to our Rules and Regulations document for more information.

Volunteer Days

In 2018, we were approached by a group of students who were able to offer their time in improving the cemetery in some way. As the graves on the chapel approach are older, we selected a large row of graves that appear unvisited and the group kindly cleared the weeds, brash and moss from within the kerb stones. Our office supplied the equipment such as rakes, shovels, brushes, litter pickers and waste bags as well as providing training and advice where necessary. The difference was remarkable, and the site was certainly much improved by their hard work.

The Cemeteries Office would like to continue this work in conjunction with a Friends Group.



Educational Visits

Following the transitional period to Environmental Services, our office are now in a position to be offering educational visits to local schools and groups. These visits could focus on history and heritage, the journey of life and death, or wildlife walks. Arrangements are in place for upcoming visits, where we will have an experienced member of staff to welcome the group and guide them through the relevant features of our site, providing educational tasks and materials where appropriate, and answering queries. As our cemetery visitors tend to be adults, we will aim to encourage children and young adults to find an interest in our grounds.

Marketing and Communication

Every opportunity is taken to publicise the work and ongoing improvements within the cemetery. Primarily, the aim of the Cemeteries Office is to provide a professional burial and memorial service to the bereaved, but in addition, we recognise and encourage visitors who visit for leisure purposes.

We want to ensure that all visitors feel welcome, that the site is accessible to all, and that it is a place for community. Therefore, effective marketing can help us reach those members of the public who might not ordinarily visit our grounds.

Key objectives:

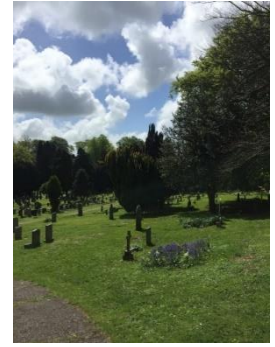
- To raise the profile of the cemetery within the local and wider community. Residents and visitors should be aware of the high quality accessible burial facility and green space available to them.
- Encourage new visitors and keep existing visitors returning. We feel that this will be achieved through high standards of cemetery maintenance, continuing to create new and innovative projects, holding events, opening the chapel for use, and ensuring that there are points of interest and varied interment and memorial options
- To highlight the Friends Group, the work they do and the opportunities available to volunteer. This in turn will assist our office with the cemetery upkeep. We shall also advertise the events held by the Friends Group, maintaining high levels of attendees.
- To ensure that visitors are aware of the management by the Cemeteries Office, our services and opening communication channels.

Social Media

Marketing undertaken includes advertising on the various social media platforms of Lancaster City Council such as Facebook and twitter, which is appealing as there are no costs incurred and yet a wide reach is gained. The Cemeteries Office also now have a dedicated Twitter page, which is updated as and when necessary. As new projects are launched, this may be one of our main sources of advertising.

Website

We have overhauled the Lancaster City Council Cemeteries Service webpages, in order to provide relevant and interesting information regarding our service. Our webpages must not only contain help and advice on dealing with a bereavement or arranging an interment, but also tourist information for those visiting for leisure reasons. Our office has ensured that this information is manageable without being overwhelming, and that our contact details are clear so that enquiries are directed appropriately and efficiently. The website is updated regularly, depending on events, updates to the cemeteries, or important notices.



Print Media and Press Releases

The Friends Group will advertise their events by poster, which we assist by including on the Lancaster City Council Cemeteries Service webpage.

The Cemeteries Office released a generic cemeteries information leaflet some years ago. Following changes to the site and management, we have now developed new literature, with specific details of each cemetery and our service. These leaflets shall be launched in 2021 after the completion of our new projects and distributed to local churches, cemetery chapels, leaflet holders in the cemetery grounds, town halls, and visitor information centres. In addition, these will also be posted to members of the public at their request.

Press releases will continue to be utilised where appropriate for launching large scale projects or events.

Management Plan

The current Lancaster Cemetery Management Plan is made available on our website. This allows current and potential cemetery users to refer to the document to gain further information about our service, the management of the site, and our future plans. In the future, when the chapels are open for use, a copy of the Management Plan will also be made available there.

Professional Bodies and Council Members

Local councillors and relevant organisations are contacted and fully informed of upcoming events. This is not only an invitation should they wish to attend, but the council members may then pass on correct and relevant information to members of the public.

Staff

Our readily available, well-informed staff are on hand to answer any queries, and help advertise our service. Our operations staff travel between all 7 cemeteries and so can be located on site, but if not, our office staff are available during office hours. Our office can be visited in person, by phone, post or email.

Finance

Lancaster Cemetery and its operations are funded by the Cemeteries Office budget, which supports our seven cemetery grounds and eight closed churchyards.

General improvements for the cemetery are an ongoing process, and there are relevant budgets to maintain specific areas, i.e. path maintenance which is continually reviewed, and repairs will take place on an ad-hoc basis.

Generally, costs from Lancaster Cemetery are low-as the grounds are well established, and the chapels unused. However, as we intend to open these chapels for use, we predict a modest expenditure to renovate the interiors. These costs will be an investment in the site - we intend to recoup costs via letting the properties, and holding events.

Our main income for the Cemeteries Office originates from burials, which incorporates all interment fees, and from the sale of Exclusive Right of Burial. Other large proportions of income are generated from sale of memorial plaques for our Garden of Remembrance areas and memorial fees (this includes any new memorial installed or an additional inscription to an existing memorial stone).

In addition to reducing our expenses, and increasing our income in order to create a more self-sustaining burial ground, we are also acutely aware of ensuring that the fees charged to bereaved families are fair. Therefore the Cemeteries Office have conducted a benchmarking exercise comparing fees and charges between burial authorities in Lancashire in 2018. See *Appendix 7* for more information on this.

Vision, aims and objectives

Management Objectives

Future management of Lancaster Cemetery will be based on achieving the following aims and objectives for 2022/2023:

Aim 1: Improve the Cemeteries Service to exceed the needs of the bereaved

Although we are proud of the service that we currently provide to the bereaved and our cemetery users, we believe that there will always be a requirement to adapt and develop. Aspects that can be improved upon will be making use of our chapel buildings that will benefit the local community, increasing facilities and improving the Grounds Maintenance standard. It is imperative to provide an attractive, well-maintained and welcoming cemetery. Families should be able to visit the resting place of their loved ones in a respectful and tidy environment.

We shall continue to implement the Memorial Safety Programme and ensure service is meeting Charter for the Bereaved standards.

- Improved customer service
- Increase facilities
- To increase the awareness of the cemetery and our service

Aim 2: Protect and enhance the environment for future generations

It is vital that our burial grounds are not only providing an essential service to the community, but also that the site is suitably managed, that any historic aspects are protected, and that any available space is well utilised to enhance local biodiversity.

- Fulfil our commitment to a healthy environment
- Increase biodiversity, creating attractive natural areas for reflection
- Improved sustainability

Aim 3: Raise the cemetery profile

Community involvement is at the core of the development of the cemetery and awareness of the site. We will take a balanced approach to the needs of all cemetery users. We must also ensure that the local community are aware of, and are using, this facility in their neighbourhood and that those travelling from further afield will be encouraged to visit the site.

- Encourage community involvement
- Provide information on the role of the cemetery service
- Develop and promote the site as a community resource

Aim 4: Assist in the reduction and elimination of Funeral poverty

The cemeteries office have long been concerned with the steeply rising cost of funerals. We aim to strike a balance of maintaining and improving our service, whilst managing our expenditure and maintaining fair prices for our customers. Undertaking regular benchmarking projects and financial reviews, we are proud that the vast majority of our fees are fair, reasonable and competitively priced, and we will continue to minimise fee increases where possible. We will aim to generate income from additional services and by further utilising our existing assets. We will continue to develop, monitor and benchmark performance indicators, as evaluation leads to improved service delivery and standards.

- Reduce financial impact to cemetery users
- Provide increased value for money
- To create financially self-sustaining grounds

Implementation of Management Objectives

Unfortunately, the pandemic put a hold on the implementation of many new projects as we prioritised interments and attending to the needs of bereaved families. This was the right decision to make as we protected our staff, the volunteers, and enabled our staff to tend to an unfortunate increase in interments during the pandemic. However, we look forward to implementing our new projects which will improve the facilities and appearance of the site, and therefore the service we provide to the local area.

Aim 1: Improve the Cemeteries Service to exceed the needs of the bereaved

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	REQUIREMENTS/COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DEADLINE
Improved customer service	Launch new literature	Officer time. Printing costs £300+	Cemeteries Office, with input from Friends Group	December 2022
	Form a Friends Group	Volunteer and Officer time. Potential advertising expenses.	Cemeteries Office	September 2022
Increase facilities	Carry out feasibility assessment for repurposing chapel buildings	£ for redecoration and labour	Cemeteries Office and Property Services	Ongoing
	Create and distribute cemetery user surveys	Officer and volunteer time	Cemeteries Office and Friends Group	December 2022
To increase the awareness of the cemetery and our service	Participate in National Cemeteries Week, and Beautiful Burial Grounds Week	Officer time	Cemeteries Office, Public Realm, and Friends Group	December 2022
	Launch new literature	As above	As Above	As Above
	Create an on-site visitor information centre/hub	£ for redecoration and labour	Cemeteries Office/Property Services	Ongoing

Aim 2: Protect and enhance the environment for future generations

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	REQUIREMENTS/COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DEADLINE
Fulfil our commitment to a healthy environment	Continue to pursue peat free alternatives when sourcing bedding	Officer time. Costs to be determined	Cemeteries Office, Grounds Maintenance	Ongoing

Increase biodiversity, creating attractive natural areas for reflection	Sow wildflower in selected areas	£ for wildflower seed	Cemeteries Office	Spring 2023
	Monitor wildlife findings through survey forms	No costs. Officer time	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing

Aim 3: Raise the cemetery profile

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	REQUIREMENTS/COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DEADLINE
Encourage community involvement	Hold volunteer days	Advertisement costs. Officer time. Provide resources	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
	Provide heritage walk and nature trails	Advertisement costs. Officer time	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
Provide information on the role of the cemetery service	Management Plan is available to the public	No costs	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
	Press release and advertising where necessary	Advertising costs to be confirmed	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
Develop and promote the site as a community resource	Offer use of our chapel space outside of funeral hours	Expect increases in energy bills, installation of heating, renovation works, all to be confirmed	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing

Aim 4: Assist in the reduction and elimination of Funeral poverty

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	REQUIREMENTS/COSTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DEADLINE
Reduce financial impact to cemetery users	Sensitively manage our fees and charges	None	Cemeteries Office and Finance Department	Ongoing
Provide increased value for money	Project management and value for money	None	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing

	applied to budget control			
	Cost effective use of available finance	None	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
	Benchmark fees against other burial authorities	Officer time	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing
To create financially self-sustaining grounds	Leasing the chapel for use other than funerals	Officer time	Cemeteries Office	Ongoing

Monitoring our Progress

Monitoring our progress, identifying areas of improvement and celebrating our achievements are vital to our future success.

Working within the bereavement sector, we need to be extremely sensitive as to how feedback and data relating to our services are obtained. However, there are some self-assessment methods that we can adopt in order to react to issues that require addressing.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking and comparisons against other burial authorities will continue to be undertaken. Aspects to monitor will be fees and charges, interment numbers, and chapel use. Focus will remain on comparisons to local authorities within Lancashire only in order to provide a fair comparison with local demographics and infrastructure.

Recording feedback

External feedback (positive or negative) is electronically recorded, and action is taken where necessary. Comments may be received from the public and cemetery users, bereaved families, Funeral Directors and other third parties. By keeping a record of these remarks, we can ensure that any issues are resolved and may be referred back to at any time. In addition, action plans may be reviewed and adjusted accordingly depending on the specific feedback and new standards may be set in future if necessary. Public consultations may be an option for the future.

Wildlife Survey Forms

As our office is based off site, this can cause an issue when monitoring the wildlife that visits the site. Therefore, in addition to observations from our operational staff and the Friends Group, the survey forms are an enjoyable way for cemetery visitors to monitor and record the wildlife that frequent our site. Of course, this also provides our office with the data to monitor wildlife levels and variations.

This Management Plan will be updated by the Cemeteries Officer on an ad-hoc basis, but assessed officially on an annual basis. The plan is designed to be a fluid document, documenting our ongoing improvements and will therefore be referred to on an ongoing basis.

APPENDIX 1: TRAVEL TO LANCASTER CEMETERY

Lancaster cemetery is easily accessible by a number of routes both by private transport and public transport, and is clearly signposted from the main road.

If walking, or travelling by car or bike, follow signs to Williamson Park entrance on Quernmore Road. The Cemetery is located across the road from the Williamson Park entrance, and is signposted from Quernmore Road.

Access to the M6 Motorway is convenient.

Access by Car

Lancaster Cemetery is accessed from Quernmore Road, Lancaster. It is located off main access routes from Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham.

From Lancaster City Centre, take a right at Dalton Square, in front of the Town Hall, on to East Road. On your right, you will pass Lancaster Cathedral as you continue uphill. When at the junction of Wyresdale Road, go straight on, to Quernmore Road, passing Lancaster Royal Grammar School on your right. Continue on this road, until the road sign for Lancaster Cemetery points you left, just after the Williamson Park entrance.

Parking is available either directly outside the main Cemetery entrance off Quernmore Road, or within the cemetery itself-the most convenient place to park being at the top of the hill, in between the chapel buildings.

The major cemetery paths are wide enough to accommodate vehicles but we would encourage all visitors to pay due care to avoid driving over any grassed areas and park their vehicles considerately as to avoid blocking access for other users and pedestrians.

Access by Bus

Lancaster Cemetery is served very well by public transport bus routes and Parkgate Drive bus stop is located directly outside the Cemetery road entrance.

Local bus service 18 leaves both Lancaster Bus Station and Morecambe Bus Station at regular intervals, for exact timings on these buses then please contact Lancashire Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 or visit <http://www.traveline.info> and plan your journey. There are also a number of other local routes that stop within a short walking distance of the cemetery, again advice on these route and timings can be found via Lancashire Traveline.

Access by Train

There are no direct train stops local to Lancaster Cemetery but there are major stations in Lancaster and Morecambe Town Centres and appropriate bus services which leave directly from both stations can provide connections, as above.

Access by Bike or on foot

There are a number of local cycle routes that you can use from any part of the district to visit Lancaster Cemetery. Lancaster City Council was one of six national Cycling Demonstration Towns until the initial program ended in 2011. In the interim, cycling is still promoted and travel is encouraged by bike where possible. More information on local cycle routes or cycle route maps can be found here: www.celebratingcycling.org or by calling 01524 582371.

APPENDIX 2: LANCASTER CEMETERY SITE PLAN

This plan shows the Lancaster Cemetery site in full, and is made available to the public.



Grounds Maintenance Report 2018 – 2019

Introduction

Grounds Maintenance are responsible for maintaining seven Council owned cemeteries, namely:

Carnforth

Hale Carr

Lancaster

Morecambe

Scotforth

Skerton

Torrisholme

And the following closed churchyards and burial grounds:

Holy Trinity Church, Bolton-le-Sands

St Wilfrid's Church, Halton

St John's Church (St John the Evangelist), Lancaster

Holy Trinity Church, Morecambe (Morecambe Parish Church)

St Mary's Church, Lancaster (Lancaster Priory)

St Peter's Church, Heysham

St. Luke's Church, Lancaster

Quaker Burial Ground, Lancaster

The Grounds Maintenance department undertake routine amenity and prestige grass cutting, and maintain flower beds/planters. They are also responsible for hedge cutting and tree pruning within the Council owned cemeteries.

A Grassland Management Plan was introduced in 2022, which covers the entire district. This plan was established in order to maintain grassed areas as they all have specific requirements-some are not required to be cut as often as others, and it will also encourage biodiversity and improve the aesthetic of such sites.

As the cemetery is considered a Public Open Space, the grass is intended to be cut every 4 weeks during the mowing season. This season takes place from mid-March to mid-October. The grass is not collected once cut.

Hedge Trimming

Privet, thorn and similar type hedges are cut to the original shape and size on top and two sides once per year, e.g., July/August (after the bird nesting season has finished).

The majority of perimeter hedging is cut to original shape and size once per year usually in October/November. Exceptions are where line of sight has to be maintained along highways.

Wreath Removal

Natural (i.e., non-artificial) Christmas wreaths will be removed from the start of February. Funeral wreaths and bouquets, etc., will be removed once the flowers have died and start to become unsightly. This usually coincides with the first lift and level after a period of one month from the date of interment.

Flower Beds and Planters

Flowerbeds, planters and hanging baskets are planted with annuals to provide summer displays.

Perennial beds were established in 2009 and additional new beds were introduced in 2010, which continue to be maintained.

Flower beds are mulched with our own recycled wood chippings to conserve moisture loss and suppress weeds. Dead heading and weeding is carried out weekly.

Planters and hanging baskets have an in-built water reservoir to help minimise water usage.

Biodiversity Areas

The cemeteries team are committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity within its cemeteries wherever possible. We will alter traditional grass cutting arrangements and practices to create wildflower meadows and manage other areas for the benefit of wildlife and to create havens, wherever possible.

Pesticide Policy

It is the cemeteries team policy to keep pesticide use to the lowest possible level and any use will be effectively controlled in a way that protects the health of people, plants or creatures and the environment. Usage will be in accordance with DEFRA's Code of Practice for using plant protection products.

Litter Bins

There are 46 wheelie type bins of 240 litre size sited within the 7 Council cemeteries and these are emptied by the Public Realm Cleansing team every 2 weeks. Incorporating green biodegradable waste bins was previously considered but due to the high volume of cemetery waste, this could not be managed due to reduced staff resources. In order to resolve this issue, all cemetery waste is instead taken to a waste recycling centre. This will be reviewed each year in order to achieve a more efficient recycling process.

General Maintenance

The cemeteries staff undertake litter picks and weeding, etc. on a weekly basis.

In Torrisholme Cemetery, help is provided by the Friends Group who meet once per month to carry out a general tidy up including weeding. They also assist in planting, watering and activities to promote the cemetery and its environment.

Grave digging

This is a specialist and skilled operation, due to the equipment and machines used, the different soil conditions found within each cemetery, the ground levels and weather conditions.

Extreme care is taken when excavating a grave to avoid any damage to surrounding headstones and grave plots. To do this, we often have to construct a soil box with base over the adjoining grave and this will prevent access to the grave for a very short period of time.

Once the burial has taken place the grave is immediately back-filled and the soil box on the adjoining grave is removed.

The Cemeteries Office include information regarding soil boxes on the paperwork processed in arranging an interment, and also with the document that accompanies a grave deed when a grave space is reserved. This ensures that the family are fully prepared, should a soil box be constructed on their family grave in future. Following a burial, the in-filled soil settles causing the grave surface to sink slightly. The cemeteries staff have a rolling programme of lift and levelling the graves at 1, 2 and 5 months after the burial.

Path Sweeping

Cemetery paths are swept by using a mechanical sweeper at regular intervals. Frequencies in some cemeteries will increase to reflect the seasons, such as autumn leaf fall.

GROUPS MAINTENANCE OF SPECIALIST AREAS

Wildflower Areas

A wildflower meadow is intended to be created and sown in 2020, with a cornfield annual mix consisting of Cornflower (35%), Corn Poppy (10%), Corn Marigold (35%) and Corn Chamomile (20%), together with a perennial seed mix consisting of Red Campion (20%), Wild Carrot (5%), Meadow Buttercup (60%), Ox-eye Daisy (10%) and Lesser Knapweed (5%).

Management

- Cut back when flowers have died off and seed heads formed. Two passes with flail mower to leave only fine clippings to avoid swamping seedlings.
- The cornfield annuals act as a nurse crop to give colour in year one, whilst the perennials flower in following years. To encourage annual seeds to re-germinate in subsequent years, they need an annual disturbance using a chain and harrow.
- An additional sowing in subsequent years will help to build up a seedbank in the soil.
- Maintain 3m wide walkway through the meadow.

Bramble and Nettle areas

Brambles will be strimmed to prevent creep and obliteration of planted areas.

Nettle patches will be cut throughout the summer, gradually, so that there is always some young growth available for the caterpillars.

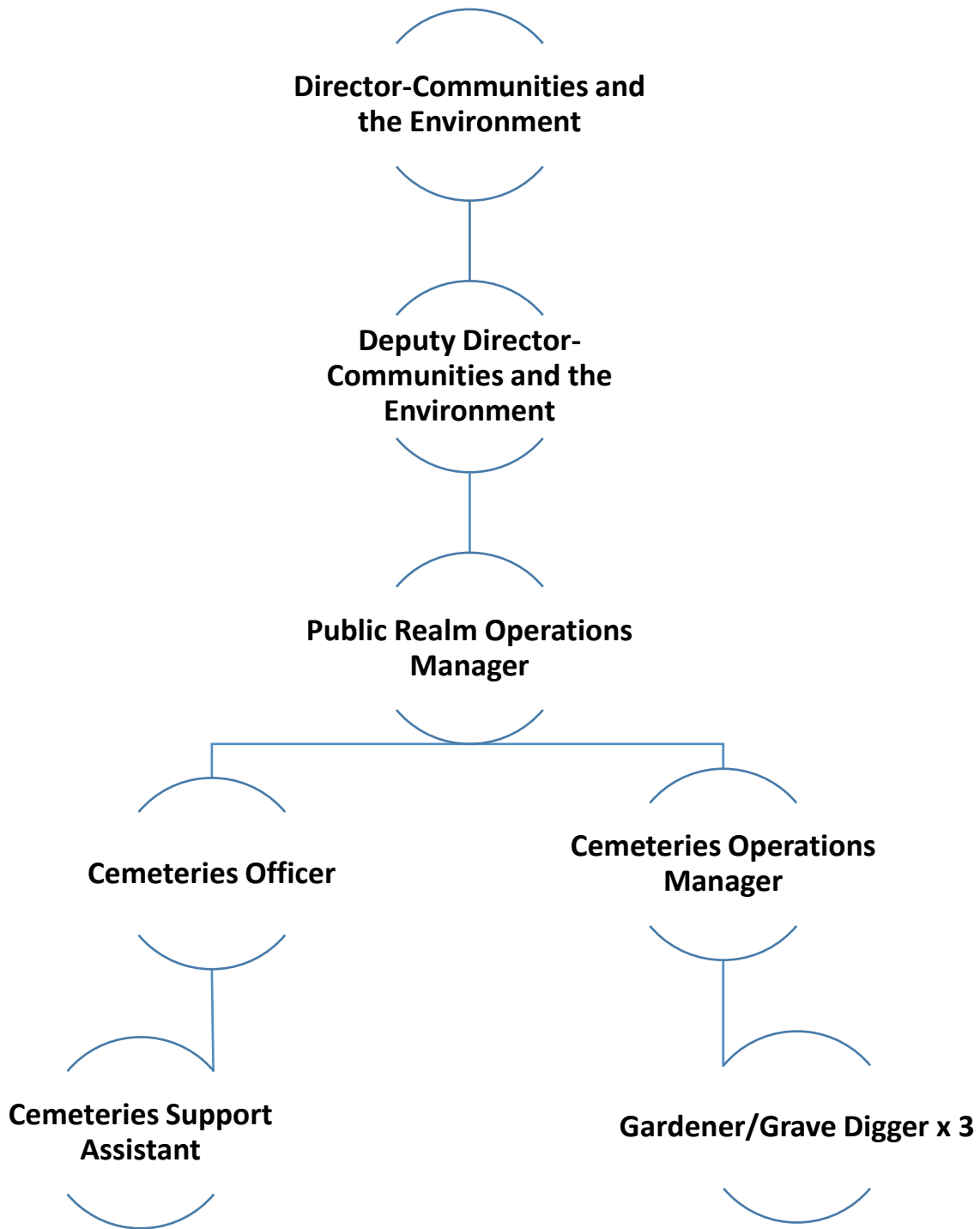
Author: Steve Shaw, Operations Manager

October 2019

Amended: Beth Aldridge, Cemeteries Officer

April 2022

APPENDIX 4: CEMETERIES STAFFING STRUCTURE



10. Line Managers

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that line managers and supervisors for which they have formal line management responsibility are able to capably, competently and fully perform their duties under this policy. Also, in the absence of such a line manager or supervisor, that they fulfil the responsibilities of a supervisor set out in the following section.
- Ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health, safety and welfare of staff members under their control, and any others who may be affected by their actions, is maintained at all times.
- Producing an appropriate assessment of the health and safety risks to staff, public and others, arising from the work activities of their section.
- Ensuring that any significant findings identified by the assessment process are documented and that any further risk control measures found necessary are implemented by the appropriate line managers within their section.
- Arranging that, so far as is reasonably practicable, staff are actively involved in the risk assessment process and that as a minimum, copies of risk assessments are made available to and discussed with the relevant members of staff within their section.
- Ensuring that staff under their control remain adequately trained and competent and are provided with suitable and sufficient work equipment to carry out their work tasks safely.
- Adherence to, and full implementation of, the parts of the council's safety policy which apply to the work tasks under their control.
- Ensuring that staff under their control carry out works tasks in accordance with the findings of the risk assessment carried out by their service unit / team.
- Reporting accidents and incidents in accordance with the council safety policy.
- Taking action to eliminate (or control) workplace hazards which are reported to or noted by them.

11. Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health, safety and welfare of staff members under their control and any others who may be affected by their actions, is maintained at all times.
- Producing an appropriate assessment of the health and safety risks to staff, public and others, arising from the work activities of their section.
- Ensuring that any significant findings identified by the assessment process are documented and that any further risk control measures found necessary are implemented by the appropriate line managers within their section.
- Arranging that, so far as is reasonably practicable, staff are actively involved in the risk assessment process and that as a minimum, copies of risk assessments are made available to and discussed with the relevant members of staff within their section.
- Identifying and informing their line manager of the need for any change to an existing risk assessment or preparation of an additional risk assessment.
- Ensuring that staff under their control remain adequately trained and competent and are provided with suitable and sufficient work equipment to carry out their work tasks safely.
- Adhering to, and fully implementing, the parts of the council's safety policy which apply to the work tasks under their control.
- Ensuring that staff under their control carry out works tasks in accordance with the findings of the risk assessment carried out by their Service.
- Reporting accidents and incidents in accordance with the council safety policy.
- Taking action to eliminate (or control) workplace hazards which are reported to or noted by them.
- Raising through the management chain any health and safety issue that they cannot personally resolve.

13. Corporate Health & Safety Function

Responsible for coordinating corporate policy on health & safety, providing advice and support in accordance with but not limited to its documented purpose and arrangements.

14. Health & safety officer embedded with Environmental Services

Provides advice and assistance to Environmental Services in support of Chief Officer (Environmental Services) and delivers corporate health & safety-related training.

15. Health & Safety joint consultative committee (H&S JCC)

The H&S JCC provides the leading mechanism for staff consultation, tabling and monitoring issues of health & safety concern, activity and progress.

16. All Staff

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Fulfilling their health and safety roles and responsibilities provided in job descriptions.
- Actively participating in competence assessment, training and development and actively assisting fellow staff members, supervisors and line managers in the achievement of full competence.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the council's health and safety policy, procedures, work instructions, guidance and relevant risk or other health and safety assessments pertinent to their work tasks.
- Ensuring that they carry out their work tasks in accordance with the significant findings of the relevant risk or other health and safety assessments pertinent to their work tasks.
- Reporting all accidents, near misses, hazards and other health and safety incidents and concerns to their supervisors immediately.
- Following all health and safety rules and instructions properly given.
- Actively co-operating with the council at all times to improve standards of health, safety and welfare.
- Raising through the management chain any health and safety issue that they cannot personally resolve.

APPENDIX 6: USE OF PESTICIDES POLICY

1. It is the Cemeteries Team policy to keep pesticide use to the lowest possible level and any use will be effectively controlled in a way which protects the health of people, plants or creatures and the environment. Usage will be in accordance with DEFRA's Code of Practice for using plant protection products.

2. The use of pesticides will be discussed and reviewed by the Public Health & Safety Manager and the Cemeteries Operations Manager. Part of the review will be whether we need to use a pesticide at all.

3. The following controls will be adhered to when using pesticides:

- Application only by NTPC certified staff.
- Applied in accordance with risk assessment and COSHH assessment.
- Storage in secure area or pesticide safes.
- Pesticide log maintained by Cemeteries Operations Manager.
- Careful selection of the correct product for the job and timing of application for best effect.
- Use of 'Nomix' products to ensure correct dilution, reduce spills, ease of disposal, etc.
- Meet any conditions on the label for keeping visitors or pets out of treated areas for a certain period.
- Check equipment for applying pesticide to make sure it is in good working order and is working correctly and accurately.

APPENDIX 7: FEE BENCHMARKING EXERCISE

Cemeteries Office Fees and Charges compared to burial authorities in Lancashire in 2018.

	EROB-Grave	EROB-G/R	Burial-Adult	Chapel Use
Burnley Council:	£1270.00	£335.00	£1141.00	£142.00
Chorley Council:	£900.00	£666.50	£600.00	N/A
Fylde Council:	£740.00	£340.00	£560.00	N/A
Hyndburn Council:	£825.00	£375.00	£725.00	£150.00
Lancaster City Council:	£773.53	£921.11	£691.64	£113.58
Pendle district:	£975.00	£269.14	£768.00	£100.00
Preston district:	£918.00	£998.00	£521.00	N/A
Ribble Valley district:	£615.00	£274.00	£469.00	N/A
Rosendale District:	£1002.00	£213.40	£808.00	£137.00
Wyre district:	£856.00	£510.00	£740.00	£202.00
Blackpool unitary:	£955.00	£535.00	£620.00	£215.00

