

**Title: Purchase of land adjacent to Presteigne cemetery for the development of an extension to the existing cemetery**

<b>Service Area:</b>	<i>Environmental Health- Environmental Protection</i>	<b>Date:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Nia Wyn Hughes
<b>Requirement</b>	<p><i>Presteigne and Norton Town Council (PNTC) have purchased land adjacent to the existing cemetery in order to develop an extension to the existing cemetery which has only 7 years capacity remaining. PNTC have taken this action having been advised previously that Powys County Council (PCC) would not invest in any additional burial sites. The recently established Cemeteries Review and Development Board (CRDB) is currently reviewing its policy with respect to investing in additional burial space and Presteigne is one of 3 sites currently under consideration.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC have suggested that it would be willing to sell the land to PCC (provided all costs associated with the sale are covered) in order for it to operate the extension as well as the existing cemetery as the relevant burial authority. PNTC are requesting a total of £47,045.84 for the sale of the land.</i></p>		
<b>Background</b>	<p><i>PCC currently manages 19 cemeteries across the County and as such operates as a burial authority. A recent review of cemetery capacities illustrated that there is considerable disparity in the amount of space available within these cemeteries. At some there is over 100 years capacity while at others namely Hay on Wye, Presteigne and Machynlleth, there is less than 10 years capacity remaining. The recently established CRDB is currently considering future provision at these sites. PNTC has taken steps to address the diminishing capacity at the cemetery and have bought adjacent land with a view to becoming a burial authority. In this circumstance, they would manage the new site whilst PCC would operate the existing site unless PNTC was minded to take over the existing site as part of the Community Asset transfer scheme. The implications for PCC would be that it would have to continue to maintain the site with little scope for income generation due to the limited number of graves remaining. This site will eventually fill and then be “closed” while receiving no income, the Council would still be responsible for the cost of its long term maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC have bought the land having been previously advised that PCC would not invest in additional burial ground. Recently however, PNTC have indicated that they would be willing to sell the land to PCC in order to develop and operate the cemetery extension.</i></p> <p><i>PNTC are requesting £47,045.84 for the sale of the land which has planning permission which expires in November 2018. There is no requirement for groundwater testing which represents a significant saving in development costs. However the site would need infrastructure such as roads, paths and fencing/hedges which would require planning approval. These costs are estimated to be in the region of £120k.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of additional maintenance costs, the additional cost of cutting the grass based on the current contract would be approximately £2k. Other works would include hedge cutting etc. which can’t be quantified at this time.</i></p> <p><i>The site measures 4000m<sup>2</sup>. Based on a grave space measuring 3.34m<sup>2</sup> and allowing 25% of the space for roads and paths it is estimated that the additional land will provide 898 grave spaces. Based on current demand of 8 graves per annum, the land will provide burial space for 112 years.</i></p> <p><i>The current cost of a single grave (inc. registration, excavation, exclusive right of burial and headstone) is £1740.55 and a double is £1902.55. Based on the average over the last 5 years of 3 singles and 5 doubles, the projected annual income is £14,734.40.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, Powys CC currently receives a grant from Pryce Williams Trust for the maintenance of the cemetery which equates to approximately 8k per annum.</i></p>		

<p><b>Solutions</b></p>	<p><i>There are 2 solutions to the problem of diminishing capacity at Presteigne cemetery:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. That PCC do not purchase the land from PNTC and that they manage the site as a burial authority. In doing so they would be responsible for managing the cemetery extension and receive all the fees for burials in that area. This would leave PCC to manage the existing cemetery which has very few plots remaining therefore limiting future income. Additionally it is likely that income from Pryce Williams Trust would reduce or cease</i></li> <li><i>2. PCC could purchase the additional land to develop an extension. This would secure future burial provision in the area and additional income for over 100 years.</i></li> </ol>	
<p><b>Preferred Solution</b></p>	<p><i>The preferred option is Option 2, to purchase the land from PNTC and develop the extension securing future burial provision in the area. The cost of the project is likely to be in the region of £170k. Additional ongoing maintenance costs would be in the region of £2k. The projected annual income based on current rates (inc. grant from Pryce Williams Trust) is in the region of £23,000. Planning approval has been secured without the requirement to undertake groundwater testing. It is not known whether soil testing has been carried out to ensure that the ground is suitable although it is located immediately adjacent to the existing site where there are no known problems. Given that planning permission has been granted, the timetable for development would be dictated solely by the infrastructure works which it is envisaged could be completed within 12 months. This would mean that additional burial space would be available before the current site reaches capacity.</i></p>	
<p><b>Cost/Benefit Analysis</b></p>	<p><i>Based on the projected income annual of £14,734.40 less the grave digging costs of £4,803.02 and the additional maintenance expenditure of £2,000 the payback period of the £170,000 capital purchase cost would be 21 years.</i></p>	
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>	<p><i>It is recommended that the land is purchased from PNTC for the development of a cemetery extension. Planning permission has already been secured and the only additional costs would be the development of site infrastructure. The additional land would generate income beyond the 7 years that the existing site will provide. This income will also help support the maintenance of other cemeteries which have lower demand.</i></p>	
<p><b>Signatures</b></p>	<p>Proposed by (Requisitioner)</p> <p>Nia Wyn Hughes</p> <p>Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017</p> <p>Commercial Services Team</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date: .....</p>	<p>Authorised by (Service Head)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Date: .....</p>