

Chigwell Parish Council Meeting Report

Meeting Date: June 26th, 2025

Subject: Proposal for Memorial Bench Sales at Chigwell Cemetery

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Chigwell Parish Council to introduce and implement a memorial bench sales program at Chigwell Cemetery, including approval of the pricing structure and lease terms for the benches installed on council land.

The Council is asked to approve the following:

- The sale of memorial benches with lease terms of 5 and 10 years.
- The pricing model proposed for public sales.
- The lease agreements for land use at £750 for 5 years and £1,500 for 10 years.
- Authorisation for officers to manage supplier contracts, installation, and ongoing administration of the scheme.

2. Background

There has been a noticeable increase in requests from visitors and customers at Chigwell Cemetery to have memorial benches installed. This reflects a growing community desire for dignified and lasting ways to commemorate loved ones within the cemetery grounds. To respond effectively to this demand, the Council has considered implementing a formal memorial bench sales program. This will enable the Council to manage installations consistently, ensure quality standards, and generate revenue to support cemetery upkeep.

3. Proposal

- Offer high-quality, durable, sustainable sourced memorial benches with personalised plaques for sale to the public.
- Benches will be placed only on unusable burial land around the perimeter edge of Chigwell Cemetery, ensuring no interference with existing or future burial plots.
- Lease cemetery land to bench purchasers for periods of either 5 or 10 years, with lease fees of £750 and £1,500 respectively.
- Set pricing to the public at £2,000 for the 5-year lease and £2,800 for the 10-year lease, inclusive of bench, plaque, installation, and land lease.
- Upon purchase, the bench owner will hold sole responsibility for the bench, including any maintenance, repair, or replacement. The Council will not incur any maintenance costs or liabilities related to the bench.
- Council officers to oversee procurement, installation, and record-keeping related to the memorial benches.
- Develop and issue clear agreements with purchasers detailing lease terms, ownership, and maintenance responsibilities.

4. Supporting Documentation

Appendix A: Cost Breakdown and Pricing Strategy

Cost Component	Amount (£)	Notes
Base bench purchase cost	1,116.28	Supplier price for durable memorial bench
Admin and handling (10%)	111.63	Covers ordering, coordination, and logistics
Total bench supply cost	1,227.91	Sum of bench cost and admin fee
Land lease fee (5 years)	750.00	Fixed fee for leasing Council land
Land lease fee (10 years)	1,500.00	Fixed fee for leasing Council land
Installation & plaque engraving	Included in sale price	Cost covered by sale price

Pricing Strategy

Lease Term	Bench + Admin (£)	Land Lease Fee (£)	Public Sales Price (£)
5 Years	1,227.91	750.00	2,000 (rounded)
10 Years	1,227.91	1,500.00	2,800 (rounded)

Rationale:

- The sales price to the public is the bench cost plus the land lease fee, rounded for simplicity.
- Bench and admin costs are recovered at cost with no profit.
- Land lease fees provide the Council's revenue to support cemetery maintenance.
- Pricing balances affordability with responsible financial management.
- Maintenance remains the purchaser's responsibility, avoiding Council liabilities.

5. Council Responsibilities and Considerations

****Finance and Best Value for Money****

- The pricing model ensures full cost recovery of bench and admin expenses and generates income through land lease fees.
- The Council will not incur ongoing maintenance costs as bench owners are responsible for upkeep.

****Governance****

- Contracts and leases will be compliant with Council policies and relevant legislation.

****Community Engagement****

- The scheme will be promoted to local residents and visitors to encourage awareness and uptake.

****Equal Opportunities****

- Memorial bench sales will be offered without discrimination, accessible to all community members.

****Crime and Disorder****

- Placement and installation will prioritise safety and deter vandalism.

****Human Rights****

- The scheme respects individual rights to memorialise loved ones while balancing public land use.

****Health and Safety****

- Installation will follow health and safety standards to protect the public and workers.

****Biodiversity****

- Bench locations will avoid environmentally sensitive areas to support biodiversity.

6. Recommendation

That Chigwell Parish Council:

- Approve the implementation of the memorial bench sales program at Chigwell Cemetery.
- Authorise the proposed pricing structure of £2,000 for a 5-year lease and £2,800 for a 10-year lease.
- Confirm bench ownership and maintenance responsibility rest with purchasers, with no Council liability.
- Authorise officers to proceed with supplier engagement, contract management, installation, and administration to launch the scheme.

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