

# CEMETERIES REPORT

## AGENDA ITEM No. 8

---

**MEETING:** ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2026

**REPORTED BY:** GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR

---

### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to bring Members up to date with issues relating to the cemeteries.

### 2.0 Grants of Grave Spaces

The following grants of grave spaces have been issued:

#### 2.1 West Cemetery

Grave No: K 81      Grant No: 2483

Grave No: I 320      Grant No: 2484

#### 2.2 Stephenson Way Cemetery

Grave No: B114      Grant No: 1418

### 3.0 Burials

#### 3.1 West Cemetery

Grave No.	Deceased	Age
I320W	Iris Watson	93
I320W	Thomas William Watson	97
K081W	Peter Richard Hetherington	73
N045W	Isobel Shaw	84

#### 3.2 Stephenson Way Cemetery

Grave No.	Deceased	Age
A008S	Joyce Raine	84
B114S	Gerard Anthony Wise	64
E003S	Kenneth Catmull	91

### 4.0 Cemeteries Update

4.1 Topping up and levelling of graves is continuing in both cemeteries, raising sunken memorials where possible in Stephenson Way Cemetery.

4.2 Internal hedges have been trimmed at West Cemetery.

4.3 Road and footpaths in West Cemetery are being cleared of weeds and moss.

## 5.0 Memorial Inspections

5.1 Memorial safety inspections have now been completed within West Cemetery. The inspections included visual assessments and stability testing using the recognised push test methodology to identify any memorials that may present a risk to visitors, staff, or contractors. The inspection programme forms part of the Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful cemetery environment whilst fulfilling its duty of care.

5.2 The table below shows a summary of the inspection results:-

MEMORIALS INSPECTED	MEMORIALS ROCKING	MEMORIALS LEANING	MEMORIALS ROCKING & LEANING	MEMORIALS THAT FAILED INSPECTION
500	47	39	8	0
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

5.3 Stephenson Way Cemetery is exempt from memorial inspections due to the type of memorials installed in the cemetery.

5.4 As the landowner, the Church are responsible for completing and recording their own memorial inspections in St. Andrew's Churchyard. However, Council staff working in the churchyard would carry out a visual inspection of memorials and report any issues to their supervisor/management.

## 6.0 Drainage Improvements Update

6.1 Groundworks at West Cemetery have been completed, and the affected areas are now being maintained. Topping up and levelling of graves remains a priority, where weather conditions permit, to help prevent surface water pooling.

6.2 Where groundworks were not possible in Stephenson Way Cemetery, improvement works focused on topping up and levelling graves to help prevent water pooling and direct surface water towards the road and drainage systems. Adverse weather and unsuitable ground conditions over the winter delayed progress; however, priority was given to the worst affected areas, and over half of the cemetery is now complete.

6.3 The issue of water ingress from outside the cemetery on county council land has been reported to Durham County Council; however, no progress has been made to date. Officers would suggest this is escalated to the Newton Aycliffe County Councillors to take up on the Town Council's behalf.

## 7.0 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Members receive the report.

**Contact Officer: Lee Williams**