

Report of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES UPDATE1. Purpose of report

To provide the Joint Committee with various updates regarding Bramcote Bereavement Services.

2. Detail

- Recent physical improvements to the building and grounds have been modest and contained within overall existing approved budgets, namely: path repairs (£10,000 as budget), replacement of old single glazed windows to the frontage of the building with new double glazed windows (£10,483 against a budget of £10,000), replacement of catafalque curtains (£8,099 against a budget of £10,000) and re-painting the reception area to warmer colours (materials cost only out of general repairs budget).
- Outstanding improvements planned for this financial year include: connecting up the heat exchanger (£25,000 budgeted), refurbishment of the Serenity Chapel exit toilets (£40,000 budgeted) and cremator reline and hearth (£35,000 budgeted).
- Officers are continuing to explore options for a replacement crematorium and burials software system (£15,700 budgeted). It is hoped to bring a report recommending a preferred option to the next Joint Committee.
- Expenditure of £10,400 was incurred to 30 September 2018 on the services of a gardener for which no provision was made in the 2018/19 budget. This service is due to end in October 2018.
- Appendix 1 illustrates the table of Gold, Silver and Bronze awards for bereavement services reported to the last meeting.
- Appendix 2 gives more detailed updates on the website, obesity and direct/low cost funerals.
- Latest take-up of the various new styles of memorialisation is as follows:

Style of memorialisation	Take-up
Columbarium (installed 2015)	13
Woodland Walk barbican (2018)	12
Children's garden columbarium (2018)	1
Reflection wall plaques (2018)	1

3. Financial implications

The financial implications are as set out above.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

UK crematorium grading for the Charter for the Bereaved

(Note: Alphabetical within each category – 106 awards in total)

No	Authority	Grade
1	Allerdale Borough Council	Gold
5	Bramcote Bereavement Services	Gold
54	Wyre BC	Gold
55	Amey Ltd (Northampton)	Silver
86	Worcester Council	Silver
87	Amber Valley BC	Bronze
89	Broxtowe BC - Cemeteries	Bronze
90	Eden District Council	Bronze
91	Erewash BC - Cemeteries	Bronze
106	Wrexham CBC	Bronze

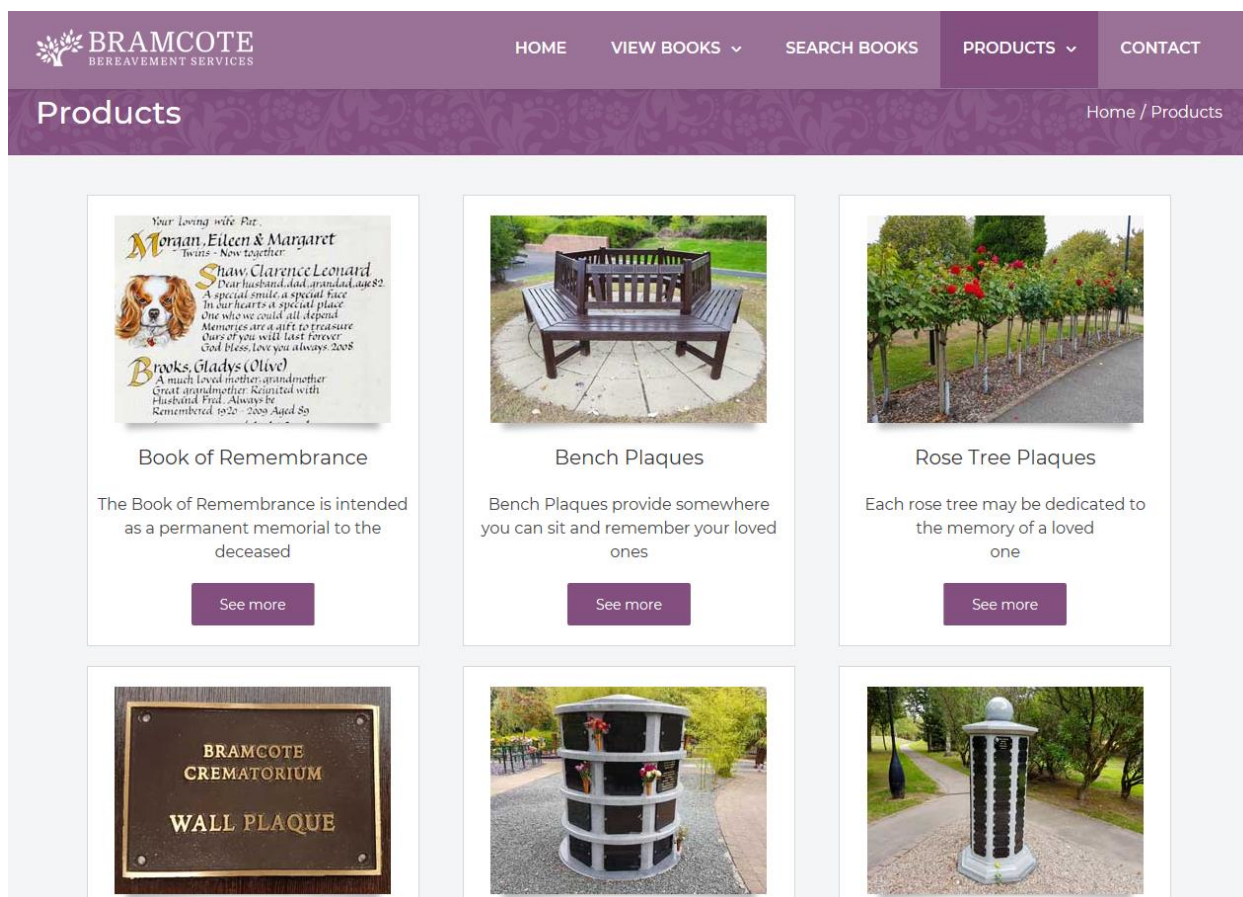
The Joint Committee on 15 January 2018 requested more information on outstanding tasks to complete to enable Cemeteries re-grading to gold. However, there are 84 criteria for cemeteries to reach Gold Standard and achievement of some (e.g. provision of woodland burials as an option) would require significant investment to achieve, whilst others (e.g. pre-purchase of graves) would require policy reversals.

It is therefore suggested that each authority work through the Gold Standard list, picking the “low hanging fruit” as an initial priority. Capital investment and policy changes for cemeteries are beyond the remit of this Joint Committee and would require the separate approval of each Authority.

APPENDIX 2

Bramcote Bereavement Services Website Update

The new website was launched on 1 July 2018. Since going live the foot traffic has increased by 30%. Also worth noting there are greater tools to monitor the hits per page. Most Bereavement services are moving products and services online, so with this in mind the online book of remembrance has been updated to be able to do name searches for easier location of their loved ones and a new products page - see example below:



<https://bramcote.bookofremembrance.uk/>

UK Obesity Crisis and the Impact on Bereavement Services

Obesity is becoming a UK-wide problem with larger numbers of people now being classed as obese and as a result many are dying earlier through obesity-related diseases. According to Public Health England by 2034, 70 per cent of adults are expected to be overweight or obese.

The impacts include extended cremation times, and, in some cases, the use of alternative crematoria such as Sherwood Forest.

Should the cremators at Bramcote become life-expired or beyond economic repair then consideration should be given to installing larger cremators.

Direct and Low Cost Funerals

Overview on direct cremation:

- The deceased is moved from the place of death such as a hospital or home directly to a place of holding or direct to a crematorium.
- As with a conventional funeral the coffin travels along the aisle of the chapel of the crematorium to the cremator.
- No ceremony takes place and usually there are no mourners present at the crematorium.
- The ashes can then either be scattered at the crematorium or if requested returned to the applicant of the deceased.

Recent APSE studies suggest 98% of people in the United Kingdom do not want a lavish funeral; trends are now showing more people want to celebrate the life of the deceased away from the crematorium, so that relates to a direct or simple funeral with a minimal amount of people attending the crematorium and normally a week later a celebration of life wake happens.

So far Bramcote Bereavement Services have only had two direct cremations, due to most people still choosing the traditional funeral approach.

These figures are taken from Sun Life cost of dying report.

Type of funeral	Average cost*	Includes
Direct cremation	£1,600	Collection of the deceased, a simple coffin, and return of ashes
Cremation using a funeral director	£3,311	Collection and care of the deceased, a basic coffin, hearse and managing a simple service; but does not include an elaborate ceremony
Burial using a funeral director	£4,257	Collection and care of the deceased, a basic coffin, hearse and managing a simple service; but does not include an elaborate ceremony

*annual Sun Life Cost of Dying report 2017, and the Royal London National Funeral Cost Index Report 2017

Currently Bramcote Bereavement Services are liaising with other authorities to consider bringing forward a direct funeral or a low cost funeral package. For example, Nottingham City Council have tendered their requirements and set up The Nottingham Funeral Service, in partnership with The Co Operative Funeralcare.

Should this be deemed an appropriate way forward a further report will be brought to the Joint Committee.