

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CIA/23/24

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** City of Inverness Area Committee

**Date:** 19 August 2024

**Report Title:** Bereavement Services – Project Updates

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive – Place

## 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to members on the work being undertaken on burial ground capacity and new burial grounds in the Inverness area.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- i. the progress of burial ground extensions in the Inverness area.
- ii. the challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development

## 3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** – The Council on 14 September 2023 approved a capital budget for bereavement services of £2.226m for 2023/24 and £4.168m for 2024/25 - 2028/29.

3.2 **Legal** – The Council has a statutory obligation to manage burial provision, memorial safety and cremations as set out in the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – The burial ground capacity project works with local communities where there may be changes to future burial ground provision in an area.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – There are not considered to be Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications related to the burial ground capacity projects.

3.5 **Risk** – If burial ground extensions or new sites are not provided there is a risk that the Council will be unable to provide burials in some locations to meet the expectations and preferences of communities. The establishment of a project board for proactive oversight and support for projects serves to reduce service risks.

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – The safety of staff and visitors in burial grounds is a statutory obligation for local authorities and memorial safety inspections are undertaken to reduce risks.

3.7 **Gaelic** – There are not considered to be any Gaelic implications.

#### 4. **Background**

4.1 Section 3 of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 requires each local authority to provide at least one burial ground within its area. The Highland Council has 245 burial grounds with 39 being in the Inverness area. Of these 27 are operational and 12 are closed. **Appendix 1** provides a breakdown of lair availability and capacity data for burial grounds in Inverness.

#### 5. **Burial Ground Capacity Projects in the Inverness area**

5.1 Through the capital programme the Council aims to provide appropriate burial ground provision in the Highlands. The team are reviewing burial ground extensions where current capacity is less than 10 years based on past trends. Information on burials and lair sales is monitored on a weekly basis following submission from all bereavement services administrative teams.

5.2 The Bereavement Services Project Board meets regularly, to support the work of the team delivering burial ground extensions and new sites. The board ensures good governance in delivering the programme and membership includes key internal partners in delivering the projects such as the Estates management team, the Project Design Unit and Finance.

5.3 The Board recognises the challenges in some areas with burial ground provision with it becoming increasingly difficult to identify available land for development of extensions or for new burial grounds. The reasons include:

- a) land availability and purchase cost.
- b) developmental costs.
- c) land suitability and geology – land conditions and requirements must comply with SEPA guidelines for burial grounds, be relatively flat land with little or no rock formations.
- d) regulatory requirements – the selection of any new sites or extensions must not cause any pollution to the environment, including groundwater and this is regulated by SEPA.
- e) acceptability with local Planning considerations.

5.4 Progress on the current approved projects in Inverness is summarised in **Appendix 2**.

5.5 As can be seen, the projects are on track with a green RAG status. Good work has been undertaken by the bereavement services team, local amenities team, the project design unit, estates and legal to progress solutions with the support and input of local members.

- Works to clear additional space within **Petty Tornagrain Cemetery** is ongoing to allow for additional lairs within the current cemetery, extending the capacity by at least 1 year.

- Works ongoing to create additional lairs within the existing boundary of **Tomnacross Cemetery**. Land investigations ongoing for future extension.
- Drainage works at **Kilvean Cemetery** have now completed. Phase 1 of works will allow for 1600 additional lairs / 10+ years capacity. Plan for future phasing of the site underway.
- Design for 84 additional lairs at **Kilmorack Cemetery** has been completed and works will be carried out in Autumn. These works will increase capacity by a further 8.5+ years.
- Works at **Dores Cemetery** is linked to the new housing development, allowing for a joint access road. Tender and contract works for the cemetery will begin once the access road has been completed.
- The extension to **Daviot Cemetery** has now been opened for use allowing pre-purchase restrictions for the cemetery have been lifted.

5.6 In addition to the specific approved capital, the team have been taking forward priority works through an approved £400k for bereavement services from the Health and Prosperity Strategy investment. This has been beneficial in taking forward additional projects in Inverness area as detailed in the table below.

Name	Comments	Status
Croy	Works to allow installation of paths and concrete foundations for headstones within existing cemetery (£10k).	Ongoing

5.7 Work is still ongoing to review detailed projects for the current capital budget for 2024/25 - 2028/29 of £4.168m. The bereavement services team will continue to engage with local members on projects in their area and their ongoing support is appreciated.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 05/08/2024

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Background Papers:

Appendices:

## Appendix 1 – Inverness Burial Ground Capacities & Lair Figures

Figures as of 13/07/2024. Figures reported weekly.

Name	Ward	Status	Number of prepared lairs available	Average Lairs sold per year	Current capacity in years
Ardersier	17	Open	26	2.1	12.5
Auchterawe	12	Open	40	0.1	460.0
Beauly St Mary's	12	Open	297	1.4	213.5
Boleskine	12	Closed	-	-	-
Breaklish	17	Closed	-	-	-
Cannich	12	Open	45	1.0	43.1
Clachan Comar (Fasnakyle)	12	Closed	-	-	-
Corriemony	12	Closed	-	-	-
Croy	17	Open	13	1.9	6.8
Dalarossie	19	Open	25	1.0	24.0
Dalchreichart	12	Open	100	0.0	100+
Daviot	19	Open	550	2.6	210.8
Dores	12	Open	-	-	-
Drumtemple	12	Open	81	0.7	116.4
Dunlichity	12	Open	22	0.0	22+
Eskadale St Mary's	12	Open	18	1.1	15.9
Foyers	12	Open	26	1.0	24.9
Glenconvinth	12	Open	55	1.6	35.1
Invermoriston	12	Open	95	0.3	273.1
Inverness Chapel Yard	14	Closed	-	-	-
Inverness Greyfriars	14	Closed	-	-	-
Inverness Old High Church	14	Closed	-	-	-
Jenkins Park	12	Open	95	1.6	60.7
Kilchuimen	12	Open	11	0.7	15.8
Kilmorack New/Old	12	Open	18	10.3	1.7
Kilmore New	12	Open	47	1.9	24.6
Kilmore Old	12	Open	27	1.5	18.3
Old Kiltarlity	12	Open	3	0.3	11.5
Kilvean	13	Open	613	125.0	4.9
Kirkhill (Wardlaw)	12	Open	27	3.0	9.1
Kirkton of Ardesier	17	Closed	-	-	-
Kirkton of Bunchrew	12	Closed	-	-	-
Lochend	12	Closed	-	-	-
Moy	19	Open	20	0.0	20+
Old Petty (Castle Stuart)	17	Closed	-	-	-
Petty-Tornagrain	17	Open	28	28.2	1.0
Struy	12	Open	59	0.6	96.9
Tomnacross	12	Open	3	2.1	1.4
Tomnahurich	13	Closed	-	-	-

## Appendix 2 – Current approved capital projects

Name	Total Capital Budget £000	Project status RAG	Date of estimated full capacity prior to any works	Works start date	Works duration (months)	Site works to be completed	Estimated site settlement (months)	Go live date	Comments
Petty Tornagrain	£80k	G	01/07/2025	01/12/2024	3	01/03/2025	3	01/06/2025	Works to add additional lairs within existing cemetery ongoing.
Tomnacross	£120k	G	01/11/2025	01/04/2025	3	01/07/2025	3	01/10/2025	Works to add additional lairs within existing cemetery ongoing. Land investigations ongoing for future extension.
Kilvean	£210k	G	01/05/2029	01/01/2028	9	01/10/2028	6	01/04/2029	Drainage works complete for phase 1 extension. Plan for future phasing underway.
Kilmorack	£150k	G	01/08/2030	01/10/2024	6	01/04/2025	3	01/07/2025	Design complete. Works to be carried out in Autumn 2024.
Dores	£303k	G	Closed	01/01/2025	6	01/07/2025	6	01/01/2026	Works linked with new housing development. Tender and contract works to begin once joint access road complete.

