



To: Sheila Stuart Ex Cllr for Community Development and Health
Report by: Bob Hadfield
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 13/11/2008

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES SURVEY Non Key

1. Executive summary

The City Council is a Burial Authority under the Local Government Act 1974 and operates cemeteries in Newmarket Road, Huntingdon Road and a Crematorium. The Regulations governing their management were last revised in November 2006 and subject to member approval officers now propose to enhance the appearance of the grounds, at the Cemeteries and Crematorium, via the enforcement of their rules and regulations. A lack of consistency and clarity in day to day management in applying the Regulations has created confusion in this important area and this has resulted in a wide range of memorabilia being left around the grounds and unauthorised planting in communal areas such as the formal rose beds. A scaled down, but comprehensive leaflet, detailing the regulations and other relevant information available to the bereaved, could ensure they are aware of the choices available to them at an early stage.

Following scrutiny in committee of the Bereavement Services questionnaire in July 2007 the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved a recommendation to adopt the questionnaire, to be issued to the public as part of wide ranging consultations with various users of the service.

Analysis of the survey results indicates that the area of most concern, particularly at the crematorium relates to mementos placed by individuals, overspill or creep resulting from the placing of these, breakables materials e.g. glass, and the inappropriate nature of some items, e.g. saucepans, flags, jam jars etc.

There is a clear but small majority in favour of restrictions being placed on the number, type of memento used and overspill. However of these people are most concerned about overspill. People would like to see rules displayed, but are less comfortable about rules being tightened, suggesting that the public should know what the rules are and would be happy just to see them enforced in a consistent way.

This may indicate a need for guidance rather than regulation and appropriate language being employed, and also suggests that the way in which the words are conveyed could influence the ultimate effectiveness of policy.

Any change in policy would therefore require a clear explanation to be acceptable by the majority. Any tidying up of memorabilia would need to be sensitively managed, carefully structured and carried out over a longer period of time.

The display of appropriate notices within the grounds and buildings, giving a substantial amount of time to clear/collect items and points of contact for any further clarification would be an essential requirement.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health is recommended to consider whether to approve the following:

- The enforcement of Bereavement Services current Rules and Regulations, subject to amendments to the text.
- To approve the adoption and display of 'guidance' signage' throughout the memorial gardens.
- To endorse the prohibition of planting or placing of mementos in formal rose bed areas.
- To approve the designation of areas for the placing of mementos.

3. Background

Following press coverage relating to memorabilia within the grounds at the Crematorium and discussions with senior officers, Cambridge City Council appointed the services of an external consultant to review the wants and needs of our users. Following member consultation and subsequent approval a comprehensive questionnaire was sent to the bereaved and funeral directors.

The results became available in July of this year and were followed by a presentation delivered by the author Phil Back to a forum of Funeral Directors.

Results from this questionnaire, in conjunction with our existing business plan, will be used to tailor the way we undertake matters in accordance with customers expectations over the coming years.

There is overall support for introducing a new policy on the use of mementos overall, but it would need to be done carefully and sensitively, as the majority in favour is not overwhelming. Younger visitors are less open to restrictions being made as to their placing, and this suggests that as over time it may become harder to introduce new restrictions, action may therefore be needed in the short rather than the medium term.

New rules on number and type of mementos would be supported, but would attract significant opposition from a minority of visitors, mostly younger people. Rules on overspill would however attract universal support, and would allow the council to tidy the grounds after a suitable interval. For example: The removal of remembrance items by mid-December, to allow for leaving of the Christmas wreaths, and the removal of Christmas wreaths on 31 January.

There is little enthusiasm for allowing anyone other than authorised personnel to undertake planting, which would support regulating against planting in the formal rose beds.

Paradoxically, people want plastic flowers to be allowed but insist on environmentally friendly wrappings being used. A compromise could be to allow plastic flowers on individual plots but regulate against it in the communal areas, where only fresh flowers only could be left and if in wrappings, these to be environmentally friendly.

The careful and sensitive management of any tidying of the grounds would require appropriate and informative temporary signage in the first instance, and then similarly, guidance type signage to maintain standards on a permanent basis also. For example: "Please do not leave any wrapping papers or plastic in the rose beds or strewing areas to help us keep the grounds looking well kept for the benefit of all our visitors."

Providing a range of memorials, both individual and communal, aims to allow the bereaved to express personal grief in a number of ways through their own individual memorial be it personal or more formal, and discourages a breach of any regulations.

4. Implications

Benefits to enforcement of the current and introduce new rules are:

- To enhance the general appearance of the grounds, resulting in a more pleasing environment for all visitors.
- To support Cambridge City Councils Medium Term Objectives, and environmental vision. For example: 'Ensure that residents and other

service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council' and 'There will be strong leadership on environmental issues'.

- To offer the bereaved a choice of preferred look relating to an area of commemoration.
- To improve the safety of all users and staff.

To do nothing may result in:

- An adverse impact on the environment and further decline in the appearance of the cemetery and crematorium grounds.
- Negative impact on satisfaction of the bereaved, visitors and professional service providers with services provided.
- Some risk to user safety via breakables and/or rusting/deteriorating objects.
- Risks to staff safety in particular grounds maintenance personnel when operating machinery.
- Staff morale being affected when service provision complaints are received relating to areas over which they feel they have no particular control.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Questionnaire Template *(Undertaken by Phil Back Associates in partnership with Cambridge City Council)*

Bereavement Services Business Plan

Bereavement Services mission statement

6. Appendices

1. Bereavement Services Rules and Regulations
2. Survey Report which followed the questionnaire

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name: Tracy Lawrence

Author's Phone Number: 01954 782428

Author's Email: Tracy.Lawrence@cambridge.gov.uk

CAMBRIDGE CITY CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Cemeteries and Crematorium Regulations

The Cemeteries and Crematorium are managed and operated in accordance with the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, as amended by the Local Authorities' (Amendment) Order 1986, the Criminal Justice Acts 1967 and 1982 and such regulations as may be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Office.

These Regulations replace those adopted by the predecessor to Cambridge City Council in 1903.

Where, in these Regulations, there is a requirement to produce documentation of any sort, all such documentation shall be in its original form. Photocopies will not be accepted.

Location and Services

Cambridge City Council operates and manages three cemeteries and one crematorium. Two cemeteries (Newmarket Road Cemetery and Histon Road Cemetery) are within the City's boundary and the Crematorium and the third cemetery are located outside the boundary on the main A14 Huntingdon Road. The Crematorium and Huntingdon Road Cemetery are approximately 5 miles from the City centre.

Bus Service

Local buses serve all locations

Rail Service

The nearest station is Cambridge and this is approximately 8 miles from the Cemetery and Crematorium on Huntingdon Road.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. Terms

- 1.1. "Administration Office" means in the case of the three cemeteries and the Crematorium the administration office located at Cambridge City Crematorium, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0JJ.
- 1.2. "Cemeteries" means the Histon Road Cemetery and the Newmarket Road Cemetery and the Huntingdon Road Cemetery and/or any

cemetery and any buildings or land provided therewith by Cambridge City Council.

- 1.3. "Cremation Authority" means the cremation authority in whose area a cremation has been carried out.
- 1.4. "Crematorium" means the Cambridge City Crematorium at Huntingdon Road Cambridge and/or any crematorium and any buildings or land therewith provided by Cambridge City Council.
- 1.5. "Director" means Cambridge City Council's Director of Community Services and his/her staff as directed.
- 1.6. "Regulations" means these Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations and any amendment thereof.
- 1.7. "Registrar" means the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages.
- 1.8. "Resident" means any individual permanently resident within Cambridge City Boundary.

2. Opening Times

- 2.1. The grounds of the Cemeteries and Crematorium will be open to the public every day of the year and at all times except as detailed in 2.2 and 6.0 below.
- 2.2. Newmarket Road Cemetery will be open from 9.00am until 4.00pm in the period from the 1st November to the 31st March and from 9.00am until 6.00pm from the 1st April to the 31st October in any year.

3. Administration

- 3.1. The Administration Office is open from 9.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday. It is closed at weekends and on public holidays.
- 3.2. Plans of the Cemeteries and the Crematorium shall be available for inspection during normal office hours in the Administration Office.
- 3.3. A Register of Burials and a Register of Cremations are kept at the Administration Office. Searches may be made and certified extracts obtained by prior arrangement with the Administration Office.

- 3.4. Any form specified in these Regulations for use in connection with burial, cremation or memorials may be obtained free of charge from the Director at the Administration Office.
- 3.5. All enquiries, complaints and requests from members of the public should be made to the Director at the Administration Office.

4. Fees

- 4.1. Cambridge City Council will determine fees for the Cemeteries and Crematorium Services annually.
- 4.2. Fees, in respect of memorials, will take effect from the 1st April in each year.
- 4.3. Details of fees for the Cemeteries and Crematorium services may be obtained from the Administration Office during office hours or via Cambridge City Council's website.
- 4.4. In determining whether burial fees will be chargeable at the Resident or Non-resident rate the last permanent address of the deceased will be used. If a long term resident of Cambridge has been accommodated in a residential care/nursing home outside the boundary of the City the Resident rate will apply so long as the deceased has had a permanent address in the City of Cambridge within the year immediately prior to the date of death. The payment of Resident as opposed to Non-resident charges may also be allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Director.
- 4.5. All fees and charges are payable in advance to Cambridge City Council at the Administration Office.
- 4.6. Official receipts will be given for all money received by Cambridge City Council.

5. Visitors

- 5.1. Cambridge City Council welcomes all visitors to the Cemeteries and Crematorium. Visitors are asked to respect the peace, dignity and reverence of the facilities
- 5.2. All persons entering the Cemeteries and Crematorium shall be subject to the Regulations and to any directions, which may be given by the Director or his/her staff in the course of their duties.

- 5.3. All persons shall conduct themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner and are advised of the following provisions in the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977:

No person shall:

- *wilfully create any disturbance in a cemetery*
- *commit any nuisance in a cemetery*
- *wilfully interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery*
- *wilfully interfere with any grave vault or tombstone or other memorial or with any flowers or plants on any such grave*
- *play at any game or sport in a cemetery*

Any person who contravenes these provisions shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 1 on the Standard Scale (at the date of the Regulations £200) and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a fine not exceeding £10 for each day during which the offence continues after conviction thereof.

- 5.4. Visitors shall not unreasonably interrupt the Council's employees at their duties or employ them to execute private works within the Cemeteries or the Crematorium or extend to them any gratuity.
- 5.5. All visitors must keep to the footpaths or roads provided for that purpose except when visiting a grave and must refrain from touching the trees, shrubs, plants or flowers.
- 5.6. No person shall drop, throw or otherwise deposit and leave in the Cemeteries and the Crematorium any wastepaper or refuse of any kind except in the litter bins provided.
- 5.7. No person shall operate any sound reproducing equipment or play any musical instrument without the prior consent of the Director.
- 5.8. No photographs or videos may be taken in the Cemeteries and the Crematorium without the prior consent of the Director and where applicable the holder of the deed of grant of exclusive right of burial.
- 5.9. No person shall smoke in any of the Cemeteries and Crematorium buildings.
- 5.10. All persons entering the Cemeteries and Crematorium do so at their own risk and Cambridge City Council will not accept liability for injuries or damage sustained howsoever caused.

- 5.11. Any person found soliciting for business within any of the Cemeteries or the Crematorium may be banned from entering the Cemeteries or the Crematorium.
- 5.12. Vehicles (which term shall, for the purpose of the Regulations, include bicycles) are allowed in the grounds of the cemeteries at Huntingdon Road, Newmarket Road and the Crematorium. Motorised vehicles are not allowed in the cemetery at Histon Road without prior consent from the Director.
- 5.13. Vehicle access is subject to absolute right of way being given to funeral cortege and/or pedestrians at all times in the cemeteries and crematorium.
- 5.14. The maximum speed limit in the grounds of the Cemeteries and Crematorium is 10 miles per hour or such other speed limit as may be notified.
- 5.15. Vehicles may only be driven on carriageways suited to the purpose and in the car parks. They must not be driven or parked on grassed areas. No vehicle to be left in a position so as to cause an obstruction to other traffic.

6. Children

- 6.1. Children under 15 years of age are not allowed, for their own safety, within the Cemeteries and Crematorium except under the care and supervision of a responsible adult.

7. Dogs and Animals

- 7.1. Without the prior consent of the Director, no animals are allowed within the buildings and grounds of the Cemeteries and Crematorium except for assisted dogs.

8. Water supply

- 8.1. Cambridge City Council reserves the right to disconnect the water supply in Cemeteries to avoid freezing, when a tap or taps are defective or if the supply provided is abused.

9. Non-council employees

- 9.1. All persons, not being employees of Cambridge City Council, engaged at work in the Cemeteries and Crematorium shall comply with all

requirements and directions of Cambridge City Council when in the Cemeteries or the Crematorium.

10. Public Health Funerals

- 10.1. Under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, Cambridge City Council has a duty to dispose of the body of any person dying within the administrative district, where it appears that no suitable funeral arrangements are being made other than by the authority. The exception to this is where a death occurs in Hospital; in this instance the relevant Hospital authorities make the arrangements.
- 10.2. The Council normally acts on written instructions received from the local Coroners Officer. In some instances the managers of residential homes and sheltered accommodation advise of circumstances where a death has occurred within their home.
- 10.3. Where the deceased has not left a will or any other documents that will indicate the existence of relatives, religious beliefs or funeral preferences Cambridge City Council will make suitable arrangements for the deceased to be buried. The reason for this option is predominantly the possibility of a future requirement for an exhumation licence request via relatives that may come forward at a later date and the Council's preferred environmental option unless contrary to the bereaved requesting cremation.

BURIALS

11. Booking burial service times

- 11.1. Applications for burial must be made to the Director at the Administration Office between 9.00am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays).
- 11.2. Every application for burial must be confirmed in writing on the prescribed Interment Notice.

12. Interment notices

- 12.1. The Interment Notice must be completed accurately and in full by the person/s arranging the burial. Advice on this can, if required, be obtained from the Administration Office.
- 12.2. The Interment Notice together with the appropriate fee must be delivered to the Administration Office by 12 noon at least two clear working days before the date of the proposed burial. This Regulation

may be waived at the discretion of the Director in the interest of public health.

- 12.3. The Registrar's Certificate for Burial or the Coroner's Order for Burial (or a duplicate thereof) must be delivered to the Director at the Administration Office before the proposed burial can take place. Whenever possible the relevant document should accompany the Interment Notice referred to in 11.1 above.
- 12.4. In the case of the burial of a non viable foetus a Certificate of Delivery from the Medical Practitioner or Midwife who delivered the foetus will be required.
- 12.5. In the case of the burial of cremated remains, a Certificate of Cremation, issued by the relevant Cremation Authority, will be required.
- 12.6. Coffin and casket approximate sizes to be supplied at the time of telephone booking and must be clarified in writing on the Interment Notice.
- 12.7. Should a properly completed Interment Notice and the prescribed documents referred to in paragraphs 11.3 and 11.4 above not be received by the required time (see Regulation 11.2 above) the Director may, at his/her discretion, postpone the funeral.
- 12.8. Before the burial takes place all fees and charges must be paid in full, unless a prior arrangement exists at the discretion of the Director.

13. Burial times

- 13.1. The time booked for a funeral is the time at which the cortege is due to arrive at a Cemetery and this must be strictly observed. This is essential if disruption to other funerals is to be avoided.
- 13.2. In the event of the late or early arrival of a cortege the funeral must wait as and where instructed by the Director until it is convenient to proceed.

14. Religious or other services

- 14.1. The person or persons arranging the burial shall be responsible for the attendance of a minister of religion or other officiant at the burial

service and for the payment of any fee to which they may be entitled, except where public health applies.

- 14.2. Any form of funeral may be used and the Director must be given details in advance of all proposed ceremonies. The Director shall have the discretion to prohibit a form of ceremony if in his opinion it would cause a disturbance or be offensive to other visitors in the Cemetery.
- 14.3. Alternatively, the coffin may be committed direct to the grave without any form of funeral service.

15. Coffins and caskets (Any reference to coffins applies equally to caskets)

- 15.1. Each individual body whether adult or child brought into any of the Cemeteries must be contained in a separate coffin. The only exceptions to this rule will be when:
 - *The burial is that of a mother and baby who died together in childbirth in which event mother and child may be contained in the same coffin.*
 - *The burial is that of twins who died in childbirth in which event the babies may be contained in the same coffin.*
 -
- 15.2. No coffin will be accepted for burial unless it bears adequate particulars of the deceased person/s therein.
- 15.3. Coffins may be open during the funeral service in the Chapel only. They may not be open if a graveside only service is held.
- 15.4. Coffins may be constructed of wood, metal, wicker or cardboard. Shrouds will also be permitted but their use must be notified to the Administration Office at the time the service is booked. The office must also be notified of the type and design of shroud.
- 15.5. Responsibility for providing sufficient bearers to carry the coffin rests with the funeral director or the person arranging the funeral.

GRAVES

Cambridge City Council's Cemeteries offers public graves and graves to which the exclusive right of burial may be purchased for a fixed period of 50 years. On the fifth anniversary of the purchase of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial we may offer the owner the chance to buy another five years bringing it back to its original full term.

16. General

- 16.1. Cambridge City Council will prepare all graves
- 16.2. No body will be buried in a grave in such a manner that any part of the coffin is less than 3 feet below the level of the ground adjoining the grave provided that Cambridge City Council may, in its absolute discretion where it considers the soil to be of a suitable character, permit a coffin to be placed not less than 2 feet below the level of any ground adjoining the grave.
- 16.3. No body shall be buried in a grave unless the coffin is effectively separated from any coffin interred on a previous occasion by means of a layer of earth not less than 6 inches thick.

17. Public graves

- 17.1. Public graves are provided for those that desire burial but cannot or do not wish to purchase the exclusive right of burial.
- 17.2. The right of burial in public graves remains with Cambridge City Council and such graves may contain other, non related, interments.
- 17.3. Memorials cannot be erected on public graves except with the written permission of the Director.

18. Graves with an Exclusive Right of Burial

- 18.1. The exclusive right of burial in a grave may be purchased at the time of the burial on payment to Cambridge City Council of the appropriate fee and completion of the Interment Notice.
- 18.2. The exclusive right of burial in a grave space in the Cemeteries is granted for a fixed period of 50 years with the option to top up at five yearly intervals.
- 18.3. The grant of exclusive right of burial entitles the deed holder to determine who is buried in the grave and whether a memorial can be erected thereon (subject to payment of the relevant fees and permission in advance from Cambridge City Council) The grant relates solely to the exclusive right of burial and does not extend any freehold rights in respect of the land space.
- 18.4. The right to erect a memorial is granted for a period of 50 years, (subject to payment of the relevant fees, including an inspection payment) with compulsory top ups at five yearly intervals. **Failure to top up at the end of the 5 year period may result in the memorial being temporarily removed until required payment is received to allow mandatory memorial safety inspection.**

- 18.5. All such graves will normally be excavated to the maximum depth available. All graves should be sufficient for a minimum of two interments but Cambridge City Council cannot be held responsible if, due to factors outside its control, two interments in a grave cannot be achieved.
- 18.6. New graves will be allocated in rotation within each section of the Cemeteries. Alternative locations are at the discretion of the Director.
- 18.7. Plans showing all grave spaces are kept by Cambridge City Council and may be viewed on application to the Director at the Administration Office.
- 18.8. At the expiration of the 50 year period of the exclusive right of burial the purchaser, or current owner of the exclusive right of burial, will have the option to renew the said right subject to such restrictions and regulations and on payment of such fees as may be in force at that time.
- 18.9. Applications for renewal of the exclusive right of burial should be made to the Administration Office no less than 6 months before the expiry of the previous grant.
- 18.10. Where the period of grant of the exclusive right of burial has lapsed, and no notification of the intention to renew has been received from the person who held the exclusive right of burial, Cambridge City Council may grant a new exclusive right of burial to another person but before doing so will, where practical, notify the previous owner, or his/her personal representatives, of the Council's intention and give the previous purchaser the opportunity to renew the exclusive right of burial.
- 18.11. Where no interment has taken place in the grave, the owner of an exclusive right of burial may surrender the same to Cambridge City Council and receive repayment of the original purchase fee paid by the owner. No refund will be made if the exclusive right of burial will lapse within 5 years from the date of surrender
- 18.12. No grave in which the grant of exclusive right of burial has been purchased can be opened without the prior written consent of the registered owner except where the burial is that of the owner of the said grant.
- 18.13. Any transfer of ownership of exclusive right of burial will be subject to the production of satisfactory evidence of title and the approval of Cambridge City Council. Such transfer must be recorded in the Cemeteries' records and the original deed of grant of exclusive right of burial produced. The legal transfer of ownership can be arranged on application to the Director at the administration office.

19. Lawn Graves

- 19.1. Sections of the Cemeteries will be designated for lawn graves.
- 19.2. A lawn grave is a grave that is laid to lawn with no mounds or surrounds erected upon it. If the grave is a purchased grave, a headstone may be erected at its head on virgin soil
- 19.3. Memorial headstones on lawn graves must not exceed 90cms (approx. 36") in height above ground level and 60cms (approx.24") wide. These measurements include a base when provided.
- 19.4. Memorial headstones must be securely fixed and safely erected by a National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) accredited stonemason in a manner approved by Cambridge City Council.

20. Traditional graves

- 20.1. Sections of the Cemeteries may be designated for traditional graves
- 20.2. A traditional grave is one that can have a memorial slab covering its full length (2.13mts - approx 7 feet) and width (90cms - approx. 3 feet) and/or kerb surrounds and/or a memorial headstone (not exceeding 1.22mts - 4 feet high) These measurements include the dimensions of any base that might be erected
- 20.3. All memorials must be securely fixed and safely erected by a NAMM accredited stonemason in a manner approved by Cambridge City Council.

21. Infant graves

- 21.1. There is a section designated for infant burials in the Cemeteries at Newmarket Road and Huntingdon Road.
- 21.2. Infant graves are intended for the burial of babies and infants up to the age of 3 years at the time of death (in exceptional circumstances burial of older children may take place at the discretion of the Director).
- 21.3. Memorial headstones, not exceeding 46cms (approx. 18 inches) high, are permitted on purchased infant graves.
- 21.4. Memorial headstones on infant graves must be securely fixed and safely erected by a NAMM accredited stonemason in a manner approved by Cambridge City Council.

22. Natural and Woodland Burials

- 22.1. The Cemetery and Crematorium at Huntingdon Road have areas designated for woodland and natural burials.
- 22.2. Natural burials in the cemetery will be in a designated section of grassland with trees and shrubs planted on or around them. This section will remain “natural” and “informal” and grass cutting will be kept to a minimum.
- 22.3. No memorial or marker of any type will be permitted on graves in this section. This is to protect the naturalness of the area.
- 22.4. Woodland burials are in a mature wooded area located at the Crematorium, in which, if required, can be marked discreetly with a wooden memorial or marker. Stone monuments or anything made from non-biodegradable materials are not permitted.
- 22.5. Interments at both locations will only be allowed if a cardboard, wood or wicker coffin or a shroud is used.
- 22.6. The planting of bulbs at both locations is at the discretion of the Director.

23. Opening of graves

- 23.1. After burial no body or cremated remains may be removed from a grave without the prior production, to the satisfaction of Cambridge City Council, of an exhumation licence issued by the Department of Constitutional Affairs at least 7 days in advance of the date set for any such exhumation. Cambridge City Council will require the original documents for this purpose.
- 23.2. Where the registered owner of an exclusive right of burial is deceased and a further burial (ie not being that of the registered owner) is sought, Cambridge City Council will require a legal transfer of ownership to be applied for by the person/s claiming ownership of the exclusive right of burial, before any burial is permitted.
- 23.3. Cambridge City Council reserves the right to demand production of the deed of exclusive right of burial before a grave can be reopened. In the event of the loss of the deed Cambridge City Council reserves the right to demand a statutory declaration as to the loss of the said grant.
- 23.4. Cambridge City Council reserves the right to erect soil boxes on graves adjacent to those needing to be opened for burial purposes. The soil box will be removed as soon as possible after the burial has taken place and the grave restored to its original state.

- 23.5. Occasionally, it may be necessary to move memorials adjacent to a grave where a burial is due to take place. When this happens the memorial will be reinstalled as soon as possible after the burial, using a NAMM.

24. Memorial Management

The installation of new memorials and the adding of inscriptions to existing memorials is carefully controlled by Cambridge City Council to ensure that:

- 24.1. The work is only carried out with the permission of the registered owner/s of the right of burial. All memorials comply with Cambridge City Council's Regulations and the work is carried out with due regard to the appropriate Health and Safety regulations.
- 24.2. Owners of the exclusive right of burial in a grave space may erect, without charge, a wooden cross as a temporary grave marker for a maximum period of twelve months from the date of burial. Crosses should be constructed from a non-tropical, sustainable forest hardwood and should not exceed 3 feet in height.
- 24.3. Application for memorial work together with the relevant fee must be submitted to the Director on an "Application To Undertake Memorial Work" form for approval in advance of any work being carried out. This form must contain full details of the memorial stone mason who will carry out the work, the material to be used, full dimensions of the memorial, the proposed inscription and include a diagram of the proposed memorial. The application must also contain the full names of the registered owner/s together with their signature/s authorising the work.
- 24.4. The Director reserves the right to refuse to approve an inscription if in his/her opinion the proposed inscription would be offensive to relatives or friends of the deceased or users of the Cemetery or the public at large.
- 24.5. Every memorial must have inscribed upon the rear of the headstone the grave number as shown on the deed of grant of exclusive right of burial.
- 24.6. Memorial permits must be presented at either the cemetery office at Newmarket Road, or the administration office if the monumental works relate to Histon or Huntingdon Road cemeteries. If the memorial is acceptable, following an inspection, the permit will be signed authorising the memorial to be erected. The permit slip must be signed before the memorial is erected.

- 24.7. The owner must keep all memorials in a good and safe condition. The Director is authorised to remove any memorial that is allowed to fall into disrepair or become dangerous.
- 24.8. All memorial stones shall be of solid stone and in keeping with the aesthetics of the cemeteries and the historical architecture within certain sections. Any requests must be applied to the Director. The Director reserves the right to refuse to approve any such requests.
- 24.9. No memorial, of whatever description, will be admitted into the Cemeteries or permitted to be erected except on condition that such memorial be erected and remain at the owner's sole risk and Cambridge City Council shall not be held responsible for any damage or breakage which may occur to the same at any time. ***(The owner of the exclusive right of burial is advised to consider the availability of a suitable form of insurance in this respect).***
- 24.10. Cambridge City Council reserves the right to remove any artificial wreaths or flowers, glass or pottery items, tins, fencing of any description or any other items of wood, metal, plastic or any other material. Any item so placed in contravention of these Regulations will be disposed of without notice.
- 24.11. The fixing of screws, hooks, nails and plastic binding including string to any tree/shrub whether it is an adopted memorial tree, or not, is strictly forbidden
- 24.12. Any unauthorised artefacts, or cut flowers used to adorn any tree will be removed immediately, without prior notice.
- 24.13. The laying of fresh flowers is permitted providing they are removed from the external wrappings.
- 24.14. The planting, of any description, is strictly forbidden within the formal rose beds.

All persons who leave flowers, do so at their own risk and Cambridge City Council will not accept liability for any removal of such by a third party, howsoever caused.

25. Memorial Safety

Duties

- 25.1. Cambridge City Council will take measures to deal with headstone safety. A memorial inspection programme will be implemented to identify memorials posing an immediate danger to the public.

- 25.2. A memorial masons registration scheme (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) has been introduced to monitor monumental masons and prevent further risk within Cambridge City Council Cemeteries.
- 25.3. Primary responsibility for Health & Safety in Council owned cemeteries lies with Cambridge City Council as the burial authority in control of the cemetery. Cambridge City Council is required to control the risks associated with any cemetery for which they have responsibility.
- 25.4. Whilst Cambridge City Council has overall responsibility for the safety of the cemeteries, including risks from unstable memorials, it does not own the memorials. The owner of the memorial will be the grave owner who is responsible for the safety and stability of their memorial. In many cases there is no identifiable owner.
- 25.5. The Council has a responsibility to staff (Section 2 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) and a responsibility to visitors (Section 3 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a legal duty on the Council to assess the risks from cemetery structures and work activities and ensure that the risks are controlled.
- 25.6. Cambridge City Council has a duty of care to all visitors at their cemeteries and to ensure all memorials are safe, will carry out regular safety inspections at least once every five years. The Memorial Mason is responsible to erect a memorial safely. They are also legally liable for the standard of workmanship and memorial owners are protected under general consumer protection legislation. The memorial owner has a responsibility for ensuring their property is installed and maintained in a safe manner.
- 25.7. Cambridge City Council has implemented a memorial safety programme in line with the guidance set by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) – Installation, Inspection, Management and Maintenance of Memorials October 2005, recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and endorsed by the Local Government Ombudsmen Special Report March 2006.
- 25.8. Cambridge City Council complies with the clear recommendations of the HSE and the ICCM “a clear policy is in place with set standards for management of memorial stability”.
- 25.9. The frequency of re-inspection will be under a five year rolling programme. The Council’s inspection regime may prescribe shorter periods of inspection for memorials with a higher risk, but are not in need of immediate repair, or where ground condition; climate or other factors indicate a need for more frequent inspections.

Immediate Danger

- 25.10. In cases of immediate danger, the Council is empowered under the provision of Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) Article 6 (1) to take immediate action to make safe dangerous memorials

Training

- 25.11. Cambridge City Council employees are trained to carry out inspections of unstable memorials, and have completed an ICCM Management of Memorials course, covering memorial testing methods, marking and record keeping and current Health and Safety issues.
- 25.12. All staff are specifically trained on manual handling, gantry lifting equipment, calibrated testing devices and moving memorials. Training is provided prior to all inspections and working in a team ensures consistency.

Communication

- 25.13. Prior to starting any work a range of collective public awareness and notification will be carried out. Press releases, prominent warning notices and open days advising the public of the inspection and make safe process. Warning notices placed at the entrance of and throughout the burial grounds, to include indication of potential danger posed by unsafe memorials. Wherever possible individual notification will be sent to grave owners, keeping them fully informed of what is being done, the test date, result and future period of inspection.

Inspection and Testing

- 25.14. On commencement of the memorial safety programme an initial inspection will be carried out to identify any memorials posing an immediate danger to the public. All memorials posing an immediate danger to the public will be made safe with a temporary support where possible and only laid down as a final option. This will minimise distress to the bereaved, giving consideration of the aesthetics to the cemeteries and avoiding trip hazards.
- 25.15. All memorials in the cemetery will be visually assessed, but memorials in excess of 2.5 metres will require inspection from a structural engineer. A physical hand test will be carried out on memorials up to 2.5 metres at the apex of the memorial or as high up as can comfortably be reached by the operative, to a force of 350 Newtons. Results from this test will be fed into a hand-held device and then downloaded to a central computer system in the administration office. The physical hand test shall only take place following a visual inspection.
- 25.16. A final test following successful visual and hand test, force measuring equipment will be used to test memorials up to 1.5 metres.

- 25.17. A risk assessment will be carried out on memorials below 500mm due to the difficulty to test using force measuring equipment as these type of memorials are less likely to cause injury.

Record Keeping

- 25.18. Every memorial inspected will have an electronic and photographic record made of the inspection. Records include locating memorials for future inspections, method of inspection and an assessment of the priority and action to be taken to make the memorial safe.

Making Safe

- 25.19. Cambridge City Council will make safe memorials by using stabilisation devices to ensure that they are as much in harmony with the cemetery use as possible. In some individual cases laying down memorials will be essential to prevent a genuine hazard to health and safety but Cambridge City Council will not operate the laying down of large numbers of lawn memorials as an appropriate making safe method.

Repairing

- 25.20. The grave owner will be contacted where possible and advised of the situation regarding their memorial and to then contact a memorial mason so a memorial anchor system can be fitted as recommended by NAMM and the ICCM.
- 25.21. Grave owners who cannot be traced, the memorials will be refixed by Cambridge City Council either by, where funds allow, complying with the NAMM and ICCM recommendations as at 24.20 or inlaying in the ground (monoliths).

CREMATION

26. Booking cremation service times

- 26.1. Application for cremation must be made to the Director at the Administration Office between the hours of 9.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays)
- 26.2. Every application for cremation must be confirmed in writing on the prescribed "Preliminary Instructions for Cremation" form.

27. Cremation papers

- 27.1. Fully and properly completed cremation papers must be delivered to the Director at the Administration Office by 9.00am at least one clear working day prior to the date of the cremation service. In exceptional

circumstances the later delivery of papers may be accepted but only by prior arrangement with the Director.

- 27.2. The Registrar's Certificate for Cremation or the Coroner's Certificate for Cremation or The Registrar's Certificate of Non Liability to register must accompany the cremation papers referred to in 25.1 above.
- 27.3. In the case of the cremation of a non viable foetus a Certificate of Delivery from the Medical Practitioner or Midwife who delivered the foetus will be required.
- 27.4. Should the duly completed cremation papers and Certificates for Disposal not be received by the required time the Director may, at his/her discretion, postpone the funeral.
- 27.5. All fees and charges must be paid in full before the cremation service unless the Director has agreed alternative arrangements for payment.

28. Cremation times

- 28.1. The time booked for a funeral is 45 minutes. The first 5 minutes to allow the congregation to assemble within the Chapel, 30 minutes service time and the latter 10 minutes for crematorium staff to facilitate essential housekeeping. These times must be strictly observed, as it is paramount to avoid disruption to other funerals.
- 28.2. The allocated time for a service shall not exceed the stated time at 26.1 unless prior approval for a longer period has been obtained in exceptional and/or unavoidable circumstances from the Director on an application at the Administration Office.
- 28.3. When prior knowledge of a large congregation or an expressed wish of the applicant for a longer service time, an additional service time must be booked.
- 28.4. In the event of a cortege arriving early or late the funeral must wait as and where instructed by the Director or other authorised person until it is convenient to proceed.

29. Religious or other services

- 29.1. The person or persons arranging the funeral shall be responsible for the attendance of a minister of religion or other officiant at the cremation service and for the payment of any fee to which they may be entitled, except where public health funerals apply.
- 29.2. Any form of funeral service may be used and the Director must be given details in advance of all proposed ceremonies. The Director

shall have the discretion to prohibit any form of ceremony if in his opinion it would cause a disturbance or be offensive to other visitors to the Crematorium.

- 29.3. Alternatively, the coffin may be committed for cremation without any form of funeral service.

30. Coffins/Caskets

(Any reference to coffins will apply equally to caskets)

- 30.1. The Administration Office must be advised before any coffin larger than 7'6" long by 32" wide by 20" high can be accepted for cremation.
- 30.2. Each individual body, whether adult or child, brought into the Crematorium must be contained in a separate coffin. The only exceptions to this rule will be when the death is due to childbirth in which event mother and child may contained in the same coffin or when the cremation is that of twins who died at childbirth.
- 30.3. Each body, whether adult or child, brought to the Crematorium for cremation must be contained in a wood or wood by-product or other suitable coffin (the Director must have prior notification if cardboard or wicker coffins are to be used). Metal or metal lined coffins and metallic coffin fittings are not permitted.
- 30.4. No coffin shall be accepted unless it bears adequate particulars of the deceased person therein.
- 30.5. Coffins may be open in the Chapel(s) during the funeral service.
- 30.6. Funeral Directors and others arranging a funeral service are reminded of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which prohibits the burning of any substance, which may cause pollution. Bodies in coffins must only be covered or clothed in natural materials. If any other form of covering or clothing is required then the Director must be informed and his/her decision on the matter will be final.

31. General cremation regulations

- 31.1. The duration of any service shall not exceed 30 minutes without the prior permission of the Director.
- 31.2. The funeral director/person(s) arranging the service is responsible for the provision of sufficient bearers to convey the coffin reverently from the hearse to the catafalque. The Crematorium may (subject to prior approval), following payment of the appropriate fee be able to provide one bearer.

- 31.3. Persons attending a funeral at the Crematorium must leave the chapel promptly at the end of the ceremony in order that it can be prepared for the next service.
- 31.4. Wreaths and flowers brought to the Crematorium at the time of the funeral service are placed in a position allocated for the deceased in the floral display area. A stand bearing the name of the deceased will indicate the allocated place.
- 31.5. Floral tributes will normally remain on display for 7 days (including the day of the service) but in the event of severe deterioration or damage due to adverse weather conditions, they may be removed earlier at the Director's discretion. In any event removal will not take place less than 5 days (including the day of the service) after the funeral.
- 31.6. Floral tributes may occasionally be displayed in the Chapel(s) unless the Director has been otherwise advised. The funeral director must advise his/her client accordingly.

All persons who leave floral tributes and/or flowers in the chapels, at the cloister areas, or within the grounds, do so at their own risk. Cambridge City Council will not accept liability for any removal of such by a third party, howsoever caused.

- 31.7. Representatives of the deceased may view the coffin being placed into the cremator after the funeral service. If this facility is required the Director must be notified at the time of booking the cremation.

Cremated remains

- 31.8. Cremated remains may be stored free of charge at the Crematorium for a period of 14 days following the date of cremation. If, at the end of this period, no further instructions have been received a telephone call will be made to the applicant or Funeral Director for the cremation giving a further 14 day period in which instructions may be given. If, at the end of this period no instructions have been received, the cremated remains will be disposed of in accordance with current legislation within the grounds of the Crematorium without further consultation.
- 31.9. Cremated remains where instruction has been received not to witness will be stored for a period of 14 days free of charge following the date of cremation. The remains will be strewn in the woodland area with the exception of a request to be reunited with a previous loved one at a specific location.
- 31.10. Cremated remains where instruction has been received to witness will be stored free of charge until the applicant has booked an appointment for interment/strewing to take place. If no booking has been received within two months of the service, the cremated remains will be returned to the nominated Funeral Director.

- 31.11. Cremated remains where instruction has been received for collection by the Applicant, Funeral Director or nominated person will be stored for up to a period of 14 days, free of charge. Contact will be made with the appropriate person requesting collection and if collection is not within another 14 day period the cremated remains will be returned to the nominated Funeral Director.
- 31.12. Cremated remains may only be strewn or interred by or under the supervision of Cambridge City Council Bereavement Services staff.
- 31.13. The appropriate cremation certificate must accompany cremated remains received from other Cremation Authorities.
- 31.14. Metals remaining after cremation are either collected by the Applicant, Funeral Director or nominated person or upon obtaining written consent staff of Bereavement services will arrange for the metal residue to be removed via the ICCM by a non profit making company as part of a national scheme. All surplus monies derived from this process is given to selected death related charities.

32. Guiding Principles for Cremation Services.

- 32.1. Cambridge City Council has adopted the Guiding Principles for Cremation Services issued by the ICCM and is a member of the ICCM Corporate. Cambridge City Council works to the Federation of British Cremation Authorities (FBCA) Code of Cremation Practice and is a member.
- 32.2. The coffin will be placed into the cremator exactly as it is received on the catafalque and no part of it or its contents may be removed after the service of committal. The only exception being that floral tributes and any covering (eg a flag) on the coffin will be removed and placed to one side to await removal by the Chapel Attendant to the floral tribute display area.
- 32.3. Each coffin and contents given to the care of Cambridge City Council will be cremated separately.

33. Garden of Remembrance

- 33.1. The gardens at the Crematorium cover an area of 9 acres. The gardens are planned and formally planted with roses, shrubs and trees with a part being set aside as memorial woodland.
- 33.2. Many forms of memorial are available at the Crematorium. There is a Book of Remembrance, roses, shrubs, trees, garden seats, stone and slate tablets and memorial vaults are available for dedication to the

deceased on payment of the appropriate fee. Application for these memorials can be made to the Administration Office

- 33.3. The only memorials allowed in the Garden of Remembrance are those supplied and approved by Cambridge City Council.
- 33.4. The placing in the crematorium buildings or on the areas designated as the Gardens of Remembrance or the woodland Cambridge City Council reserves the right to remove any artificial wreaths or flowers, glass or pottery items, tins, fencing of any description or any other items of wood, metal, plastic or any other material. Any item so placed in contravention of these Regulations will be removed and disposed of without notice.
- 33.5. The fixing of screws, hooks, nails and plastic binding including string to any tree/shrub whether it is an adopted memorial tree, or not, is strictly forbidden
- 33.6. Any unauthorised artefacts, or cut flowers used to adorn any tree will be removed immediately, without prior notice.
- 33.7. The laying of fresh flowers is permitted providing they are removed from the external wrappings.
- 33.8. The planting, of any description, is strictly forbidden within the formal rose beds.

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL ARE AUTHORISED TO ALTER OR AMEND THE FOREGOING REGULATIONS AT ANY TIME; TO INTRODUCE SUCH FURTHER REGULATIONS AS THEY CONSIDER NECESSARY; TO WAIVE ANY OF THE FOREGOING REGULATIONS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR TO IMPOSE TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS ON ANY MATTERS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED BY THESE REGULATIONS.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

The Cambridge City Crematorium is owned and managed by Cambridge City Council, and is located on the A14 near Girton. The Council's Bereavement Services Team provide a comprehensive cremation and burial service at this site and recently opened a new lawn cemetery as an extension to the city's Newmarket Road cemetery, which is now nearing capacity.

Bereavement services is always a sensitive area to customers and the service works hard to ensure that it provides an effective and efficient service that meets people's needs in as sensitive and supportive a way as possible, especially in the context of great personal difficulty at a time of loss. However, there are times when individual wishes cannot be accommodated, or even when they clash with those of other people, and the service is therefore always interested to know how well it meets need, and the extent to which it should respond to pressure for changes to rules, or to the way services are provided.

This survey comes about as a result of that desire to engage more fully, and more directly, with customers to see how well the services meet existing needs and desires. For many customers of the service, contact with Bereavement Services is limited at the time of loss and is filtered through Funeral Directors; but many of these people do want to discuss issues later when memorials are being considered or when visiting the grounds, and the service wished to ensure that people who might be reluctant to comment on a sensitive area of work should be given a chance to have their say.

The objectives of the research are therefore:

- To assess how well the upkeep and maintenance of the crematorium and its grounds, and the Newmarket Road cemetery, live up to the expectations of those who visit;
- To explore possible improvements that could be made at the crematorium to serve people better;
- To examine how well the service meets basic customer service criteria such as availability and courtesy, and its responsiveness to equalities issues in relation to burial and cremation practice;
- To explore whether rules on *memento mori* need to be tightened, and if so what the nature of those rules should be. (This has proved to be a controversial issue in the recent past, with discussion in the local media about the current policy on mementos).

1.2 Methodology and data handling

The objectives, and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, called for a carefully managed quantitative approach; the standard questionnaire with a reply envelope would not be acceptable here, and it would be important to employ a researcher with a knowledge of bereavement, and the sensitivity, to minimise adverse reaction. Phil Back, a researcher with many years' experience in local government and a background in researching different aspects of bereavement services, including the management of cemeteries, was selected for this reason.

We devised a carefully worded covering letter clearly indicating our awareness of the issues surrounding bereavement and highlighting what we intended to do with the information we received. We also drew up a questionnaire designed to allow people to respond as they saw fit to the range of issues being presented, and covering as far as possible the answers people might want to give, whilst allowing

space for people to expand on or explain their views as they worked through the questionnaire. We were conscious throughout the work that our target audience for the questionnaire would include a significant proportion of elderly people and also others for whom the topic might well be distressing, and worked to overcome these difficulties.

We were also aware that a reminder might be insensitive and that we might be best to accept that non-completion on the first mailing was, in effect, the expression of a wish not to take part. This made it important that we got a good response rate on the initial mailing, as we would not get a second try.

Three different groups were selected for sampling. The first of these was the next of kin of people who had recently been buried, either at the new cemetery extension or at the Newmarket Road site. The second group was the next of kin of people who had been cremated at the City Crematorium. In both cases, we balanced the need for recent experience against the need to minimise distress by selecting people who had used either the burial or cremation service between four months and two years ago. In addition, we allowed a self-selection group who picked up a copy of the questionnaire from either of the two sites or from other public offices such as the Guildhall, libraries and so on. The total numbers of forms distributed and received are shown here:

Sample group	Number issued	Number returned	Response rate
Burials	139	53	38%
Cremations	1236	378	31%
Free distribution		44	
Total	1375	475	35%

The figures exclude forms returned marked gone away. Taking just the controlled distribution, the overall response rate is 31%, which we consider a very good rate

for a survey of this nature. This rises to a notional 35% if the free distribution forms are added in. In addition, a number of people indicated that they did not wish to take part because they had had little or no contact at the time of disposal, and no ongoing contact with either site. Only one person objected strongly to being approached, and this was more than counterbalanced by those people who wrote messages on their forms welcoming the survey and thanking us for the opportunity to contribute.

The resource originally earmarked for a possible reminder was instead, with the council's agreement, diverted into a survey of funeral directors who use the crematorium. A total of 37 funeral directors were sent a questionnaire targeted at their needs as agents of the bereaved, but with some parallel questions that could be set alongside those in the main survey. A total of 12 responses was received, in spite of what we would have foreseen would be a level of business interest in any proposed improvement. This represents a response rate of 32% from this group, which is reasonable for a postal survey, and parallels the response from residents themselves.

No weightings have been applied to any of the data.

In the analysis that follows, some responses have been converted into "mean scores", by assigning a value to the answer given and then calculating the average of those values for the issue in question. This process is explained in more detail as it arises.

We are very grateful to the officers at the Crematorium and the cemetery for their assistance in this study, and to the portfolio holder on the City Council whose advice has been both helpful and constructive.

2 Newmarket Road cemetery

2.1 Visiting Newmarket Road

We began by asking people about the Newmarket Road site, and a total of 152 people in the sample say they visit this site (other respondents were not asked the Newmarket Road questions).

This table shows how frequently those who visit Newmarket Road do so:

Frequency of visit to Newmarket Road	Proportion of respondents
At least weekly	10%
1-3 times a month	20%
4-6 times a year	11%
Once or twice a year	24%
Less than once a year	35%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	146

Although there are people who visit Newmarket Road Cemetery on a regular basis, they are very much in the minority. A third of all those who visit do so only occasionally, and three out of every five visitors attend at most twice in a year.

On the other hand, nearly a third of visitors to Newmarket Road visit at least once a month, and there are a few – one in ten of all visitors – who call in at least weekly, with a very small number who visit more or less every day.

On the whole, the younger a person is the more frequently they tend to visit, though there are exceptions to this. People aged 50 or under are more likely to be visiting at least monthly (around 40% do so) whereas only about half this proportion of over 70s visit this often. Seven out of ten over 70s visit at most twice a year, and people with disabilities (who are more likely to be older people) visit

less often than those with no disability. There is little variation between men and women as to the frequency of visits to the cemetery.

This table shows when people last visited:

Last visit to Newmarket Road	Proportion of respondents
Within last three months	43%
4-6 months ago	16%
7-12 months ago	24%
1-2 years ago	8%
Over two years ago	9%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	152

Although many people say they don't visit the cemetery terribly often, nearly half the people who replied to the survey have been there in the preceding three months, and three out of five have visited in the last six months. This may be influenced by a sample base which would have focussed on those most recently bereaved.

Those visiting most recently tended to be younger people; the older a respondent is, the less likely they are to have visited recently. Men were a little more likely to have visited recently than women, and people with disabilities were also a little more likely to be recent visitors.

These visits are scattered across the week, as this table shows:

Timing of visit to Newmarket Road	Proportion of respondents
Weekdays	10%
Saturdays	5%
Sundays	10%
Anniversaries	13%
Holy or special days	1%
Only for funerals	27%
No particular time	34%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	165

Weekends are a busier time for visits than weekdays, with an average of 8% of visits taking place on a weekend day, against just 2% on average on a weekday. Within that, Sundays are a much more important day than any other, with Sundays accounting for one in ten of all cemetery visits.

One in eight people visits the grave of a loved one to mark an anniversary, but visits prompted by religious obligation are very few and far between. A quarter of those who visit Newmarket Road do so only on the occasion of a funeral; perhaps unsurprisingly, these tended to be older people.

Although two out of five visits are carried out on a regular, fairly predictable timetable, one in three visits are much more ad hoc than this and take place without any regular pattern. Women who visit are much more likely to visit in this way.

Those who do not visit were asked why this is. There are individuals who do not visit because of distress, inconvenience or disability, but overwhelmingly those who do not visit have no reason to do so. No-one in this group said they are discouraged from visiting by safety fears, and no-one said they are put off by the

way the site is cared for and managed. Nine people with relatives or friends at the cemetery say that they have no reason to visit.

2.2 Quality assessments of Newmarket Road

People were asked to rate different aspects of quality in relation to Newmarket Road, and their views have been converted into mean scores.¹ The results of this calculation have been ranked below:

Quality attribute	Mean score
Peace and quiet	1.04
Cleanliness and litter	0.82
Quality and maintenance of gardens and planting	0.68
Quality and maintenance of buildings	0.58
Car parking	0.49
Information and signage	0.47
Condition of headstones and memorials	0.45
Access for wheelchairs/buggies	0.44
Waiting rooms	0.32
Toilets	0.13
Outdoor seating	0.12
Shelter from bad weather	-0.47
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 73 to 136</i>

Most attributes are viewed positively, and some receive quite strong scores. Peace and quiet is arguably one of the most important aspects of a cemetery, and the achievement of a score of this strength, equating to an overall “very good”, is

¹ A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of “excellent” is given a value of +2, a “very good” answer is assigned a value of +1, and answers of “poor” or “very poor” are assigned values of -1 and -2 respectively. Answers of “fair” are assigned a value of zero, and don't knows are disregarded. The result is a score in two dimensions; a positive or negative result gives the overall tendency of opinion, whilst the score value indicates the strength with which that opinion is held.

laudable not least given the situation of the cemetery on a busy road close to a busy junction.

The council can also take heart from the score on cleanliness; a relatively strong score on an issue like this is a relative rarity in open spaces generally, and suggests that staff are monitoring and responding well to the challenge of clearing rubbish, which can include windblown items such as tribute wrappers as well as the more normal litter.

Maintenance of the gardens and planting gets a positive score, but the score is a little more qualified and suggests that people's expectations are only partly being met in this area. Buildings too attract a modest positive score that suggests room for improvement, with waiting rooms scoring below the overall buildings rating, and toilets singled out here as a particular problem, getting only a "fair" rating overall.

Car parking, signage and access are all areas where improvement could be achieved, but perhaps of more concern is the modest score given to seating. Noting the age profile of visitors, it must be a concern that seating does not get a higher rating, and it may well be that the absence of adequate seating is itself a factor in discouraging the older person, and the less able person, from visiting.

We also note the modest score given to headstone condition. Vandalism and subsidence alike take their toll on municipal cemeteries, but headstone damage does detract significantly from the overall ambience of cemetery, and also creates safety concerns arising both from the headstones themselves and from those who may be damaging them.

It is interesting to look at how the scores compare for different groups of visitors. On the whole, older people were more forgiving and gave generally higher scores than their younger counterparts – which may hint at changing expectations of relatives in the years to come. Older people's criticisms therefore come with a little

more weight attached, and this particularly relates to seating, where they give a negative score in contrast to the modest positive score given by younger visitors.

Younger people (which here means anyone under 50) are generally more critical across the board, but especially criticise the toilets (they give a negative score here) and the waiting rooms. They are also much less forgiving of the condition of headstones. Men are also more critical than women about the seating.

People with disabilities also seem to make a greater allowance in their scores, but this vanishes when considering seating (a negative score), and shelter (a substantial negative score).

People do add comments to illuminate their answers, but these do not provide a great deal more information, and often apologise for low awareness on some issues.

The funeral directors take a much more critical view, as this table of mean scores (from a small sample) shows:

Quality attribute	Mean score funeral directors	Mean score residents
Condition of headstones and memorials	0.40	0.45
Maintenance of gardens and planting	0.33	0.68
Cleanliness and litter	0.17	0.82
Outdoor seating	0	0.12
Information and signage	-0.20	0.47
Access for wheelchairs/buggies	-0.25	0.44

Peace and quiet	-0.33	1.04
Car parking	-0.50	0.49
Quality and maintenance of buildings	-0.60	0.58
Waiting rooms	-1.25	0.32
Toilets	-1.25	0.13
Shelter from bad weather	-1.50	-0.47
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from just 4 to 6</i>	<i>Ranges from 73 to 136</i>

Several issues of interest emerge here, although we must be careful about conclusions based on small numbers of responses. Firstly, every score from funeral directors is lower than that offered by the relatives themselves, sometimes significantly so. Secondly, whereas relatives were generally positive overall, apart from the score on shelter, eight of the quality attributes here are rated negatively by funeral directors, indicating that this group is much less tolerant of shortcomings on the site than their clients are. Finally, the lowest scores are assigned to the cemetery fabric – buildings, toilets, waiting rooms, and shelter – rather than to the grounds, which attract modest positive scores.

Visitors were also asked about the extent to which different issues affect their enjoyment of the cemetery, and again the results have been turned into mean scores² ranging from 1 (not a problem) to 3 (very serious problem).

Problem	Mean score
Vandalism and graffiti	1.36
People leaving breakables on memorials	1.34

² A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of "not a problem" is given a value of +1, a "problem at times" answer is assigned a value of +2, and a "very serious problem" is given a value of +3. Don't knows are disregarded. The higher the resulting score, the bigger the problem.

People leaving too many mementos/memorial creep	1.34
Inappropriate mementos	1.25
Noise and disturbance	1.20
Antisocial or inappropriate behaviour	1.18
Too many services at the same time	1.16
Dogs running free or uncontrolled	1.13
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 89 to 118</i>

The striking things about this table are that the scores lie within a quite narrow range, and are all tending towards “not a problem at all”, so none of these issues is significantly damaging people’s experience of the cemetery on a regular or persistent basis.

Memorial issues are quite high in the list, with some questioning of the appropriateness, quantity or breakability of mementos, suggesting that some guidance on these matters would be welcomed by those suffering “memorial creep” – whereby mementos left on one memorial or grave spill over on to adjacent plots. These issues are less emphasised, though, in comparison to vandalism and graffiti.

Interestingly, older people are again a little more forgiving, and younger people see all of these issues as a little bit more of a problem, though the differences are not as marked. There are no significant differences in the way men and women view problems in the cemetery.

3 The City Crematorium and Cemetery Extension

3.1 Visiting the Crematorium

A total of 304 people in the sample say that they visit the crematorium, and this table shows how often they call:

Frequency of visit to the Crematorium	Proportion of respondents
At least weekly	2%
1-3 times a month	10%
4-6 times a year	14%
Once or twice a year	39%
Less than once a year	35%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	268

Although there is a handful of people who visit regularly, the patterns of usage here are for less frequent visits than at the cemetery site. A third of visitors attend less than once a year, and in total three quarters of those who visit the cemetery do so twice a year at most. Whereas 30% of cemetery visitors go at least monthly, here the figure is just 12%, a marked difference.

Older people tend particularly towards the occasional visit rather than the regular one, and there are very few over 70s who come to the crematorium more than twice a year. Having said that, even the younger visitors are only likely to attend three or four times a year at most. Men visit a little more often than women, but the difference is not especially marked; there is also little difference in visiting patterns between those with disabilities and those without disability.

This table shows when people last visited:

Last visit to Crematorium	Proportion of respondents
Within the last three months	38%
4-6 months ago	27%
7-12 months ago	29%
1-2 years ago	4%
Over two years ago	3%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>304</i>

Given that people visit the site relatively rarely, it is interesting to see that many people had visited in the quite recent past; no doubt, though, this is influenced by the sample base which was focussed on those most recently bereaved (although none of the sample was bereaved as recently as three months ago).

Two thirds of the people in this group have visited the crematorium in the past six months, and most of the rest have been there in the past twelve months. Very few of those responding to the survey are occasional visitors.

Younger people (i.e. under 50s) are much more likely to have visited in the recent past, and in fact half those aged 60 or under have been to the crematorium in the past three months. Older people are more commonly found among those who last visited up to six months ago. Although there is no significant difference between the genders, people with disabilities are less likely to have visited recently.

The timing of visits is indicated here:

Timing of visit to Crematorium	Proportion of respondents
Weekdays	6%
Saturdays	3%
Sundays	4%
Anniversaries	19%
Holy or special days	1%
Only for funerals	48%
No particular time	20%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	306

Visits to the crematorium follow a very different pattern to those at the cemetery. Here, around half of all visits are prompted solely by the wish to attend a funeral, and presumably the opportunity may be taken at that time to visit a memorial. Anniversaries prompt one in five visitors to come to the site, and ad hoc visits account for a further one in five attendances. Those following a regular pattern of visits are fewer and further between, and just one in seven visits takes place regularly at a particular time of the week or month.

There are some differences between different groups of people here. Men are more likely to visit only at times of funerals; women are more responsive to anniversaries. Older visitors were more likely to attend for funerals, and younger visitors more likely to be remembering an anniversary.

The crematorium covers an extensive area and offers a wide range of facilities, so it is interesting to see which are most visited.

Area	Ppn of respondents who visit	
	Regularly	Occasionally
Rose garden	20%	37%
Cloisters	16%	36%
Book of Remembrance	14%	27%
Cemetery area	11%	23%
Chapels	10%	46%
Memorial woodland	9%	33%
Sunken garden	5%	24%
Memorial vaults	7%	15%
Columbarium	0%	3%
<i>N(=100%)</i>		<i>Ranges from 195 to 236</i>

Given the overall frequency of visits, it is not really surprising that most areas are visited occasionally rather than regularly. The Rose Garden is the area that attracts the most visitors, and also the highest percentage of regular visitors; the cloisters are also popular with visitors, and to a lesser degree, so is the Book of Remembrance. This is less likely to be visited on an occasional basis, but, as might be expected, is particularly popular with those who choose to visit on anniversaries.

The chapels are most often visited on an occasional basis, and these visits are most often associated with attendance at funeral services; there are nevertheless a minority of visitors who visit the chapels regularly, and the survey also picked up a view that several people would like to visit the chapels more but cannot do so, either because they are in use, or, less understandably, because they are closed at the weekend.

Visits to the memorial woodland, the sunken garden, and the memorial vaults are very much more occasional, whilst hardly anyone ever visits the columbarium; just nine people in this sample had ever been there at all.

Men visit the chapels, the cloisters, and also the sunken garden, more often than women, but women favour the Book of Remembrance, the memorial woodland, and the memorial vaults. People with disabilities are much less likely to visit the cloisters or the sunken garden, much more likely to visit the Book of Remembrance or the memorial vaults, and a little more likely to be in the rose garden.

Those who do not visit were asked why this is. There are individuals who do not visit because of lack of time, distress, or disability, but overwhelmingly those who do not visit have no reason to do so. No-one in this group said they are discouraged from visiting by safety fears, and no-one said they are put off by the way the site is cared for and managed. However, there is a small minority who note that the site is too inconvenient to reach, particularly by public transport, and that this discourages them from visiting or forces them to rely on the goodwill of friends or relatives with cars.³

A total of 37 people with relatives or friends commemorated at the crematorium (8% of all respondents) say that they have no reason to visit.

³ Although the site is served by public transport, crossing the A14 at the crematorium is not a challenge for the faint-hearted

3.2 Quality assessments of the Crematorium

People were asked to rate different aspects of quality in relation to the crematorium, and their views have been converted into mean scores.⁴ The results of this calculation have been ranked below:

Quality attribute	Mean score
Quality and maintenance of gardens and planting	1.08
Cleanliness and litter	1.04
Peace and quiet	0.95
Quality and maintenance of buildings	0.92
Car parking	0.80
Information and signage	0.72
Condition of headstones and memorials	0.70
Toilets	0.67
Access for wheelchairs/buggies	0.64
Waiting rooms	0.61
Outdoor seating	0.53
Shelter from bad weather	0.22
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 162 to 234</i>

All the scores here are positive, but none ranges far above a score of +1, the equivalent of “very good”, so clearly there is still scope for improvement. Interestingly, all the scores bar one are above those achieved at the cemetery, suggesting this site is much better cared for and much more appreciated than its counterpart. The differences on structural factors such as toilets and shelter are especially marked.

⁴ A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of “excellent” is given a value of +2, a “very good” answer is assigned a value of +1, and answers of “poor” or “very poor” are assigned values of -1 and -2 respectively. Answers of “fair” are assigned a value of zero, and don't knows are disregarded. The result is a score in two dimensions; a positive or negative result gives the overall tendency of opinion, whilst the score value indicates the strength with which that opinion is held.

The highest score is that achieved by grounds maintenance, with litter also scoring strongly. Buildings and support for visitors attract more modest scores, though they are still viewed positively. As with the cemetery, bad weather facilities are particularly identified as problematic, although the score here is at least a positive one.

The only attribute that scores less well at the crematorium is peace and quiet; even though this is still the third highest score overall, it is a little below the score at Newmarket Road, and reflects the close physical presence of the busy A14 and its constant traffic noise, which provides a persistent accompaniment to any visit. This factor is remarked on several times by people as damaging or diminishing their visit, although by and large they recognise there is little that can be done to remedy the situation.

The score on headstone condition is perhaps a little disappointing given that this is a relatively new site with correspondingly less weather damage, and that many of the memorials are tablets rather than upright stones.

The frequency with which a person visits has a bearing on their view. The most frequent visitors – those coming more than twice a year – give a higher rating for grounds maintenance, outdoor seating, information and toilets, but score the site lower than their counterparts on memorial condition, the condition of buildings and site cleanliness.

Older people tend to score most attributes more highly than younger people, and this again suggests that younger visitors have higher expectations or are less willing to accept what they see as shortcomings. Looking to the future, this may mean that there is a shift in expectations which will call for higher standards of provision than are on offer at the moment. Areas where younger visitors are happier than their older counterparts are information, accessibility and shelter.

Women tend to be more content with provision than men, and even give peace and quiet a relatively strong score of 1.10, making this their highest scoring attribute.

Additional comments here focus on one area in particular – the road noise from the A14, which clearly causes significant detriment to some people’s visits.

This table sets funeral directors’ assessments of the crematorium alongside those of the relatives:

Quality attribute	Mean score funeral directors	Mean score relatives
Access for wheelchairs/buggies	0.92	0.64
Toilets	0.75	0.67
Information and signage	0.75	0.72
Maintenance of gardens and planting	0.50	1.08
Cleanliness and litter	0.58	1.04
Car parking	0.36	0.80
Condition of headstones and memorials	0.27	0.70
Waiting rooms	0.17	0.61
Shelter from bad weather	0.08	0.22
Peace and quiet	0.00	0.95
Quality and maintenance of buildings	-0.08	0.92
Outdoor seating	-0.09	0.53
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 10 to 12</i>	<i>Ranges from 162 to 234</i>

Funeral directors generally give lower scores, but unlike at the cemetery this is not across the board. In fact funeral directors rate access and toilet facilities at the crematorium higher than relatives do, and assign a similar score to information as do relatives. It is also noticeable that funeral directors score most other attributes positively (again, unlike the cemetery) and only assign negative scores (and then quite modest ones) to the quality of the buildings and to outdoor seating.

Nevertheless on many attributes the expectations of funeral directors seem much higher than those of the relatives, and they are much less accepting of things like waiting rooms, grounds maintenance and memorial condition, for instance. Some commented, though, that standards had been improving in the past year or so.

Visitors were also asked about the extent to which different issues affect their appreciation of the crematorium, and again the results have been turned into mean scores⁵ ranging from 1 (not a problem) to 3 (very serious problem).

Problem	Mean score
People leaving too many mementos/memorial creep	1.36
People leaving breakables on memorials	1.30
Too many services at the same time	1.28
Inappropriate mementos	1.27
Noise and disturbance	1.19
Vandalism and graffiti	1.14
Antisocial or inappropriate behaviour	1.04
Dogs running free or uncontrolled	1.04
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 273 to 277</i>

⁵ A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of "not a problem" is given a value of +1, a "problem at times" answer is assigned a value of +2, and a "very serious problem" is given a value of +3. Don't knows are disregarded. The higher the resulting score, the bigger the problem.

None of the problems is an especially serious one; all the scores are well below a score of 2, which would indicate a consensus that the issue is a problem at times. However, the most significant issue is the one of memorial creep, where people's mementos spill over on to neighbouring plots. This is always likely to be more of an issue in a crematorium, where plots are smaller but mementos are the same size as they would be in a cemetery, and echoes the prominence of this issue in recent press coverage.

It is not only the volume of the mementos, but also their composition, which causes occasional difficulty. Breakable mementos will inevitably break from time to time, and broken pieces will inevitably spill over. This clearly causes a measure of distress to some people, who complain about having to take cleaning materials with them when visiting. Equally, not all mementos are seen as appropriate, and the proximity of plots may mean that a memento for one bereaved family becomes a distraction for their neighbours.

Management of the funerary process sometimes means that services take place in quick procession, and this too can be an irritant to some visitors, although it is again not a serious problem by any means. Problems with noise and disturbance centre on the proximity of the very busy A14 nearby.

Other problems that might be commonplace in an urban context hardly register at all here; antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and rampaging dogs are barely noticed here, although they may be more of an issue after the visitors have left for the day.

Looking at variations on these scores, women and older people have more of a problem with memorial creep, and men are more bothered by road noise, but otherwise differences between the age groups and genders are small. The more frequent visitors score almost all of the problems a little more seriously, but the differences are not especially marked.

4 Service standards

All respondents were asked to comment on the quality of service offered by the Bereavement Services team. Several respondents declined to pass judgment, noting that most if not all of the liaison had been through the agency of Funeral Directors, but around 300 people did feel able to comment, at least on some aspects of the service, and their views have been appraised as mean scores⁶, as follows:

Service area	Mean score
Courtesy and politeness	1.18
Sensitivity and support for the bereaved	1.16
Choices in providing a chapel service	1.11
Fairness regardless of ethnicity, religion etc.	1.08
Sensitivity to different religious/cultural needs	1.07
Help and advice	1.05
Availability when contact needed	0.95
Choices in providing a place for cremated remains	0.93
Speed in response to enquiries	0.89
Choices in memorials	0.82
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 168 to 294</i>

All the scores are positive, and many of them are fairly strong positives indicating scores that lie between “very good” and “excellent”.

⁶ A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of “excellent” is given a value of +2, a “very good” answer is assigned a value of +1, and answers of “poor” or “very poor” are assigned values of -1 and -2 respectively. Answers of “fair” are assigned a value of zero, and don't knows are disregarded. The result is a score in two dimensions; a positive or negative result gives the overall tendency of opinion, whilst the score value indicates the strength with which that opinion is held.

Courtesy and politeness attract the highest overall score, as is often the case with public sector frontline teams; perhaps more impressive, in the context of this service, is the strongly positive score on sensitivity, a key element in running a bereavement service and one in which Cambridge's team performs strongly.

The choices the service offers attract a variable score. Choices in relation to services score very well, but disposal choices and memorial choices attract more qualified scores that suggest that expectations are not necessarily being met.

A number of people feel unable to comment on fairness or cultural sensitivity, but those who do give strong scores on both counts. The help and advice the team gives is valued, but there are doubts at times about the availability of people at the times when contact is needed (weekends are part of this) and the speed of response to some enquiries. Even though these issues feature at the lower end of the table, the scores are still relatively good and do not suggest that there are anything more than occasional concerns here.

Scores are high across all age-groups, but older people tend to score a little higher on all aspects of service. Women also give higher scores on all attributes than their male counterparts. The major differences in perception however arise from frequency of visit, and frequent visitors are more critical about availability and response times, suggesting that staff are not always available or able to respond at the necessary time – which may well be outside normal hours.

Additional comments on this set of questions note especially the lack of contact that would allow an informed assessment of service quality; most of those making such a comment declined to score the individual attributes. However, we do have the views of funeral directors to set alongside these observations (a slightly different set of questions was put to funeral directors):

Service area	Mean score funeral directors	Mean score relatives
Quality of recorded music	1.33	
Ability to provide music	1.25	
Quality of live music	1.18	
Speed in response to enquiries	0.92	0.89
Fairness regardless of ethnicity, religion etc.	0.91	1.08
Sensitivity to different religious/cultural needs	0.90	1.07
Sensitivity and support for the bereaved	0.83	1.16
Choices in providing a chapel service	0.83	1.11
Staff assistance of bereaved parties	0.83	
Courtesy and politeness	0.75	1.18
Availability when contact needed	0.67	0.95
Choices in memorials	0.60	0.82
Flexibility in relation to special requirements	0.55	
Choices in providing a place for cremated remains	0.45	0.93
Information on fees	0.27	
Help and advice		1.05
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 10 to 12</i>	<i>Ranges from 168 to 294</i>

The first thing to note is the encouraging fact that all the scores are positive, indicating that these different aspects of the service are generally seen in a positive light. Secondly, where comparison with relatives' scores is possible, the scores are lower, but the differences are not nearly as marked as with the other comparisons made in this study.

The other striking feature of this table is the very prominent scores given by funeral directors to the musical provision for services at the crematorium. All three music attributes score well above the “very good level and tend in the direction of excellence.

The one disturbing aspect of the funeral director scores is the low score on fee information. This type of information never comes as good news, but it may be that the council can improve the way it communicates fee changes in response to approval of council budgets.

5 Improvements

We asked respondents to indicate how much, or how little, they would welcome each of a range of possible improvements. This question attracted a certain amount of comment and one or two respondents responded quite forcefully to some of the suggestions, not always demonstrating an understanding of why these improvements might be considered. Whatever might be done in response to this question, we suggest it would need to be carefully explained to avoid misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy.

To assist interpretation, the responses given have been converted into mean scores⁷, which can range here from +2 (would improve things a lot) to -2 (would be a waste of money):

⁷ A mean score is calculated by assigning a value to each individual's response. In this instance, an answer of “improve a lot” is given a value of +2, an “improve a little” answer is assigned a value of +1, and answers of “wouldn't make a lot of difference” or “waste of money” are assigned values of -1 and -2 respectively. Don't knows are disregarded. The result is a score in two dimensions; a positive or negative result gives the overall tendency of opinion, whilst the score value indicates the strength with which that opinion is held.

Suggested improvement	Mean score
Displaying rules and regs clearly	0.24
Lengthening service time	0.13
A dedicated area for memorabilia and mementos	-0.08
CCTV	-0.08
Tightening regulations on placing mementos and tributes	-0.21
Place to buy light refreshments	-0.25
Place to buy flowers and tributes	-0.36
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 221 to 348</i>

Only two suggestions get any kind of endorsement, and even then the scores are generally neutral rather than wholehearted endorsement. The most popular (or perhaps least unpopular) suggestion is that the crematorium's rules and regulations should be displayed more clearly, and there is also a very modest overall support for longer service times. The other suggestions, however, get an overall negative score, albeit in every case one which tends closely to a neutral position.

The least popular suggestions are those linked to what might be seen as commercial activity, the provision of refreshments and of tributes. Interestingly, while there is a measure of support for displaying the rules, there is much less interest in tightening them.

The overall scores here should not, however, be interpreted as a general consensus. The variance on these issues is substantial, and it is therefore helpful to see the extent of overall agreement and disagreement:

Suggested improvement	Proportion of respondents who	
	support	oppose
Displaying rules and regs clearly	56%	44%
Lengthening service time	51%	49%
A dedicated area for memorabilia and mementos	51%	49%
CCTV	47%	53%
Tightening regulations on placing mementos and tributes	41%	59%
Place to buy light refreshments	44%	56%
Place to buy flowers and tributes	41%	59%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 221 to 348</i>	

This table evidences the total lack of consensus on these suggestions, with a split between support and opposition that is generally very close to 50/50. Whilst each of these possible improvements would be widely welcomed by a substantial proportion of visitors, each would also generate significant levels of opposition.

Whilst there are variations according to the personal characteristics of the respondent, it is perhaps more useful to explore this question by reference to the frequency of visit. Certainly these results are interesting; on the whole, the more frequent visitors are much more positive about many of these improvements and assign overall positive scores to them, whilst those who visit less often are more opposed to change. The results are shown here:

Suggested improvement	Mean scores of those who visit		
	At least four times a year	Once or twice a year	less than once a year
CCTV	0.60	-0.05	-0.84
Displaying rules and regs clearly	0.39	0.20	0.11
Lengthening service time	0.00	0.00	0.21
A dedicated area for memorabilia and mementos	-0.08	-0.15	-0.11
Place to buy light refreshments	0.00	-0.29	-0.32
Place to buy flowers and tributes	-0.06	-0.59	-0.41
Tightening regulations on placing mementos and tributes	-0.14	-0.22	-0.55
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>~60</i>	<i>~85</i>	<i>~60</i>

There is an interesting pattern here, with those who visit the crematorium most often tending to take a generally more favourable position than those who visit less often. If we were to take the view that those who visit most often should have the greatest weight attached to their views, we might be able to conclude that some of these improvements could be supported by consultation. We have also looked at the first column in more detail and note that the most frequent visitors are even more supportive of the suggested improvements.

Funeral directors also had a chance to comment on these suggestions, and their views are shown here (noting of course the small numbers involved):

Suggested improvement	Mean score Funeral Directors
CCTV	1.00
Displaying rules and regs clearly	0.75
A dedicated area for memorabilia and mementos	0.58
Tightening regulations on placing mementos and tributes	0.42
Place to buy light refreshments	0.42
Lengthening service time	-0.50
Place to buy flowers and tributes	-0.92
<i>N(=100%)</i>	12

Funeral directors take a quite different position on these issues. They are generally in favour of most suggestions, but would not want to see a place to buy tributes; interestingly, they are also not particularly keen on longer service slots. They do want to see CCTV, unlike many relatives, and are fairly keen on the other suggestions, including the possibility of refreshments.

We also asked about some other possibilities linked to increasing engagement between the crematorium and those using the service. The proportion of respondents interested in these opportunities is shown here:

Opportunity	Proportion of respondents who are	
	Very interested	Fairly interested
Info about wildlife, nature, conservation	23%	38%
Green or environmentally friendly burials	23%	33%
Helping to maintain grounds and gardens	8%	19%
Info about those commemorated here	7%	26%
Annual memorial service	7%	21%
Becoming a “Friend” and helping to look after the crematorium	2%	9%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 399 to 406</i>	

Interest varies widely and there are people interested in each of these possibilities, to at least some degree. The most attractive suggestions to people visiting the crematorium are the provision of interpretation setting out what is going on at the site and how the natural world is benefiting, or being managed, by the work undertaken by grounds staff; overall, three in five visitors are at least fairly interested in this relatively inexpensive improvement.

Another area of interest, already in place at a number of municipal sites, is the facility to choose a green burial, or at least an environmentally friendly option for disposal of remains. Well over half of all visitors to the site have some interest in this, and this reflects a growing interest in, and awareness of, non-traditional choices for disposal.

Other options attract much lower levels of interest, and this tends to be more cautious as well. There are people who would be interested in helping, on a

voluntary basis, with grounds maintenance, and there are people who would like more information about those who share this place with their own loved ones, but interest in these opportunities is much less marked. An annual memorial or remembrance service would also be of some interest, but is not embraced with any particular enthusiasm.

There is very little interest in a Friends group at present, and perhaps other ways of engaging with the public need to be established first before this is attempted.

However, these overall patterns of response conceal some very interesting differences according to how often a person visits the site.

Suggested improvement	Very or fairly interested responses from those who visit		
	At least four times a year	Once or twice a year	less than once a year
Info about wildlife, nature, conservation	69%	63%	67%
Green or environmentally friendly burials	54%	64%	55%
Annual memorial service	44%	44%	13%
Knowing more about the people commemorated here	36%	38%	29%
Helping to maintain the grounds	35%	28%	24%
Becoming a "Friend"	19%	15%	9%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>~68</i>	<i>~100</i>	<i>~85</i>

There are some interesting differences of perspective here. Information about the natural world of the crematorium, and opportunity to choose a greener form of disposal, are equally popular with all visitors regardless of their visit frequency, and the same is true when it comes to information about those commemorated at the crematorium.

The annual memorial service, which attracts overall just 28% of respondents, appeals much more strongly to those who visit the crematorium regularly, but hardly at all to the occasional visitor. The other opportunities also appeal more to the regular visitor; although becoming a Friend only interests 11% of respondents overall, the level of interest rises sharply among those who visit more often, with one in five of the most frequent visitors at least fairly interested, a level where a Friends groups might be a viable option.

Funeral directors' views on these possibilities are indicated here:

Possibility	Ppn of funeral directors who think their clients would be interested or very interested
Info about wildlife, nature, conservation	92%
Green or environmentally friendly burials	92%
Annual memorial service	83%
Knowing more about the people commemorated here	83%
Becoming a "Friend"	68%
Helping to maintain the grounds	50%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	12

The order of priority here is very similar to that for relatives, but the level of interest shown by funeral directors is significantly higher for some possibilities. They seem especially warm to the idea of information about conservation, and the possibility of green burials, and the response to the possibility of a friends' group suggests they might be willing to help promote it to their clients.

Respondents were also asked about options for landscaping and management of the grounds, and reacted to these as follows:

Suggested improvement	Proportion of respondents who	
	Are keen to see this	Would prefer not to see this
Create areas for wild flowers	68%	4%
Create areas for spring bulbs	75%	2%
Create wildlife and bird habitats	69%	5%
Provide more native British trees	69%	2%
Provide more evergreens	42%	13%
Provide more pathways	40%	10%
Leave grass in the woodland to grow long	28%	29%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 393 to 407</i>	

On most of these options, respondents give the crematorium a very clear steer. There is very little argument against the idea of wild flower areas, spring bulb areas, or native British trees. Although more people disagree, there is also a clear majority in favour of more evergreens (though these are less popular than native British trees in general), and in favour of an extended path network through the site.

Views are less clear, though, on allowing the grass to grow long in the woodland, where there is an even split between those who would support, and those who

would oppose, the proposal. Looking at this in more detail, it is those who visit the crematorium most who are least likely to want to see this change; 40% of those who visit most often oppose this idea, in contrast to just a quarter of the least frequent visitors.

Respondents were given an opportunity to suggest other improvements, although most declined to do so. Those who did comment – 53 people in all – tended to stress improvements that were already under consideration in other questions, or raised issues already recognised as problems without necessarily offering a solution. The most significant of these is the difficulty of access to the site by public transport; seating is also a serious issue for some people. Otherwise there is little consensus on any particular improvement that might be achieved.

6 Rules and regulations

Rules and regulations are often contentious areas, since their very existence suggests that some people are unhappy about the behaviour or practice of others. A series of questions was put to respondents seeking their views on different applications of rules and regulations, and respondents were asked to choose from a limited range of options in each case.

Restrict number of items		Do not restrict number of items	
63%		37%	
Fresh flowers only	Fresh or silk flowers	Fresh, silk or plastic flowers	
34%	20%	46%	
Restrict type of items		Do not restrict type of items	
64%		36%	
Rules on overspill		No rules on overspill	
96%		4%	

Allow planting by visitors	Council gardeners only
17%	83%
Environmentally friendly wrappings only	Any wrappings
86%	14%
Clear away after a suitable interval	Leave this to the relatives
95%	5%
Allow dogs on a lead	Ban dogs other than guide dogs
70%	30%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 411 to 423</i>

In most instances, respondents give a clear steer to the crematorium management, and in some cases the results are overwhelming.

There is very strong support for rules on mementos that prohibit the placing of items overspilling on to other plots, and very few would argue with this. There is also very strong support for clearing away after a suitable interval – and indeed the frequency of visiting would suggest that leaving this to the relatives would result in a very untidy site indeed, as items would deteriorate over a long period before being renewed or replaced.

On flowers, there is no consensus, and although one in three visitors want to see fresh flowers only, nearly half of all visitors want to be allowed to bring silk and plastic flowers as well. This group would be outnumbered, but only just, if fresh and silk flowers were allowed. However, people are clear about the need for wrappings to be environmentally friendly, and it is interesting to see that people who are prepared to allow plastic flowers are insistent that they should be wrapped in environmentally friendly ways.

There is a marked difference in attitude to flowers according to age; older people tend to favour restrictions, but younger visitors want to see a liberal approach here and over half of under 60s would argue in favour of an absence of restriction on types of flower allowed. The same is true, though to a much lesser extent, on wrappings; the older a person is, the more likely they are to want to see restrictions on wrappings.

There is also a very clear view that grounds should be left in the care of council gardeners, and that visitors should not be allowed to plant their own items. Again, the older a person is, the more likely they are to want to see restrictions on planting, but even among the under 50s, those who want restrictions outnumber those who want to plant for themselves by three to one.

There is a majority in favour of restrictions on the number of items, with those who want to see restrictions outnumbering those who oppose restrictions by three to two; the same pattern is evident in relation to the type of items being left. Whilst this is a clear majority in each case in favour of restriction, it will be noted that the minority who oppose restriction is a substantial one.

Enthusiasm for restriction on numbers is strongest among older people; younger visitors are much more evenly divided over the number of items, with a slight majority of under 50s saying there should be no restrictions. On the type of items, there are few differences between different groups of people. Frequency of visiting does not affect a person's view on these restrictions.

The balance of opinion on dogs is that they should be allowed on a lead, but there is a substantial minority who would like to see a dog ban, other than for guide dogs. Interestingly, the youngest and oldest visitors are those least in favour of allowing dogs in the grounds, with those aged 51-70 the least supportive of a ban. However, the more often a person visits the crematorium, the more they tend to favour a ban.

7 Respondent profile

This section examines the personal characteristics of those who responded to the survey.

7.1 Age

Age group	Proportion of respondents
50 or under	17%
51-60	28%
61-70	33%
71 Or over	22%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>447</i>

Given the nature of the service, it is hardly surprising that the age profile is largely an elderly one. Over half of those who visit either site are over 60 years of age, but there are younger people who visit in relatively small numbers.

7.2 Gender

Gender	Proportion of respondents
Male	40%
Female	60%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>465</i>

There are three women who visit these sites for every two men, reflecting to at least some extent the greater longevity of women which means that at any given time there are more widows than widowers in the population. The DWP statistics on bereavement benefit ⁸ indicate that there are around twice as many widows in

⁸ Dept of Work and Pensions Bereavement Benefit statistics, 2004, accessed at [Hwww.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/bb/BB_Sept04_rounded.xls](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/bb/BB_Sept04_rounded.xls) 1 July 2008

the population as widowers; the respondent profile thus includes a higher proportion of men than might be expected, although by no means all male visitors are widowed.

7.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Proportion of respondents
White	99%
Black African/Caribbean	1% in total
Asian	
Chinese	
Mixed race	
Other ethnic group	
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>451</i>

The respondent profile is overwhelmingly white. This is also true of the Cambridgeshire population, where 95% of the population is white⁹ but we could reasonably have expected to see around 5% of respondents from other ethnic groups.

7.4 Relationship to the cemetery/crematorium

Relatives or friends at	Proportion of respondents
The cemetery	22%
The crematorium	53%
Both	12%
Neither	37%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>465</i>

About one in five respondents here have relatives or friends at the cemetery, and just over half have relatives or friends commemorated at the crematorium, though

⁹ 2001 census

in neither case does this mean that the respondent actually visits these locations. One in eight respondents has a relationship with both sites, while just over a third has no relatives or friends at either site. These people will have had a service conducted at the crematorium, but have taken their loved one's ashes elsewhere for strewing.

7.5 Religion

Religion	Proportion of respondents
Church of England	68%
Roman Catholic	5%
Other Christian	11%
Other religion	3%
No religion	14%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>46</i>

Two thirds of respondents associate themselves with the Church of England, and overall 84% are adherents of some form of Christianity. Only a small proportion adhere to any other faith – a figure that is consistent with the ethnicity profile of the group – but one in seven people has no religion, and this may point to an increased interest in non-religious approaches to funerals.

7.6 Employment

Employment	Proportion of respondents
Retired	48%
Full time	26%
Part time	14%
Self employed	5%
Homemaker	4%
Other	3%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	463

Not surprisingly, the largest group here is the retired, with about half the group in that category. Most of the rest are working, with just a handful of students or unemployed people. This means a significant proportion of people could only visit outside normal working hours.

7.7 Disability

	Proportion of respondents
With disability	9%
With no disability	91%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	455

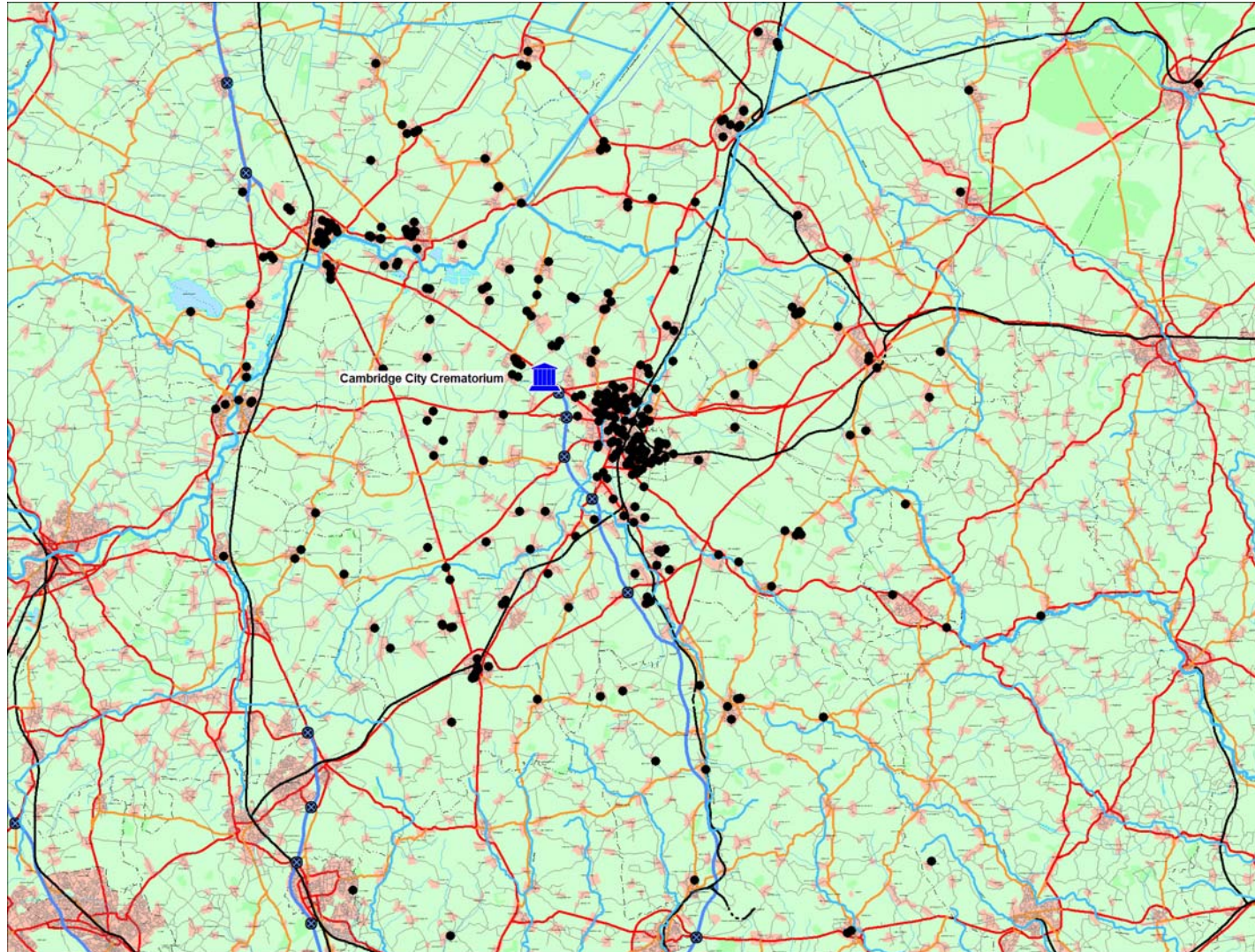
Given the age profile of this group, the level of recognition of disability is surprisingly low. The question, though, asked whether people have a disability that affects their enjoyment of open spaces, so a number of otherwise limiting conditions may have been discounted.

People with disabilities were asked whether access could be made easier for them, and the most frequent observations here are to do with public transport to the

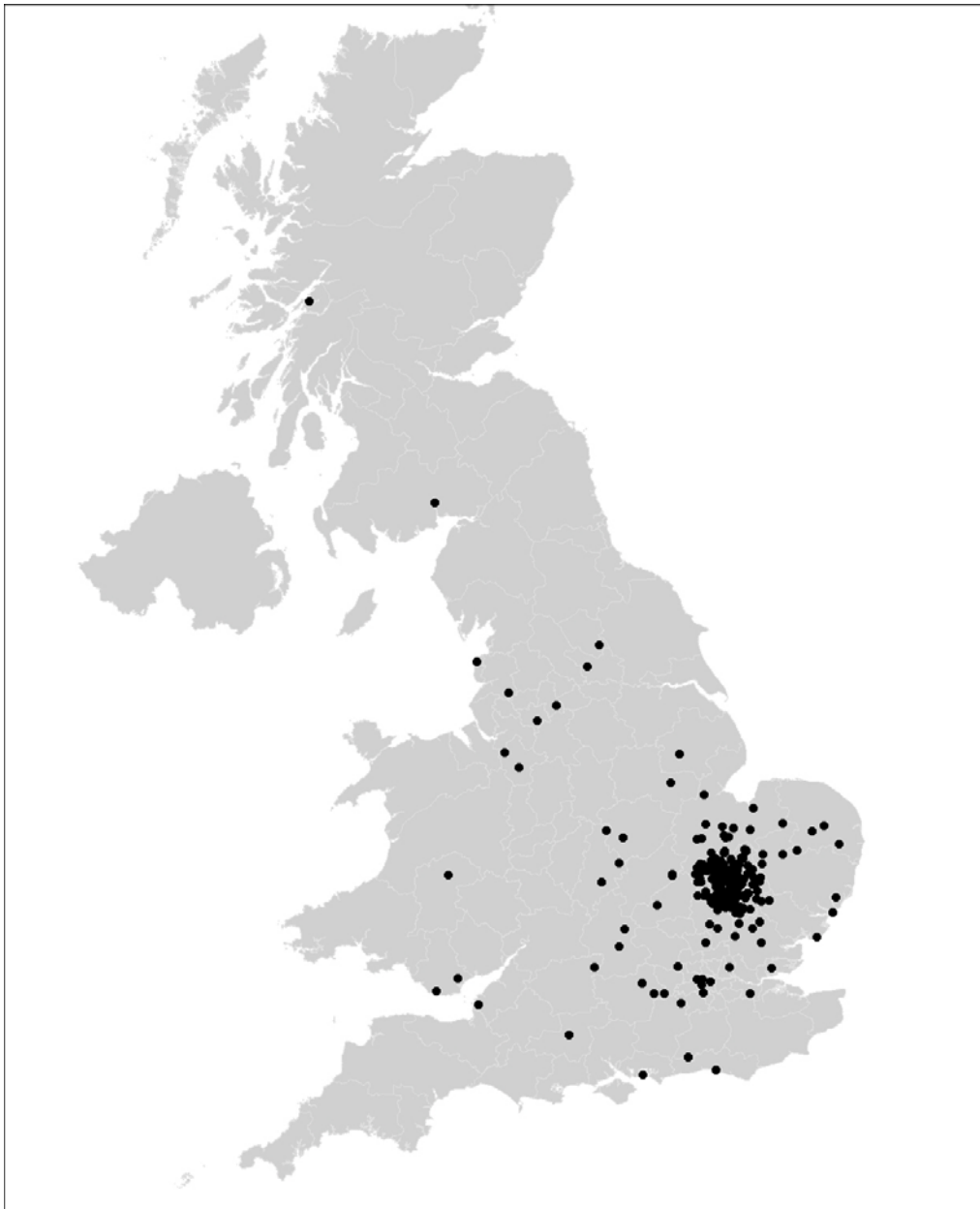
crematorium, the road crossing for those using public transport, and the need for better path surfaces within the site.

7.8 Geography

The map below shows how the respondents are located geographically around the area served by the crematorium.



There is an expected concentration in the city of Cambridge, but visitors come from both the city and the whole of South Cambridgeshire, with substantial clusters at Ely and Huntingdon. This second map shows how respondents scatter across the country as a whole (and in some instances beyond; we had replies to the survey from Spain and the USA as well as the UK).



The concentration remains in the east of England, but there are people who live a long way away and who would be travelling quite long distances when they visit.

7.9 Funeral Directors

This table shows the relative size, in terms of volume of business in Cambridge, of the funeral directors taking part in this study.

No. of funerals arranged in Cambridge	Number of responses
Less than 50 a year	6
50-100 a year	3
Over 100 a year	3
<i>N(=100%)</i>	12

The contributors range from very occasional users of the Cambridge facilities, arranging just 5 disposals a year, up to major business partners with 200 or 300 interments or cremations in the city annually.

Funeral directors were also asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. They agree strongly that their clients are looking for a more personalised approach to funerals, suggesting that the “production line” crematorium has had its day. They also agree strongly that there is a lot more information around these days about bereavement and funeral arrangements, suggesting that clients are much better informed than used to be the case, and that informed decisions are therefore possible on issues like disposal and commemoration.

Directors tend to agree that a funeral is becoming more of a celebration of life, but the lack of strong endorsement here suggests that there is still a funereal dimension to funerals for some clients (and perhaps for some funeral directors). They also tend to agree that clients are more open to discussion about death, suggesting there is still a degree of suppression of this subject for

some people – a factor which would make pre-planning a funeral difficult.

There is agreement, but at a lower level of consensus, that it is easier to get support in times of bereavement now.

The two additional funeral options put forward in this question achieve only tentative agreement. Interest in non-religious approaches to funerals is increasing, but agreement here is tentative and the traditional religious approach is still the norm; indeed the profile indicates that a residual religious belief is still present even where the person in question may not pursue a particularly devout life. Surprisingly, the same is true of green burials, even though there are three sites in the district offering green interment, at Barton, Brinkley, and Ramsey; perhaps funeral directors are seen as less necessary in such cases?

8 Summary

- 1 One in three of those who visit the Newmarket Road Cemetery do so on a fairly frequent and regular basis, but in general visits are occasional, taking place just a few times a year, rather than frequent. Apart from attendance at funerals, visits are concentrated on weekends, and on Sundays in particular, and on special anniversaries. One in three visits takes place at no particular time.
- 2 Those who do not visit the site have no particular problem with any aspect of the cemetery; they simply have no

reason to visit. This includes some who have relatives or friends buried there.

- 3 The cemetery is viewed positively, on the whole, but with considerable room for improvement; most scores for quality are moderate in nature. Its strongest attributes in terms of quality are its tranquillity and its cleanliness; attributes that score less well are shelter, seating and toilets. Older people tend to be more forgiving, but younger people's expectations are higher and may carry through into the future, indicating a need to raise standards of provision. Funeral directors familiar with the site are very much more critical, especially of the buildings
- 4 Although vandalism is recognised as the main issue at the cemetery, people also draw attention to problems over memento mori, with concerns about the number and nature of mementos and the problem of overspill onto neighbouring plots. These are occasional problems at worst, though.
- 5 Crematorium visits are less frequent, and although there are regular visitors, the general pattern is for visits to take place at most twice a year, and often less frequently. There are significant differences in the way the crematorium is viewed according to the frequency with which people visit. Visits take place mostly in response to death of friends, or on the anniversaries of loved ones.

- 6 Visitors to the crematorium spend time mainly in the rose garden, the cloisters and the Book of remembrance; the last of these is especially popular with anniversary visitors, for obvious reasons. People would like to visit the chapels more, but are prevented from doing so by services on weekdays and by their closure at weekends. The Columbarium is barely visited at all.
- 7 Quality ratings at the crematorium are positive, and generally outperform those at Newmarket Road, with the exception of peace and quiet; road noise from the A14 is an issue which detracts from a visit, but which it is recognised you have little control over. The highest scoring attributes are grounds maintenance and cleanliness; both score well but could achieve a higher rating. The lowest scoring quality attribute at the crematorium is shelter in bad weather. Funeral directors are critical of many aspects of the crematorium, but less so than at the cemetery.
- 8 There are no serious problems identified at the crematorium, but the ones that emerge most strongly are those linked to mementos – overspill, breakables and inappropriate items. Antisocial behaviour and vandalism are not recognised as problems and action against these issues (which presumably take place after people have left for the day) would need to be explained to people.
- 9 Bereavement Services performs well on customer care, and scores highly, especially on courtesy and on sensitivity to

the bereaved. Areas where improvement might be prioritised include availability (this may be a weekend issue) and response time. Frequent visitors have the greater problems here. Funeral directors rate all aspects of the service positively and are very enthusiastic about the music provision.

- 10 People support the general idea of a display of rules, and (to a limited degree) longer service times, but there is a balance of opinion against CCTV and places to buy refreshments or tributes, and also against a tightening of the rules on mementos. Opposition to this last issue is much stronger among less frequent visitors, but even regular visitors have problems with it, so any change in policy would require clear explanation to be acceptable.

- 11 There is some interest in interpretation of the crematorium site and its conservation objectives, and considerable interest in green alternatives to the traditional funeral, but much less interest in more active engagement. However, those who visit the grounds most often are also the most interested in activities such as a Friends group, and this might be a way of bringing these people to an understanding of issues such as memento policy. An annual memorial service would also be welcomed by those who visit most, but is of little interest to the occasional visitor.

- 12 There is strong support for wild flower and spring bulb areas, for wildlife habitat creation, and for native British trees, and there is also some support for evergreens and for more pathways through the site. There is, however, no consensus on the length of grass in the woodland.
- 13 New rules on number and type of mementos would be supported overall, but would attract significant opposition from a minority of visitors, mostly younger people. Rules on overspill would attract universal support, as would allowing the council to clear away items after a suitable interval, and there is little enthusiasm for allowing anyone other than authorised personnel to do planting. Paradoxically, people want plastic flowers to be allowed (at least, this is the prevalent view) but insist on environmentally friendly wrappings. People want to retain the right to bring dogs into the site on a lead.
- 14 Looking at mementos specifically, there is overall support for introducing and enforcing a new policy on these, but it would need to be done carefully and sensitively as the majority in favour is not always an overwhelming one. A dedicated area for mementos has as many detractors as it does supporters. People want to see rules displayed, but are less comfortable about tightening them, suggesting that they may know what the rules are and would be happy just to see them enforced. This may indicate a need for “guidance” rather than “regulation” and the language being used, and the way in which the words are conveyed, could

influence the effectiveness of the policy. There are clear majorities in favour of restrictions on number, type and overspill, but people are more concerned about overspill than the other two issues. Younger visitors are less open to restriction on their placings, and this suggests that over time it may become harder to introduce new restrictions, suggesting that action may be needed in the short rather than the medium term.

- 15 There is a demand for green burials, but it is a little muted at present and funeral directors do not indicate pressure in this area. There are already some green burial sites in the Cambridge area and a response from the crematorium might well be welcomed.

Phil Back

Stutton, North Yorks

June 2008