

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	11 th March 2014
Subject: Cemetery and Crematorium Public Consultation review	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Summary	
<p>In April 2013 your committee received a report summarising the findings of a public consultation exercise carried out by a company called Marketing Assistance Ltd.</p> <p>This report updates your Committee on the progress made and future plans regarding the areas highlighted in that report, including developing the cemetery as an education resource, the cemetery newsletter, the development of a volunteer/ friends group, guided tours, the catering and florist kiosk and the general perceptions by the public of the facilities and staff at the cemetery and crematorium.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You receive this report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium is the largest municipal cemetery and crematorium in the country and is 200 acres in size. The site is open every day of the year and last year carried out 2539 cremations and 1079 burials.
2. Excluding those attending funerals, the cemetery grounds and memorial garden receives approximately 250,000 visitors each year; some of those visitors only attend on special occasions and others more regularly. Our Christmas Carol services are always popular and were fully booked with over 100 people attending each of the two services last year.
3. In April last year a report was presented to your Committee regarding a consultation exercise that was carried out by a company called Marketing Assistance Ltd and this report seeks to inform your Committee of the current position and future plans regarding the main points highlighted by the consultation.
4. The main points highlighted by the Marketing Assistance public consultation were as follows;
 - The cemetery's potential as an educational resource
 - The cemetery newsletter

- Developing a friends/ volunteers group for the service
- Guided tours
- The quality of the catering facilities and florist shop
- The general perception of the facilities and staff at the cemetery and crematorium

Current Position and Future Plans

5. The cemetery management team have been working to develop the cemetery as an educational resource by offering the site as a venue for visits and training days for groups such as cemetery managers, police family liaison officers, hospice staff, trainee ministers, trainee funeral celebrants, schools, universities, delegations from Australia and China as well as a team from English Heritage. The Cemetery Management Team will continue to promote best practice within the industry and encourage visits from interested parties.
6. All previous feedback supports the need for a paper newsletter and we receive many compliments regarding the content. However the brochure is also provided in e-form as a PDF download from our website. Each year we receive requests from people to be added to our mailing lists and the document is a useful way of advising our visitors of forthcoming events and important issues relating to the site. The service will continue to monitor people's preferences through regular communication and will continue to make an electronic version available.
7. The early promise of a large volunteer group soon faded as many of those who originally intimated that they would like to become part of the group were not so keen when formally approached about the idea. Unfortunately many of those who had expressed an interest in becoming involved with the cemetery and crematorium service did so as a platform to voice a personal issue with the site, and once this was resolved their interest faded. This reinforced what had been highlighted in previous surveys and attempts to gain visitor feedback, that cemetery visitors have a rather focused view/interest in the site based around the dedication or grave that they visit. However, we have a small group of people who are in the process of learning more about the site and who will be assisting with the cemetery guided tours this year and will continue to advertise for friends/volunteers in our newsletter and website.
8. The Cemetery Guided tours have become more and more popular with families braving all weathers to attend and many positive comments received. Monthly tours were offered throughout the warmer months last year (May to September) and all were fully booked. Special arrangements were also made for several other groups and extra dates added to accommodate them. This year it is likely that interest will again outstrip provision and this is why a small group of volunteers are being trained to assist in the delivery of guided walks and hopefully expand the provision once they become capable of providing them without assistance.
9. The Marketing Assistance consultation exercise highlighted that the cemetery café and florist kiosk (The Gatehouse Pantry and Gatehouse Flowers) were very popular with visitors who felt that they offer good food and value for money. The services offered complement the cemetery and crematorium business and often families will contact the café to agree availability before making a funeral booking. This is something that the cemetery and crematorium wish to develop through promotion of funeral receptions, the maintenance of the pantry garden and the cemetery function room. The lease for the café and florist kiosk is due for renewal in March 2015 and

the cemetery Superintendent will be working with the City Surveyor to ensure that an assessment is made of the business and an appropriate lease is renegotiated as their ability to offer a good offering has a financial and reputational benefit to the cemetery and crematorium service.

10. The Marketing Assistance consultation exercise demonstrated the high regard in which the service is held by users and stakeholders (such as funeral Directors and Officiants) and the cemetery management team wish to develop this where possible through improved customer care and high quality service provision and to review our success through further visitor surveys in years to come, reporting back to this committee as part of the Fees, Charges and Marketing report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

11. The effective and efficient management of the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium supports the local community and protects, promotes and enhances the local environment in accordance with the City Corporation's Community Strategy.

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

HR Implications

13. There are no HR implications associated with this report.

Property Implications

14. The Superintendent will work with the City Surveyor to ensure that the facilities required to continue to deliver the services highlighted in the Marketing Assistance consultation are well maintained and that they are suitable and fit for the purposes outlined as well as service delivery needs. This supports the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy in particular ensuring that opportunities to maximise income generation are explored and promoted where feasible.

Conclusion

15. In conclusion, the Cemetery and crematorium service is recognised within the industry as an exemplar service due to its landscape, leadership, quality service and innovation. The management team aim to develop the service further in the coming year and measure success through public consultation. The development and use of volunteers will help the service to improve public understanding the history and unique nature of the site.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers:

Port Health and Environmental Services Committee - Vehicle Access and Public Consultation Report 30th April 2013

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