

West Rainton & Leamside Parish Council

Item 7 : Annual Review of Cemetery fees and charges

Report of M Ramshaw, Parish Clerk

Cemetery Fees

The Parish Council conducts an annual review of cemetery fees and charges in the context that maintenance and development of the cemetery should be self-financing, in accordance with good practice.

The review also takes into consideration inflation as calculated by the Office for National Statistics (OFNS)

Historical fee increases include 1.8% in 2020/21, 2% in 2021/22, 5% in 2022/23 and 11% in 2023/24.

In the approved budget for 2024/25, an inflationary uplift of 5% was applied to all relevant spend. For budget purposes an increase of 5% was also applied to burial fees and charges. The most recent OFNS inflation rate is also around 4-5%

If this increase (5%) is applied to current charges, fees would increase as illustrated in the table below:

Service	*2023/24 Fee	*2024/25 Fee
Double depth grave plot, with ERB	£616.00	£647.00
Single depth grave plot, with ERB	£370.00	£389.00
Cremated Remains plot, with ERB	£185.00	£194.00
Re-Open of an existing grave	£185.00	£194.00
Child up to 16 years – burial plot	No charge	No Charge
Memorial Erection Fees	£93.00	£98.00
Search Fee	£31.00	£33.00

* Fees of non-residents are double

Whilst it is acknowledged that not all cemetery expenditure for next year will increase by 5%, expenditure on the general maintenance of the cemetery since 2018 remains significantly higher than income generated as illustrated in the table below:

YEAR	INCOME	*Expenditure
2018/19	£1525	£12951
2019/20	£2668	£9049
2020/21	£2871	£6916
2021/22	£1114	£5021
2022/23	£2806	£7257
2023/24 (At 13/1/2024)	£1881	£3784

*This includes, ad hoc environmental improvements, planned grounds maintenance, responsive grounds maintenance, water rates, and waste collection services.

Memorial Tree Leaf Fee

In September 2022 our memorial tree was installed and became operational. Individual leafs are currently offered for a fee of £167.00 for a 20-year lease, including inscription and a colour motif.

The current cost of replacing a blank leaf with an inscribed leaf with a motif is £81.50 (£59 without a motif)

The supplier has advised of price increases as follows from 1/4/24

- With motif - £87.00 (6.75% increase)
- Without motif £62.00 (4.84% increase)

It should also be noted, as last year, the supplier has advised that their charges are to be reviewed again in October. Consequently, costs may increase further during 2024/25.

Our current fee of £167 is applied whether or not a motif is requested, in accordance with the Parish Council's agreed charging structure to only have one fee. To date all leafs purchased have included a motif.

The current OFNS inflation rate is around 4-5% however the 6.75% increase by the Supplier is above inflation. In order to meet the increased cost of supply and contribute towards the aim for the cemetery becoming self-financing an increase in our fee is recommended.

An increase of 6.75% would increase our fee from £167.00 to £178.27.

Recommendation

- 1. Burial Fees**

An increase of 5% is applied to current fees with effect from 1/4/24

- 2. Memorial Tree Leaf Fee**

The fee is increased to £178.00 with effect from 1/4/24

Mark Ramshaw

Parish Clerk – 4th February 2024