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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

4 June 2024

## Cabinet

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**Title:** North Ayrshire Burial Grounds

**Purpose:** To update the Cabinet on the review of burial grounds capacity and future provision of cemeteries in North Ayrshire.

**Recommendation:** That Cabinet;

- Notes significant progress has been made since the previous report in 2016 with cemetery extensions delivered at Knadgerhill, High Road, Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash) as well as walls repairs and other infrastructure works.
- Notes a new cemetery at Redston, Kilwinning is complete.
- Notes a site has been identified for a new cemetery in Kilbirnie and is being progressed.
- Notes that work is underway to identify a suitable site for a new cemetery in Ardrossan.
- Notes it has not been possible to identify a suitable site for extension or construction of a new Sannox cemetery, Arran.
- Agrees that when Sannox cemetery has no further capacity, alternative existing burial grounds on Arran will require to be used.
- Notes a comprehensive assessment of available burial space within all existing cemeteries has been carried out.
- Agrees options will continue to be assessed for cemeteries with less than 10 years capacity remaining – Dalry, High Road, Brisbane Glen.
- Notes that future funding requirements will be considered as part of the Capital Plan refresh.

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 Under the Burial & Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016, local authorities have a duty to provide burial grounds. The statutory duty is to provide at least one burial ground within the area of the local authority. In 2013 Cabinet agreed to adopt a locality approach for the provision of cemeteries in North Ayrshire. The principle of this approach was that once a cemetery reaches capacity another cemetery within that locality would be used, ensuring at least one cemetery was provided within each locality.

1.2 In October 2016, Cabinet agreed to extend the existing cemeteries at Knadgerhill (Irvine), High Road (Stevenston), Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash, Isle of Arran). Cabinet also agreed to create new cemeteries within Kilwinning and Kilbirnie.

It was also noted that 3 cemeteries on the Isle of Arran (Brodick, Sannox and Shiskine) were reaching capacity and that further investigation was required into possible extension sites. Whilst a move away from a locality approach wasn't specifically agreed, the spirit of the decision was to move away from this.

- 1.3 Knadgerhill (Irvine), High Road (Stevenston), Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash) cemetery extensions are all now complete.
- 1.4 The new cemetery for Kilwinning, namely Redston Cemetery, is also complete. In respect of Kilbirnie, it has proved difficult to find a suitable location that meets the needs of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) but a site has now been identified.
- 1.5 As for Arran, Brodick has over 10 years capacity and Shiskine has over 20 years capacity. Sannox has 5 years capacity. No alternative sites have been identified and therefore it is proposed that once capacity is exhausted at Sannox then burials take place at another cemetery on the Island, chosen by the family.
- 1.6 In parallel with the above extension work, a range of investment requirements were identified including roads, walls and other infrastructure improvements at a number of sites, most of which has now been actioned. Other wall repair work is continuing.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Under the Burial & Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 local authorities have a duty to provide at least one burial ground within the area. Cabinet agreed to adopt a locality approach for the provision of cemeteries in North Ayrshire in 2013. This means that once a cemetery reaches capacity another cemetery within that locality would be used, ensuring at least one cemetery is provided within each locality.
- 2.2 In North Ayrshire there are 45 burial grounds under the responsibility of North Ayrshire Council. Of these, 27 are closed for new lairs (still accommodating interments in existing lairs where Right of Burial and remaining capacity exist for the grave) and 18 have provision for new lairs.
- 2.3 In October 2016 Cabinet agreed to extend the existing cemeteries at Knadgerhill (Irvine), High Road (Stevenston), Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash). Cabinet also agreed to create new cemeteries for Kilwinning and Kilbirnie. It was also noted that 3 cemeteries on the Isle of Arran were reaching capacity and further investigation was required into possible extensions sites. Whilst a move away from a locality approach wasn't specifically agreed, the spirit of the decision was to move away from this.
- 2.4 In terms of progress to date, extensions for Knadgerhill (Irvine), High Road (Stevenston), Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash) are all complete. The new cemetery for Kilwinning, Redston Cemetery, is also complete.
- 2.5 Investigations have been carried out at Brodick, Sannox and Shiskine cemeteries. Additional ground for lairs has been identified at Brodick and Shiskine which results in both sites having over 10 years capacity remaining. Sannox has only 5 years capacity remaining and it is intended that once capacity is exhausted Sannox burials will be redirected to Lochranza churchyard, or another cemetery on the island of the family's choosing.

- 2.6 In parallel with the above cemetery extension work, a programme of inspections was undertaken which confirmed infrastructure investment requirements for a range of sites including wall, road and other improvements. Significant wall repairs were carried out at Beith Auld Kirk in 2017, boundary wall rebuilt at Knadgerhill Cemetery in 2017 along with some carriageway resurfacing in 2018. Wall repairs and carriageway resurfacing works were carried out in Haylie Brae Cemetery (Largs) in 2019 and resurfacing work was done at Millport, Kilbirnie and Beith in 2019. The creation of additional 'ashes only' plots, removal of an internal wall and boundary wall repairs were carried out at Ardrossan Cemetery in 2020.
- 2.7 Whilst there has been a gradual increase in cremations compared to burials (69.4% cremations in Scotland in 2018 increased to 71.66% in 2022) at this moment in time, in the short term, it has little effect on burial capacity and forecast needs.
- 2.8 The current status for cemeteries with less than 10 years capacity is as follows:

#### Arran locality

Sannox has an estimated 5 years remaining and there are 5 other cemeteries in Arran with capacity of 10 years or more.

It is recommended that alternative cemeteries on Arran are used when Sannox cemetery is full.

#### North Coast & Cumbrae

Brisbane Glen, Largs has an estimated 5 years remaining and it is proposed to develop the ground to the rear of the site which is owned by the Council and has planning permission approved. This is a relatively low- cost solution and will be funded from the cemeteries extensions, walls and infrastructure holding fund.

#### Kilwinning

No capacity issues, Redston Cemetery has sufficient capacity.

#### Irvine

No capacity issues, Dreghorn, Knadgerhill and Shewalton all have sufficient capacity.

### 3 Towns

Ardrossan has an estimated 5 years capacity remaining and PMI are currently looking at possible locations for a new site.

In the interim, options are being explored within Ardrossan Cemetery to extend capacity by removing paths, shrubs etc. This may well increase the capacity and negate the need for a new cemetery in the short term.

It was planned to extend High Road for 10 years but due to tender cost increases this was reduced to 6 years capacity. There is suitable land, owned by the Council, to extend further subject to budget being made available.

#### Garnock Valley

Dalry has an estimated six years capacity and Kilbirnie has an estimated 1 – 2 years capacity.

There is an area of land within Dalry Old Cemetery that may be suitable for burials, and this is being investigated, subject to budget being made available for this extension.

In respect of Kilbirnie, significant effort has been made to identify suitable land for a burial ground in Kilbirnie, which has proved difficult due to Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) legislation and areas prone to flooding. However, land has now been identified at the site of the former Garnock Academy (Moorpark) for a new cemetery. The existing cemetery has an estimated 1 -2 years capacity remaining with a burial rate of approximately 19 new lairs per year.

Initial findings on the proposed site are encouraging and suggest that site topography, drainage and soils would meet legislative criteria for a burial ground.

At the former Garnock Academy (Moorpark) site the intended phase 1 of the scheme would provide a further 12 years capacity for Kilbirnie at this location with the option for further extension in later years.

Discussions with Scottish Environment Protection Agency are ongoing to confirm their requirements.

An Engineering Consultant has been appointed to develop design proposals to prepare a Scheme design cost estimate. The latest estimate is that a budget of £1.45m to £1.7m is needed for a cemetery providing around 231 burial lairs for Phase 1, with associated access road and infrastructure for operatives.

There is currently a budget allocation of £1,502,000 for the development of a new cemetery for Kilbirnie. Officers are working with the Engineering Consultant to review potential options to reduce costs.

- 2.9 Options will continue to be developed for those cemeteries with less than 10 years capacity (Ardrossan, Dalry and High Road Stevenston) to inform financial investment requirements, to allow consideration of funding as part of the Capital Budget Programme review.
- 2.10 In respect of the walls and infrastructure works, whilst significant progress has been made with these, it is inevitable that further investment will be required on safety grounds as walls deteriorate through time. Therefore, proposals and costs will also be developed to help inform future capital budget programming and investment for these works.

### **3. Proposals**

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- Notes significant progress has been made since the previous report in 2016 with cemetery extensions delivered at Knadgerhill, High Road, Dalry, West Kilbride and Kilbride (Lamlash) as well as walls repairs and other infrastructure works.
- Notes a new cemetery at Redston, Kilwinning is complete.
- Notes a site has been identified for a new cemetery in Kilbirnie and is being

progressed.

- Notes that work is underway to identify a suitable site for a new cemetery in Ardrossan.
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- Agrees that when Sannox cemetery has no further capacity, alternative existing burial grounds on Arran will require to be used.
- Notes a comprehensive assessment of available burial space within all existing cemeteries has been carried out.
- Agrees options will continue to be assessed for cemeteries with less than 10 years capacity remaining – Dalry, High Road, Brisbane Glen.
- Notes that future funding requirements will be considered as part of the Capital Plan refresh.

#### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

##### **Financial**

- 4.1 Budget of £1,502,000 is already in place for a new cemetery in Kilbirnie. Largs Brisbane Glen will be funded from the existing cemeteries holding budget. Additional funding will be required to develop additional burial space for Ardrossan, Dalry and High Road. The review of walls and infrastructure requirements will also require funding. This will be considered as part of the Capital Budget Programme review.

##### **Human Resources**

- 4.2 None.

##### **Legal**

- 4.3 The Council has an obligation under the Burial & Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 to provide at least one burial ground in its area.

##### **Equality/Socio-economic**

- 4.4 None.

##### **Climate Change and Carbon**

- 4.5 The Scottish Environment Protection Agency will be consulted on developments for new sites.

##### **Key Priorities**

- 4.6 This contributes to the Council Plan priority of ensuring North Ayrshire is well connected with effective infrastructure.

##### **Community Wealth Building**

- 4.7 Opportunities for community wealth building will be considered as part of the construction tender processes for proposed work.

#### **5. Consultation**

5.1 Consultation takes place with PMI on a regular basis for new cemeteries, cemetery extensions, walls and infrastructure.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON  
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For further information please contact **Thomas Reaney, Head of Neighbourhood Services**, on 01294 324890.

**Background Papers**

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