

17. LINWOOD CEMETERY

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Corporate Plan Output: Cemeteries 9.4.39	

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board of the progress which has been made through public consultation with residents regarding the issues which are of concern to them at Linwood cemetery.

1.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

There have been eight meetings regarding Linwood cemetery, to seek the views of the public on how the cemetery layout and surrounds can be improved and maintained to an acceptable standard.

Meetings have been held as follows:

1. 23 November 2000 - Public meeting at Linwood Intermediate School
2. 24 January 2001 - Linwood Cemetery Sub Committee meeting at Linwood Intermediate School
3. 6 March 2001 - Linwood Cemetery Sub Committee meeting at Linwood Intermediate School
4. 13 March 2001 - Report working group meeting at Linwood Service Centre
5. 27 March 2001 - Report working group meeting at Linwood Service Centre
6. 19 April 2001 - Report working group meeting at Linwood Service Centre
7. 4 May 2001 - Report working group meeting at Linwood Service Centre
8. 17 May 2001 - Public meeting at Linwood Intermediate School

A report was prepared by the working group and adopted by the public meeting of 17 May 2001, for submission to the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board.

2.0 ISSUES

The principal issues which have been discussed include the Heritage, Sexton's house removal, Grounds maintenance, Security and clarifying matters of Council responsibility.

2.1 Heritage

There is a very strong recognition throughout the community of the historical significance within the cemetery. The fact that the first burial was in 1884 and many notable former citizens are buried here is noteworthy.

Concern has been expressed about the uncared for look of graves, headstones and monuments, while recognising that there are limitations on how these can be remedied.

Suggested action: - That a landscape master plan be developed, taking into account;

- the return of headstones from Decra Art
- restoration of headstones
- the tidying up of grave sites, ie fill in holes
- sign posting of heritage graves
- creation of a tour circuit of historic graves
- provision of seating and a water feature to help create tranquillity

2.2 Sexton's House

The sexton's house was removed in the mid 1980's, because it was beyond economic repair. The policy of the Parks and Recreation department at the time was to discontinue with the practice of having cemetery and park custodian houses, primarily because of the high costs involved. Similarly, today the Parks and Waterways Unit cannot justify houses at cemeteries.

At the public meetings there has been a section of the community (not a majority) who believe that if a sexton's house is re-established, it would provide a higher level of security for the cemetery, discourage vandalism and have benefits in terms of historical and on site information for visitors and interest groups.

2.3 Grounds Maintenance

Numerous concerns have been raised, ranging from the type of trees, shrubs and ground cover plants within the cemetery and the road frontages, to details of opening up views within the cemetery, additional tree planting, the use of chemicals for weed control and surfacing of pathways.

2.4 Security

A wide range of concerns have been expressed about this issue. Discussion has included lighting, types of surveillance, community watch, increasing visibility around the perimeter of the cemetery and types of planting to minimise hiding places.

Suggested Action:

That the master plan incorporates lighting improvements within and around the cemetery features. Appropriate gates and fencing detail are considered essential and a good balance of suitable trees, shrubs and ground cover planting must be achieved.

2.5 Christchurch City Council

A number of issues pertaining to the council's responsibilities have been discussed including:

- the importance of adhering to the policies and standards established by the Parks & Waterways Unit.
- developing a plan of recommendations for the \$10,000 allocation by the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board for landscape and beautification.
- opportunities exist for cost sharing street/cemetery boundaries with the City Streets Unit.
- Two legal documents apply to the administration of cemeteries; Burial and Cremation Act 1964 No 75 and Christchurch City Bylaw No 0110 (1980) Cemeteries.

3.0 CONCEPT PLAN

A plan for enhancement of Linwood Cemetery was presented to the 17 May meeting by landscape architect, Craig Benson. The concept received general approval from those residents at the meeting.

4.0 FUNDING

\$10,000 has been allocated by the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board for the current financial year, while \$20,000 is budgeted for in the 2001/02 year and \$20,000 for the 2002/03 year within the Parks and Waterways Unit budget.

5.0 COMMUNITY GROUPS

A group of interested residents has been established to support development of the Linwood cemetery. This group is enthusiastic to work positively with the City Council.

The Community Advocate comments: Please refer to clause 20.1 in the Community Advocate's Update regarding the report from the Cemeteries Committee and clause 19 relating to the report on the 2000/01 Funding Allocation of Board discretionary funding.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the working group of residents are recognised by the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board for their enthusiasm and contribution toward the short term and long term improvements at Linwood cemetery.
 2. That the concept plan of Linwood cemetery enhancement prepared by Craig Benson is adopted.
 3. That a plan of action is established to achieve the principles and the enhancement plan during the next five years as funding allows.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the recommendations be adopted.