

# DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Leisure and Arts Services Committee – 16 May 2005

**REPORT ON:** Headstone Memorial Installation and Repair Registration Scheme

**REPORT BY:** Director of Leisure and Arts

**REPORT NO:** 319-2005

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the introduction of a Scheme which permits registered Memorial Masons and other suitable Contractors to undertake works in respect of the installation of new stones and work on existing stones within cemeteries.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Registration Scheme as outlined in 6.2 below.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications from the proposal with the exception that there would be a one-off charge of £100 to cover administration and vetting of the Memorial Masons and suitable Contractors to carry out works in cemeteries.

## **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

## **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

6.1 Reference is made to Article 111 of this Committee of 18 April 2005 when the Director of Leisure and Arts was remitted to consider additional measures which could provide a long-term option for sustaining headstone safety for the future. The report stated in terms of the way forward, that the Leisure and Arts Department would continue to liaise with headstone owners and Memorial Masons in respect of specific cemetery headstones issue and develop the Registration Scheme.

At the same time there is still a major concern in respect of the hazards presented in cemeteries with unstable headstones. The inspection process is carried out on the headstones has shown that a number of stones have become unstable due to poor or inadequate fixings and foundations and also poor repairs carried out in previous years. Currently there are no set standards laid down by the Council in respect of the fixings and foundations of headstones. However the National Association of Memorial Masons have agreed standards.

Taking into account both the consultations with the Memorial Masons and also the real problem that exists with dangerous headstones and the need to look at solutions to contribute to reducing the Health & Safety concerns in the cemetery, a Registration Scheme is proposed. The key objectives of the Registration Scheme are as follows:-

- The Scheme will ensure that only registered and vetted Memorial Masons and/or

appropriate Contractors are permitted to carry out any work on headstones within the Council's cemeteries.

- Minimum standards, which guarantee the longevity of the headstones when erected, and also works carried out on the headstones are laid down as part of the Scheme.
- The Scheme will be policed by Leisure and Arts staff. The Scheme itself includes a disciplinary code which could ultimately mean that an organisation is de-registered from the Scheme if works of an unacceptable standard are evidenced.
- The Scheme will give comfort both to the Council in terms of meeting its Health & Safety obligations and from the public's perspective ensure that there is some guarantee that the work is carried out to an acceptable standard.

The Scheme should ensure the limitation in the long term, of the Council's liability, from a Health & Safety perspective, as well as limit the financial burden on future Departmental Capital allocations.

The Registration Scheme is designed to cover specifically the installation of new stones but in addition structural repairs to the existing stones. There would be no objections to individuals who wished to carry out regular cleaning of their own stones.

- 6.2 Subject to approval, it is proposed that individual organisations are invited through advertisement as well as the regular Memorial Masons to register with the Scheme. The organisations will be vetted by competent Officers and there will be an initial fee of £100 to cover the administrative process involved.

The Scheme would then be monitored and policed by Leisure and Arts departmental staff. It should be noted that every new headstone is inspected by the Department. There will also be a programme of random checks. To ensure minimum standards are achieved, an agreed disciplinary process is included with the scheme.

It is envisaged that the Scheme would be up and running from late summer and any contractors who were not registered after this time would be given an opportunity to do so otherwise they would be excluded from the cemetery for the purposes of undertaking memorial headstone works.

It is proposed that the Scheme is approved and the Director of Leisure and Arts is remitted to take forward the Scheme accordingly. A copy of the full Scheme is in the Councillors' Lounge.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents. In the formulating of the Registration Scheme a note of interest was put out to all Memorial Masons and those who contributed to the meetings views have been taken into account.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 Article III – Leisure and Arts Services Committee – 18 April 2005

**STEVE GRIMMOND**  
**DIRECTOR OF LEISURE and ARTS**  
**28 APRIL 2005**