

To receive a report from the Service Delivery Department and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Report to: Burial Authority Committee.

Date of Report: 06/10/2026

Officer writing the report: Acting Service Delivery Manager

Officer Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the report.

- **Key Updates at a Glance**

- Routine Health and Safety inspections continue with no significant issues identified.
- Wasps' nest safely treated and removed.
- Grass condition impacted by summer heat; reseeding programme planned.
- Caterpillar infestation continues to affect box hedging, although regrowth is evident.
- Investigation underway into replacing a failed hedge with a low lying Cornish stone wall.
- Wildflower areas have been successfully managed following the growing season.
- Approximately 75% of boundary hedge maintenance completed.
- Annual tree survey completed with no actions required.
- Headstone Safety Audit to be scheduled for early 2027 following public notification requirements.

- **General Health & Safety**

Routine Health and Safety inspections continue to be undertaken by staff on a regular basis.

During the reporting period, a wasps' nest was identified and successfully treated within the Cemetery grounds. The nest was located to the right of the pedestrian entrance, adjacent to the main gate. No other significant Health and Safety concerns have been identified.

- **Ground Works**

The grass at Churchtown Cemetery has been cut six times throughout the summer season. However, concerns remain regarding the condition of the lawned areas following the prolonged periods of hot weather experienced during the summer. The grass has been significantly affected by the heat, resulting in patchy coverage across several areas with weed growth becoming increasingly prevalent throughout the Cemetery. Grass seed is currently being purchased to trial a programme to rejuvenate the affected areas and improve the overall appearance of the Cemetery.



The box hedging throughout the Cemetery has been adversely affected by caterpillar infestation. Whilst there are encouraging signs of regrowth in some locations, the infestation has had a considerable impact on the overall appearance of the grounds during the past year.



Historical records and horticultural guidance indicate that box hedging can recover from this type of infestation. However, recovery can be a gradual process and may take up to six months before noticeable signs of regeneration become evident. Staff will continue to monitor the affected areas and assess the level of recovery over the coming months.

The hedge located between the Children's Section and the Ashes Plots has been removed, as the plants were deteriorating and had also been affected by the caterpillar infestation. Options are currently being explored to replace the hedge with a low Cornish stone wall, designed to complement the existing boundary walls and provide an appropriate separation between the two sections of the Cemetery.

The box hedging around the Memorial Rose Garden has also been severely impacted by the infestation this area is again being monitored to see if it will recover naturally.

The wildflower areas located to the rear of the allotment car park and alongside the Cornish wall have been cut back following another successful growing season.

Routine pruning of hedges and borders has also been undertaken. Approximately 75% of the boundary hedge maintenance programme has now been completed, the remaining 25% will be completed in November.

- **Tree Maintenance**

The annual tree survey has been completed, and no remedial works or further action are currently required for any of the trees within Churchtown Cemetery.

- **The Five-Yearly Headstone Safety Audit - Update:**

All memorials have been installed in accordance with BS 8415 standards. It is anticipated that no urgent remedial works will be required.

The inspection will therefore be scheduled for early 2027, following the appropriate period of public notice and in accordance with recognised best practice guidance.

Any findings arising from the inspection will be managed accordingly and reported in full to the next appropriate meeting of the Burial Authority Committee.

End of Report.

Signature of Officer: L Clarke

(Acting Service Delivery Manager)