

## **Agenda item 12 – To receive a report from the Service Delivery Department**

**Grounds Maintenance** – The winter works program was completed in early March with the formal hedge pruning, perimeter hedge cutting and raising of tree crowns.

The 2021 grass cutting season commenced on the 17<sup>th</sup> March. To date we have completed 6 grass cuts at Stephens Churchyard with the 7<sup>th</sup> in process. We are aiming at a 2 to 3 weekly frequency for mowing operations during the mowing season. The Height of Cut (HoC) is set to 50mm due to the uneven nature of the ground in St Stephens Churchyard.

The SDGA's were instructed not to cut the bulbs (daffodils) or the primroses at the start of the mowing season, these have now been cut having finished flowering. Oxeye Daisy's in the vicinity of the Church were not cut in late May (the 5<sup>th</sup> cut of the season).

SDM together with SSDGA have categorised areas within St Stephens Churchyard for the mowing operations, and allocating realistic work time targets for these areas. Please refer to the enclosed plan of the Churchyard which details the areas with red borders.

- Lawn Cemetery(LC) – 1-man day to complete with a ride on mower and strimmer
- Lawn Cemetery A (LCA) – 1-man day to complete with a ride on mower and strimmer
- Around Church (AC) – 1 & ½ man days to complete with a ride on mower and strimmer
- Old Section A – 3 man days to complete with a ride on mower, pedestrian and strimmer
- Old Section B – 3 man days to complete with a ride on mower, pedestrian mower and strimmer
- Old Section C – 3 man Days to complete with a ride on mower, pedestrian mower and strimmer

**Memorial Management** – The H&S inspections continue. Subsequent to SDM & ASDM completing the ICCM Cemetery & Crematoria Management Course, where the question was asked by SDM regarding frequencies of memorial stone inspections and was answered with 'every 3 to 5 years', the frequency of inspections has been set at every 3 months. Using the mowing plan enclosed we have split the churchyard in 3 sections for the inspections as follows:

- Lawn Cemetery (LC) and Lawn Cemetery A (LCA) – month 1 (completed in the first week of June)
- Around Church (AC) and Old Section A (OSA) – month 2 (due first week of July)
- Old Section B (OSB) and Old Section C (OSC) – month 3 (due first week of August)

The SSDGA has attempted to report the findings of the memorial stone inspections to the PCC by telephone on a number of occasions, but has not heard back from them.

Please note that there are 3 members of the SDD team attending the ICCM Management of Memorials Course on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Subsequent to the completion of the course, the SDD will review the frequency of the inspections.

**Memorial Wreaths** – Remembrance Memorial Wreaths were removed in late April. The Christmas Memorial Wreaths were removed in mid-March. The Easter Memorial Wreaths were removed in late May.

**Blitz 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – Special attention was given for the Memorial Service held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 to the Memorial and surrounding areas. Positive feedback was received from the organisers relating to the Memorial area. A well-received Social Media post after the event included photographs of the Memorial area showing a nice display of primroses.

**Staffing** – subsequent to the retirement of the Cemetery Warden at the end of 2020 the Service Delivery Department has implemented a flexible approach to the cemetery staffing. At present the SSDGA is in attendance most days, being assisted, as required, by other members of the Service Delivery Department.

### **Update on Minutes from JBB 13/10/2020 minute no.11/20/21 D**

To receive a letter from a resident regarding tree roots and fly tipping at St Stephens Churchyard.

Councillor Phillips proposed that the Service Delivery Department further investigate. Councillor Pinckney seconded Councillor Phillips' proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** that: -

1. The Service Delivery Manager meet with the Tree Surgeon to discuss options.
2. The Service Delivery Manager liaise with Cllr Phillips reference issues regarding Fly Tipping.

SDM visited site and met with the resident to discuss the issue in November 2021, during which it was noted that many years ago the branches on the resident's side of the tree line had been removed.

The tree line in question is surveyed with the Annual Tree Survey which highlights any works required. The oak was noted as requiring all major dead wood to be removed whilst the sycamores did not require any works.

The works to the Oak were undertaken by Contractor A subsequent to the tree survey work instructions being issued in October 2020.

1. SDM visited site with two Arboriculture contractors during Spring 2021 to look at the trees.

**Contractor A** On inspection of the trees **Contractor A** noted that the trees were not dangerous, but offered a crown height reduction be undertaken. It was noted that trees do fail on occasion despite being in healthy condition.

*To reduce the height of 4 x Sycamore trees by 2-3m and reshape leaving a natural flowing tree line. To reduce lateral growth on 1 x Oak tree over neighbouring property by 2m*

*Cost for the works to be undertaken is £1490.05 + VAT*

**Contractor B** noted that the trees are in good condition and there was no requirement for a crown reduction. However, it was recommended that a low branch churchyard side be removed.

*4 x Sycamore Trees - (No work required) These trees have been heavily reduced back over the garden in the past therefore in my opinion no further works are required in the short to medium term.*

*1 x Oak - Reduce over extended oak limbs projecting over the cemetery by 2-3 meters.*

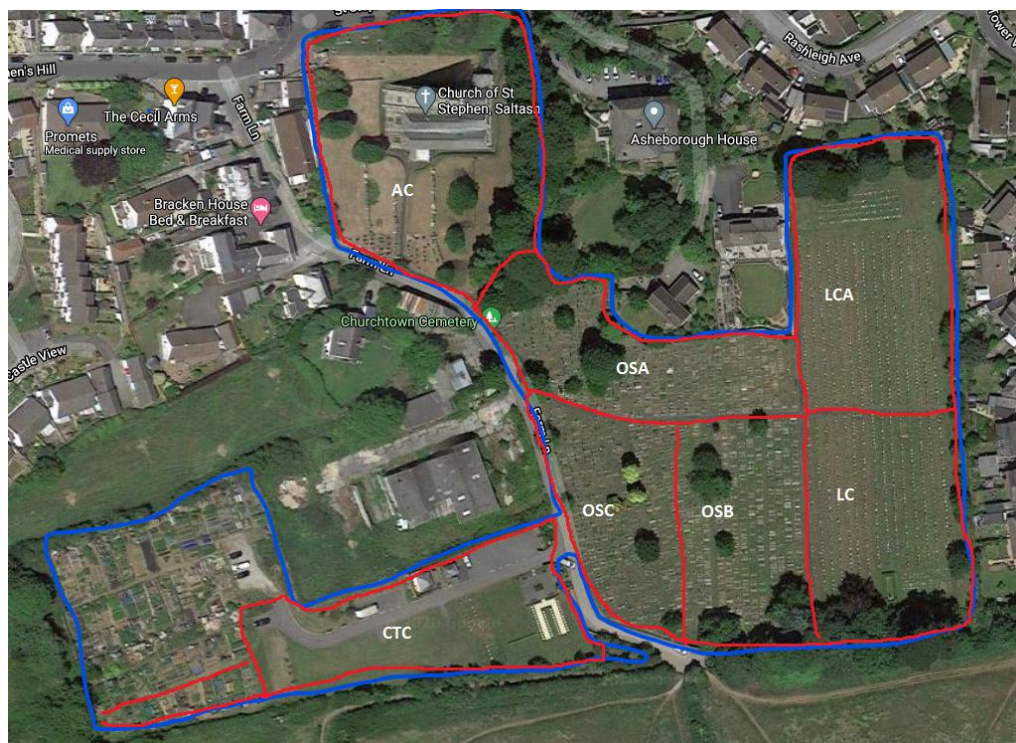
Cost for the works to be undertaken is £225.00 + VAT

**2021 – 2022 JBB Budget available for Tree Survey and Tree Maintenance is £3,231.00.**

- SDM instructed the Cemetery Warden to resolve the issue by addressing the problem. There is a small gap in the hedgerow / fence to a property adjacent to the churchyard in Killigrew Avenue that has been closed using a 'dead hedge' method which creates a wildlife habitat, whilst also addressing and closing the gap in the hedgerow.

**It is recommended that STC appoints Contractor B to undertake the works as detailed in point 1.**

### **Churchtown Cemetery and St Stephens Churchyard Mowing Areas**



**End of Report  
Service Delivery Manager**