

To receive a report from the Service Delivery Department

JOINT BURIAL BOARD

25th October 2022

St. Stephens Cemetery

Grounds Maintenance – As we enter our Autumn Season, the planned frequency for grass cutting has now been revised to three weekly intervals, which will be completed by one third of the churchyard being cut each week, we are currently in the process of completing a week 3 of a cycle.

This year the summer period has seen some very dry and hot weather conditions, August was particularly hot with temperatures reaching high 30's, and even over 40 degrees centigrade. This resulted in slowing the growth of grass and vegetation, however, unfortunately, this presented another risk, this being the real and significant risk of wildfires breaking out and spreading around the cemetery and to residential areas; to prevent, manage and control this risk all tall dry grass, (including wildflower borders), trees, and shrubs were cut back to minimise any outbreak.

Our Autumn/Winter work schedules will include the pruning of all formal hedges and perimeter hedgerows, raising the crowns (lower branches) on the trees and cutting back all shrubs and plants as required; clearing, and maintaining all pathways to always ensure safe access into and through the Churchyard for all visitors. We will also be clearing the vegetation from the foot of the perimeter wall bordering the lane between the two cemeteries.

Remembrance Day – Week commencing the 7th of November we will ensure all areas are complete and maintained to the highest standard for Remembrance Day; this will include the cleaning of the war memorial and surrounding areas, and ensuring the grass and hedges are prepared and cut in the vicinity and all pathways are free from debris.

Memorial Management – Health and safety inspections continue with the entire churchyard being completely inspected during August, a number of headstones were identified as dangerous, and action was taken to make them safe for all visitors; some were laid down and those that were too heavy to manually handle were isolated with hazard tape and road pins. We will be reviewing the process of how to isolate and identify these hazards to ensure absolute minimum risk to all visitors and maintenance workers, this review will be complete by the end of October 2022.

The legal requirement for Memorial Headstones is they must be inspected every 5 years, however, the inspections will continue on a quarterly basis, due to the substantial risk of injury they present.

End of Report
Service Delivery Manager