

BLAKENALL AND BLOXWICH LNP

19TH SEPTEMBER 2005

BLOXWICH CEMETERY, FIELD ROAD

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members of the LNP on the issue of vehicular access into Bloxwich Cemetery.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

Members of the LNP are recommended to:-

- i) Note the revised vehicular restrictions that are to be adopted for a trial period from 1st December 2005 for approximately three months.
- ii) Agree to receive a further report detailing the outcome of the trial.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 At your meeting on the 14th March 2005, a report was discussed which outlined the considerable damage that had been caused by inconsiderate vehicle drivers and the LNP agreed three resolutions:-

- 1) That this Local Neighbourhood Partnership urges the Executive Director of Regeneration, Housing and Built Environment and Portfolio Holder to consider the closure of Bloxwich Cemetery to all vehicular traffic with the exception of funeral corteges or by prior appointment from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon the following day Monday to Friday;
- 2) That the Cemetery is staffed by a warden during the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 12 noon in order to monitor vehicular access to the Cemetery during those hours;
- 3) That the Cemetery remains closed to vehicles at all times during the weekends and Bank Holidays.

3.2 These resolutions have now been considered by the portfolio holder and the then Acting Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment, in conjunction with the service managers.

3.3 Of these, **Resolution 3** has been implemented, The Cemetery is closed to vehicles at all times during the weekends and Bank Holidays. However, to address accessibility for disabled badge holders at weekends, the facility is available for them to gain access on an appointment basis if they have made prior arrangements with Bereavement Services.

3.4 This report makes alternative proposals based on the operational difficulties arising from the implementation of Resolutions 1 and 2 which recommend restricting vehicular access during the week to a two hour morning period.

3.4.1 Resolution Number 1

Restricting cemetery opening hours to between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon daily would effectively lead to a higher concentration of vehicles attempting to visit, park and leave the cemetery within a two hour period. It is anticipated that the measure might potentially actually make traffic management problems much worse.

3.4.2 Resolution Number 2

A number of Patrol staff are employed within Bereavement Services who work across all eight cemeteries, on a mobile basis, carrying out duties such as opening and closing the gates and cemetery patrol during the advertised extended Monday to Sunday opening hours, i.e. outside the usual Monday to Friday office hours. Current staffing levels do not enable a static warden dedicated to attend any cemetery during specific hours each day.

3.4.3 Although there are grave digging and gardening staff based permanently in the Cemetery Monday to Friday, they have their own grave digging and gardening duties. It is not feasible for them to monitor traffic flow and/or attend the cemetery gates on a dedicated basis for the recommended period each day or for any specified length of time.

4. **PROPOSALS**

4.1 It is apparent that there is no easy solution to this issue that will satisfy all Cemetery visitors. However, some sort of positive action is required to help prevent any repetition of the appalling scenes which occurred during last Christmas.

4.2 To prevent a recurrence of this inconsiderate driver behaviour and to balance accessibility needs for responsible visitors it is proposed to introduce additional vehicle restrictions for access during the week, in addition to the current weekend and Bank Holidays restrictions.

4.3 However, to avoid introducing a complete vehicular access ban to the cemetery at all times it is proposed to take the following traffic management steps for a trial period of approximately three months from 1st December 2005:-

During the Week

4.3.1 The main cemetery gates will be opened to allow vehicular access and some limited parking. Double yellow road markings will be painted along the accessible road in order to help prevent double parking.

4.3.2 Traffic barriers will be installed near to the Chapel and Lodge, see attached plan, across the internal roadways preventing vehicular access into the parts of the Cemetery where there are relatively narrow single track roads. Arrangements will be made to enable these barriers to be opened to allow funeral corteges and following vehicles access to the vicinity of the graveside.

4.3.3 As this will limit the current unlimited access to all parts of the cemetery for disabled vehicle drivers it is proposed to operate a prior appointment system on a trial basis on one day a week, possibly on a Wednesday, this being midweek, to enable disabled drivers to park on the internal roadways near to the grave being visited. During the trial, any disabled driver with an appropriate badge may telephone the Bereavement Services office prior to a Wednesday and make arrangements for a member of staff to meet them at the barrier to let them into the site to visit the grave, and then to lift the barrier when they wish to leave.

During the weekends and Bank Holidays

- 4.3.4 As is now the practice the gates will remain closed for all vehicles except for disabled drivers with the appropriate badge gaining access by a prior appointment system. Officers may also have to take a decision to extend this preventative measure to week days during the lead-up to Christmas.
- 4.4 Officers from the Council's Traffic Division have been consulted on these proposals and do not have any adverse comments to make.
- 4.5 A further report will be presented to the LNP on the outcome of this trial, based upon constant monitoring and evaluation of user feedback and the necessity to make appropriate adjustments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the installation of barriers and double yellow road markings can be met from existing revenue budgets.
- 5.2 Based on the outcome of this trial the LNP may wish to revisit their recommendation for provision of a dedicated warden present at the site for operating the internal barriers, potentially funded through LNP support budgets. This might support the dedicated attendance of a warden for a specific time daily/weekly, although the comments set out in 3.4.1 would still apply if this time were reduced to 2 hours daily. The estimated cost to the LNP to support a dedicated warden for say 5 hours daily (10.00am – 3.00pm) during weekdays, for 51 weeks each year would be approximately £20,000 pa.

6. PUBLICITY

- 6.1 In order to maintain public confidence in these traffic management measures it is important that appropriate signs are placed around the Cemetery advising visitors of these arrangements, in advance of the changes introduced during the trial. These proposed measures will be operational before the peak visiting period over the Christmas and New year holidays.
- 6.2 There will also be appropriate information supplied to Ward Members, published on the Council website and made available through press releases circulated to local newspapers.

Contact Officers:-

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**BLOXWICH
CEMETERY**

Pedestrian only
entrance & exit

Not to scale

Position of
proposed barriers

Proposed double
yellow lines

Pedestrian and
vehicle entrance
& exit

Field Road

