

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**County Council  
16<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor John Powell, Portfolio Holder for  
Highways and Environmental Health**

**SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe**

**Can the portfolio with responsibility for graveyards confirm all avenues will be examined to find suitable area to extend Hay-on-Wye cemetery before any plans are implemented. Concerns are being raised that all possible avenues have not been fully explored in a timely manner.**

Officers of the Council have been exploring the potential to extend Hay on Wye Cemetery since 2007 when a report was presented to the Council's Board recommending the following:

1. Approval be given in principle to extending the cemetery
2. Approval be given to enter into negotiations with a local landowner to purchase adjacent land which was in private ownership.
3. Approval for the proceeds of the sale of the Cemetery Lodge to be used to finance the development.
4. That the pre-purchase of graves be suspended

Negotiations began with the owner of land to the south east of the cemetery to purchase as area of 1.672 acres. Discussions continued until 2008 when the agent for the landowner advised that his client was unwilling to sell and was prepared to wait until the land achieved its full development value.

At that time, the land was outside the development limit and was agricultural land. This remains the case today.

Adjacent Council owned land at the recreation ground had been previously considered but at that time no further progress was made with the proposal as it was considered that parts of the recreational ground might form part of a larger scheme incorporating the re-location of Hay on Wye C P School and other uses.

The Council's Cabinet resolved not to proceed with the development on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2013.

The Cemetery Lodge was sold on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014. However, by then Council had resolved that capital receipts would not be linked to specific projects. This being the case, a bid for funding for the project had to be made, resulting in £100,000 being set aside for the development.

Given the Cabinet's decision, the possibility of utilising part of the adjacent recreational ground owned by Powys County Council was re-examined. This would

require consideration of the re-location of the existing cricket square to allow the ground to continue to be used by the cricket club.

Officers initially met with Cllr Ratcliffe to discuss the proposal on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. At the meeting it was agreed that Officers would subsequently meet with the Cricket Club and Town Council.

Officers met with a representative of the Cricket Club on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 and the Town Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 to discuss the proposal and to request their views in writing.

A response was not received from the Town Council until the 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2014. No response has been received from the Cricket Club to date, despite a reminder being sent on the 18<sup>th</sup> June.

An approach could be made to local landowners in the area before doing so it's important to consider the following:

- 1) Depending on future burial rates, there could be as little as 2 years burial capacity remaining in the existing cemetery.
- 2) A pre-planning consultation has already taken place with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority which suggests that the use of the recreational ground for the cemetery extension would be acceptable subject to other material considerations.
- 3) Any land identified for the development of the extension would be subject to planning approval. A pre-requisite to planning approval would be a groundwater assessment of the site which is likely to take 12 months to complete. In the event that planning permission is granted, it will take an additional few months to develop the infrastructure of the site.
- 4) Consideration also needs to be given to the additional cost of acquiring private land for the development.
- 5) In any negotiations to purchase land, the Council would have to undertake tests to determine the suitability of the land for use as a cemetery.