

Watts Cemetery – cemetery records digitalisation

David Herbert and I have made two visits to the cemetery to date, with two purposes.

1. To accurately map the area, taking measurements of boundaries.
2. To start checking the accuracy of current data and maps

Accurate mapping

We have measured the boundaries of the cemetery for David to plot into the mapping software, to ensure that the area of the cemetery is accurately represented.

Accuracy of current data

On our first visit we checked Zone K against the map of graves. The ashes plots are generally accurate but the full graves record makes no sense against what is on the ground. Graves are marked in one place on the map and are physically evidenced in another.

On our second visit, we checked Zone A. I assumed this would be set in stone, as being the oldest part of the cemetery it would be easy to map, as the graves were all in existence when the map was drawn up, and would be a good starting place. This was no better. A number of graves are not recorded at all, and a number are recorded in a different place from where they are.

The situation is as follows:

- We will have to re-draw the map from scratch, entering into it the graves that we can see exist, in the place that they are on the ground.
- This creates a new problem, in that the records show those buried in the cemetery, but they do not all have headstones, or in some cases the headstones are illegible.
- Over the last 12 years I have used the map to find existing graves, luckily with success in most cases, so the map is accurate in places. The problem is, as shown, that it is not accurate in many instances.
- We will have to decide how to record those who are clearly interred in the cemetery, but whose grave may be misrepresented on the existing map.

The positive is that the Council has agreed on a system that is flexible and will be able to be adapted as we progress.

However, this project will take longer than initially expected, as we started with the premise that the map was generally accurate against the excel spreadsheet.

It is of course essential that we record the graves in the cemetery as accurately as possible, to the extent that every effort must be made to achieve accuracy, but this is a bigger exercise than we first hoped, and I seek the Council's permission to extend the original contract to accommodate the problems outlined, with a report at each Council meeting, together with a breakdown of costs and projections.