

# CITIZEN LED INSPECTION

## ‘LOOK SEE’

### FEEDBACK REPORT

# NETs, Land & Countryside Services

## Cemeteries Revisit

**April & May 2019**

**INSPECTION TEAM:**

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**REPORT SUBMITTED TO:**

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## **Introduction**

A Service Revisit is designed so that the Citizen Led Inspectors can reassess areas that they have previously inspected.

Inspectors revisit the service and will look at the areas they originally reported on but will also highlight any additional areas that they may come across. Inspectors will use the same criteria as they did during the 'Look See' visit and score the service based on the set criteria established prior to the first inspection. They will use a rating scale of Excellent, Good, Adequate, Poor and Very Poor. Areas for improvement and areas of good practice will also be highlighted.

The revisit is devised to allow Inspectors to follow up on work they have previously carried out.

## **Background to the Inspection**

West Lothian Council manages and maintains 32 different cemeteries and churchyards as well as 18 war memorials across West Lothian. In addition to this the service manages and holds all of the council's burial records, provides a family heritage service and administers lairs, interments and headstones for all the cemeteries. This is a frontline, customer facing service aimed at dealing with a customer's range of enquiries, particular during sensitive and challenging times.

The Inspectors carried out a 'Look See' inspection during the months of August and September 2017. They presented their reports to the Service Manager and an Improvement Plan was drawn up based on their findings. The Improvement Plan was given to the Service Manager who was asked to look at the recommendations and put in place any necessary changes where possible.

The Inspectors have now been asked to carry out a revisit of the cemeteries to follow up on the work previously carried out. The revisit will not include burial records, internments, lairs or headstones as these were all rated as good or excellent on the last visit.

The inspectors agreed to carry out their revisit inspection throughout the months of April and May 2019 and were asked to revisit the same cemeteries as they did on the original inspection.

Cemeteries inspected during the revisit:

Almondell, East Calder  
Blaeberry, Whitburn  
Burngrange, West Calder  
Hermand, West Calder  
St Michaels, Linlithgow

## Summary of Findings

Almondell Cemetery was visited by 2 different Inspectors. The Inspectors rated the service as follows:

Category - Cemeteries		Almondell (AD)		Blaeberry (BB)	Burngrange (BG)	Hermand (HM)	St Michaels (StM)
1	Information available prior to inspection	Poor	Very Poor	Poor	Very Poor	Very Poor	Poor
2	Cemetery Visit	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Good	Good	Good
3	Cemetery Management Rules	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Very Poor	Good	Not Rated
4	Staff Interaction	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated
Overall Findings		Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Poor	Adequate	Adequate

## Findings

The table below highlights the key findings, areas of good practice and recommendations for areas for improvement.

Category - Cemeteries	Sub Categories of Inspection	Areas of Good Practice		Areas for Improvement	Overall Rating
<b>1.Information available prior to inspection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Location</li> <li>▪ Opening times</li> <li>▪ On-site facilities</li> <li>▪ Accessibility</li> <li>▪ Available parking</li> </ul>	<b>AD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive cemetery rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Map on West Lothian Council website is a pdf one and cannot move like a google map.</li> <li>▪ Very generic information.</li> </ul>	Poor
		<b>BB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The post code of EH47 8LD gives a position on the wrong side of Blaeberry Road on google maps.</li> </ul>	Poor
		<b>BG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive cemetery rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information too generic.</li> <li>▪ Location information is a static planning map with a red dot. Unable to zoom in and out and road information is unclear.</li> </ul>	Very Poor
		<b>HM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive cemetery rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information too generic.</li> <li>▪ Location information is a static planning map with a red dot. Unable to zoom in and out and road information is unclear.</li> </ul>	Very Poor
		<b>StM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nothing online about the churchyard.</li> </ul>	Poor
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider more user friendly maps.</li> </ul>			
	<b>1.2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review postcode given on web page for Blaeberry Cemetery.</li> </ul>			
	<b>1.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider providing online information for St Michael's churchyard.</li> </ul>			
	<b>1.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider adding bespoke information for each cemetery.</li> </ul>			

Category - Cemeteries	Sub Categories of Inspection	Areas of Good Practice	Areas for Improvement	Overall Rating
<b>2.Cemetery Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signage</li> <li>▪ Accessibility</li> <li>▪ Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Appearance</li> <li>▪ Ambience</li> <li>▪ On-site facilities</li> <li>▪ Information Available</li> </ul>	<b>AD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very well-tended.</li> <li>▪ Well maintained and in a beautiful setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signage is only seen on the wall of the Cemetery, there are no signs on the main road in either direction.</li> <li>▪ The Rules sign on the wooden building is slightly different to that in Blaeberry.</li> <li>▪ There is no access to the grounds to cars due to padlocked gates</li> <li>▪ No facilities for visitors.</li> <li>▪ Car park shares and access point with Almondell Country Park so parking may be an issue for funerals with a large attendance.</li> <li>▪ Inspector was unable to find tap.</li> </ul>	Good
		<b>BB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open bright space with reasonable tended surroundings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signage still very poor at the entrance from Blaeberryhill Road and at cemetery gate. Inspector has provided photograph.</li> <li>▪ No facilities open for shelter or toilet.</li> <li>▪ 5mph sign is needed as during inspectors visit 2 cars visited the grounds at a higher speed.</li> <li>▪ Very small baby area that the inspector has described as “not that nice”.</li> </ul>	Adequate
		<b>BG</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well maintained and in a beautiful setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No signage on the main road coming from the west.</li> <li>▪ 2 spaces for disabled parking but no markings for general spaces.</li> <li>▪ Gravestone BG749 unsteady.</li> </ul>	Good
		<b>HM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very well maintained and in a beautiful setting.</li> <li>▪ Signage from West Calder village is clearly visible.</li> <li>▪ Signage off road is very clear.</li> <li>▪ 2 taps available.</li> <li>▪ Plenty of parking spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Walking route not signposted.</li> <li>▪ Loose chippings but mostly contained to individual plots.</li> </ul>	Good

Category - Cemeteries	Sub Categories of Inspection	Areas of Good Practice		Areas for Improvement	Overall Rating
		<b>StM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the church, volunteer staff are available to help.</li> <li>The War Memorial is very well kept. (Inspector has photograph).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bins, large safety meshes and some slabs in view.</li> </ul>	Good
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider main road signage for Almondell.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review padlocked gates at Almondell.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review signage at entrance to Blaeberry.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider internal speed limit sign for Blaeberry.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review tidiness of St Michaels churchyard.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make secure gravestone BG749 located at Burngrage.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider signposting walking route at Hermand.</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider marking out car parking spaces at Burngrange</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider road signage for Burngrange visitors coming from the west,</li> </ul>			
	<b>2.10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the possibility of installing a tap at Almondell unless already installed. (Inspector unable to find tap.</li> </ul>			
<b>3. Cemetery Management Rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display</li> <li>Understanding</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Fairness</li> </ul>	<b>AD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be in a larger font with a sign top encourage reading.</li> <li>Poster had slipped in glass box when inspector visited.</li> </ul>	Good
		<b>BB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could be in a larger font with a sign to encourage reading.</li> <li>Summary on window of locked building includes "railing, kerbing, fencing, cornerstones, gravel not permitted" – yet a large amount of graves contravene these rules. (Inspector has provided</li> </ul>	Adequate

Category - Cemeteries	Sub Categories of Inspection	Areas of Good Practice		Areas for Improvement	Overall Rating
				photographic evidence).	
		<b>BG</b>	▪	▪ Inspector was unable to find cemetery management rules during visit.	Very Poor
		<b>HM</b>	▪	▪	Good
		<b>StM</b>	▪	▪	Not Rated
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>3.1</b>	▪ Consider larger font for all cemetery management rules on display.			
	<b>3.2</b>	▪ Consider making clearer what is and what is not allowed on graves.			
	<b>3.3</b>	▪ Investigate Cemetery Rules at Burngrange			
<b>4. Staff Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge</li> <li>▪ Polite &amp; Friendly</li> <li>▪ Helpful</li> <li>▪ Respectful</li> <li>▪ Recognisable</li> <li>▪ Accessible</li> </ul>	<b>AD</b>	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	n/a
		<b>BB</b>	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	
		<b>BG</b>	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	
		<b>HM</b>	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	
		<b>StM</b>	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	▪ No comments were provided by the inspector for this section.	

Category - Cemeteries	Sub Categories of Inspection	Areas of Good Practice	Areas for Improvement	Overall Rating	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	▪ No cemetery staff were on site during the inspectors visit.				
<b>Overall Findings</b>		<b>AD</b>	▪ Well maintained.	▪ .Signage from main road non-existent. ▪ No facilities for visitors	
		<b>BB</b>	▪ Open bright space with reasonable tended surroundings.	▪ Signage inadequate. ▪ Poor facilities for visitors. ▪ Too many areas contravene the rules.	
		<b>BG</b>	▪ Well maintained.	▪ Road signage could be better. ▪ Car parking spaces could be marked.	
		<b>HM</b>	▪ Well maintained. ▪ Taps available. ▪ Plenty of parking spaces.	▪ Signpost walking route.	
		<b>StM</b>	▪ War Memorial very well kept.	▪ Remove bins, meshes and slabs from the churchyard.	

## **Conclusions & Next Steps**

The 2 inspectors revisited 5 different cemeteries between them. Their feedback regarding information available before the visit was consistent. Both inspectors felt that the maps could be more user-friendly and that there should be more information on opening times, facilities, and parking for each individual cemetery. The Inspectors felt the cemeteries are all well looked after and well maintained. The Inspectors did not come into contact with any West Lothian Council staff on this visit so this section could not be rated or commented on. However on their previous visit they found staff to be excellent – knowledgeable, helpful and friendly and they were considered by the inspectors to be a credit to the service.

Cemetery Management Rules are not always being followed, details of which have been outlined in the report. Facilities for visitors were also highlighted.

Areas for improvement and recommendations have been identified by the inspection team and the service should now review the findings of the inspectors; take note of the recommendations made and devise an improvement plan to action these. Planned improvements will then be fed back to the inspectors and followed up with the service by the Business Improvement Officers.

For further information please contact Jane Baillie or Katherine McLaughlin, Performance and Improvement Service.

**Date: 23 May 2019**