

**Report of Trading and Operational Support Manager  
Report to Chief Officer Parks and Countryside**

**Date: 13 June 2018**

**Subject: Lawnswood Book of Remembrance Restoration Works**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Over the Easter period, the Book of Remembrance Room at Lawnswood Crematorium was the subject of a break in.
2. The Books of Remembrance from the Reading Room, with records going back over many decades, appeared to have been attacked with a sharp knife and scattered in the grounds and around the outside of the building.
3. It appears to have been a malicious and targeted attack on the books as nothing else appeared to be damaged or stolen.
4. These books are absolutely priceless, holding personal sentiments from many hundreds of families from all across the UK and further afield dating back decades.
5. Given the high profile and sensitive nature of this targeted attack, the Council had no option but to act quickly to locate all of the damaged pieces and send every fragment found to a specialist book binder company to assess the damage and see if these books could be salvaged and or restored back to their original condition.

**Recommendations**

6. The Chief Officer for Parks and Countryside is requested to use the authority set out in Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 1.3 to waive Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurement – to enter into a contract for the restoration of the Books of Remembrance direct from FG Marshalls Ltd.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To request the Chief Officer of Parks and Countryside to note the contents of this report and to approve the waiver contracts procedure rule 8.1 and 8.2 - Intermediate Value Procurement – to enter into a contract for the restoration of the Books of Remembrance direct from FG Marshalls Ltd.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Staff at Lawnswood Crematorium were shocked to return from the Easter weekend to find that there had been a break-in at the Reading Room at the popular and historic facility.
- 2.2 Books of Remembrance from the Reading Room, with records going back over many decades, appeared to have been attacked with a sharp knife and scattered in the grounds outside the building. In addition to the damage caused by a sharp knife the books and strewn fragments were left out in the rain and became severely water damaged.
- 2.3 For decades the books of remembrance are always kept on public display within a locked cabinet and within a locked room. This is the first time that these books have been targeted in this way and the service has reviewed its security arrangements.
- 2.4 Friends and relatives of the deceased will travel far afield so that they are able to view the Book of Remembrance on the anniversary of the death of the deceased. These memorials play a significant part to help those who wish to remember their loved ones and it is most upsetting when these memorials are not on public display.
- 2.5 Given the importance of these records and the sensitive nature of the damage occurred, the Council had no alternative but to respond quickly and appropriately to procure the services of a specialist company to help restore these books back to their original condition.

## **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The book of remembrance plays a significant and important role for those who have been bereaved. It provides a simple and everlasting record of and memorial to the deceased.
- 3.2 The books are made from the finest paper and the inscriptions and emblems are written by professional artists and calligrapher's. Therefore they need to be restored by a reputable company who specialises in this area of work which is both time consuming and a costly process.
- 3.3 Not to procure a specialist company has the potential of reputational damage to the Council and creating further distress to the friends and families of the deceased.
- 3.4 The service is also investigating the possibility of providing a digital record of the books of remembrance which can also be used for public display. However, it is also acknowledged that this does not have the same personal touch as that of the more traditional leather bound books which families prefer.
- 3.5 This is the first time the books of remembrance have been targeted in this way and as a direct result of this vandalism it meant that the records were not available for public display causing further distress to friends and relatives of the deceased including the staff who work at the Crematorium.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 There is no requirement for consultation and engagement with regard to this waiver.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 The outcome of this process will have no effect on equality and diversity, cohesion or integration of our customers as the books of remembrance will be restored back to their original condition.

### **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1 The waiver of the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules in relation to the purchase of memorial sanctums and memorial plaques and this report draws attention to co-ordinated working that demonstrates a contribution towards the following priorities contained in the City Priority Plan:

- Best city for communities:
- Best city to live:
- Best Council Plan 2015 to 2020
- Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The procurement of the restoration of these memorials represents value for money and the details of which are set out within the Confidential Appendix and is attached to this report.

4.4.2 Following this vandalism incident, the Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery have set up a help giving page on their website to help raise funds to assist with the restoration works. The Council's insurance section has also been contacted who have confirmed that any associated costs for this restoration will need to come from revenue.

### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 This is a significant operational decision which is not subject to call-in.

4.5.2 The Appendix to the report is Exempt/Confidential under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4(3). The public interest in maintaining the exemption in relation to the confidential Appendix outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and financial details which, if disclosed would adversely affect the business of the Council and the business affairs of a number of individual companies.

4.5.3 Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the waiver of CPR 8.1 and 8.2 the content of the report should be noted. In making their final decision, the

Chief Officer of Parks Countryside should be satisfied that the approved course of action represents best value for the council.

#### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 The risk associated with this waiver is thought to be low given the specialist nature and quality of the products available to restore these memorials.

#### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 It will be important to ensure that these memorials are put back on public display as soon as possible to reduce the distress caused by this targeted vandalism.

#### **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Chief Officer for Parks and Countryside is requested to use the authority set out in Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 1.3 to waive Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurement – to enter into a contract for the restoration of the Books of Remembrance direct from FG Marshalls Ltd

#### **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.