**DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

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| **SMD/2017/0181**<br>**Valid 04/04/2017** | **COTTON PARISH CEMETERIES**<br>**COTTON LANE**<br>**COTTON** | **PROPOSED NAME DISPLAY ARCH AT THE ENTRANCE TO COTTON PARISH CEMETERY**<br><br>**(FULL - MINOR)** |

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**MAIN ISSUES**

- Design
- Rural location

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

The site is the pedestrian gateway to the cemetery alongside the single track Cotton Lane. A low wall with strong privet hedge forms the boundary with the road and the gateway is midway along and slightly set in from the hedge line so that it isn't obviously visible in approaches along the road from either direction. The gates comprise a twin pair in attractive wrought iron work painted dark green. The gates are mounted on square pillars built in stone blockwork to c.1.5m high.

The location is strongly rural being isolated from other development and surrounded by fields. The next nearest property is Cotton Lane Farm some 300m to the NW. Hall Farm at Cotton College is c.400m to the east. The cemetery occupies a gently rising site with a central ramped pathway leading from steps immediately inside the gates to the far top boundary where there is a small store.

**PROPOSAL**

To erect a metal arched name sign, 'Cotton Parish Cemetery', over the gateway mounted on steel support posts set to the outer side of each stone support column. Amended plans have been submitted in response to concerns about the overall scale of the proposal bringing the crest of the arch down slightly to a maximum height of 2687mm. The lettering would be formed individually as flat cut-outs to be mounted on parallel curving bars arched between the support posts. The sign is proposed to be finished in green matching the green of the gates.

**RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

**Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)**

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Areas
SS7 Churnet Valley Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

**National Planning Policy Framework**
Paragraph(s) 1 to 17
Section(s) 7 – Requiring Good Design

**SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**
No recent records.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Publicity**
Site Notice expiry date: 10th May 2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

**Public Comments**
None

**Town / Parish Comments**
N/A

**OFFICER COMMENTS**

**Principle of Development**
With no express policy relevant to the proposal the application falls to be determined in accordance with SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. The relevant considerations are the impact of the development on the landscape and character of the rural setting. The Parish Council's aim and intention behind the proposal stems from concern that visitors to the cemetery may fail to find it.

**Design**
The proposal has a simple form. It would be seen as part and parcel of the entrance with the gates and stone columns.

**Amenity**
With no near neighbours the amenity impacts are solely those affecting the street scene. It was put to the applicant that a lower level sign against the hedge side would serve equally well and be less imposing but the Parish Council wish to have the more noticeable presence of the overhead arch.

**CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**
It is possible that this proposal could be seen as having an urbanising influence on the location which policies such as SS7 and DC3 would seek to avoid. The structure is however modest in scale and its presence would only be apparent in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery entrance where the characteristic is distinct from the otherwise rural setting eg privet hedge and mortared semi-dressed stone walling

and gate posts – as opposed to field hedging and drystone walling. There is also an identified community need behind the proposal and therefore a benefit to be derived from it and it is put forward by an agency of the local community. The possible adverse urbanising effect is not so great as to significantly outweigh the identified benefit (Policy SS1a) and so the proposal should be supported as being in accord with SS1a.

Subject to appropriate colour finish to match the dark green of the gates the proposal is found acceptable. It may be desired that the lettering be picked out in black or gilt either of which would be suitable.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :** approve

**Case Officer:** Arne Swithenbank
**Recommendation Date:** 26th September 2017

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**