

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood Shared Service****Council: 09 February 2022**

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**Subject: Covid Memorial Garden Proposals - Motions from Council 24 June 2020 and 25 May 2021****1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the motions agreed at the West Dunbartonshire Council meetings held on 24 June 2020 and 25 May 2021 regarding COVID memorial garden proposals.

**2. Recommendations****2.1** Council is asked to:

- i. approve in principle the memorial garden locations identified as Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton, Dalmuir Park, Clydebank, and Christie Park, Alexandria as noted in section 4.3 of this report;
- ii. approve that Officers commence with the public consultation exercise to develop and shape the memorial garden proposals; and
- iii. note the national Covid Community Memorial programme managed by Greenspace Scotland and the opportunities for West Dunbartonshire communities to participate in the project.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** The first Covid 19 deaths in Scotland were reported in March 2020. Since then almost 12,500 people have died with Coronavirus.

The past two years have been like no others and everyone has been affected in some way. Very sadly, people across West Dunbartonshire have lost loved ones and no Community has been untouched by the impact COVID 19 has had.

In addition to the tragic death toll, residents throughout West Dunbartonshire have felt the impact on businesses and livelihoods, education and a lack of social contact with family and friends.

West Dunbartonshire council want to create a lasting legacy in recognition of the suffering and sacrifice experienced throughout our Communities.

The motions below were agreed at Council meetings and Council Officers have commenced with the development of projects that will provide Memorial Gardens in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria

### **3.2 Motion by Councillor Gail Casey at Council meeting of 24 June 2020 – Formal Record of Thanks to the Communities of West Dunbartonshire**

Councillor Casey moved:-

In times of adversity, we need to pull together and it is in these moments that we see the best in our fellow citizens.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought out the best in all of us.

Overnight we have seen our key workers in the public, voluntary and private sector turn into superheroes. Whether it's caring for our sick and vulnerable; providing our communities with the basics of daily living, food, shelter, warmth and safety; or lifting our spirits in times of sadness and worry. This was more than just a job it was a lifeline for many.

Therefore, it's important as a Council that we publicly acknowledge what they have done for our communities.

- To the carers and medical staff who at their own risk, selflessly protected and comforted us in our hour of need, we say thank you.
- To the shop workers who made sure that we had our daily bread and sometimes something a bit stronger, we say thank you.
- To the workers who continued to empty our bins, keep our streets clean and cut our grass, we say thank you.
- To the voluntary groups who tirelessly collected and distributed food to those shielding at home or those who were struggling to make ends meet, we say thank you.
- To the people in organisations who kept the services going and kept us all informed throughout a fast moving and changing environment, we say thank you.
- To all those many individuals and groups who went out of their way to keep our spirits up, singing, dancing and piping to entertain us in our time of need, we say thank you.
- To all those who raised money for charities, donated to foodbanks or who sent food to key workers, we say thank you.
- To all of those friends and family members who took on the additional burden to help others day in and day out during the pandemic, we say thank you.

- To all those support groups who daily telephoned vulnerable people just to let their neighbours know they cared, we say thank you.
- To those parents and carers who have been housebound looking after dependent children and dependent adults, we say thank you.
- To everyone else who has done their bit to break the spread of this infection, those who stayed indoors self-isolating and shielding and all of those neighbours who stepped up to the challenge to help others, we say thank you.

The kindness of strangers has helped many in our community through the worst of times. For a lot of people this pandemic has meant they have had to put their lives on hold to help others. They didn't need to be asked; they were self-motivated and fuelled by kindness.

This Council acknowledges the fantastic effort of all of our communities in responding to the COVID-19 emergency. Our motto is strength through community and our citizens have shown us all in no uncertain terms what this actually means.

So for pulling together, helping each other, and going the extra mile just to get things done that needed done, we say thank you.

Following a request from Councillor Docherty<sup>1</sup>, Councillor Casey accepted the following addendum to her motion:-

Council thanks all Council staff who have gone above and beyond to deliver vital services to our communities throughout this crisis.

The Council agreed the motion with addendum and noted that a report would be brought to a future meeting of Council on a proposal to erect a memorial to recognise the key workers from West Dunbartonshire Council who have died during this difficult time.

### **3.3 Motion by Councillor Daniel Lennie at Council meeting of 25 May 2021 - Proposed Memorials at Clydebank, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven**

Councillor Lennie moved:-

The Council acknowledges the heartache, pain and suffering that the Covid19 pandemic inflicted upon local residents in both halves of the local authority area.

Council recognises the calls by our communities for some sort of memorial to allow us to recognise and commemorate the loss of loved ones.

The memorial could be in the form of a garden, a plaque, a public artwork or other physical representation where families could attend throughout the year at a time of significance to them such as a birthday, religious holiday or the date the family member died.

There could also be an option of an annual day of remembrance, where family and friends come together for a service of remembrance.

In addition, the commemoration could also make reference to all the key workers who provided help and support throughout the public health emergency and who often comforted families and loved ones in their time of need.

The location and type of memorial should be decided by the residents of Clydebank and Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven respectively.

The council should contribute to the costs but we should also open this up to public subscription so that individuals and groups can have an opportunity to contribute and so they can help to shape the final memorial for Clydebank and the one for Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven.

A full report should be brought to a future Council meeting for consideration by Councillors which should include feedback from our communities.

The report should be mindful that some vulnerable people may have died in the early pandemic in our communities and in care homes when testing was not readily available.

The Council agreed the motion.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** Officers from the Council's Roads and Neighbourhood Service have set up a small working group and have held a series of meetings to consider what would be an appropriate memorial of the COVID pandemic period in West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.2** In line with the agreed Council motions identified in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this report the group are seeking to put in place memorials that will be welcomed by all of the communities of West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.3** The group have identified three areas that they feel would be appropriate for the creation of the memorial gardens. The locations identified are:
  - Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton
  - Dalmuir Park, Clydebank
  - Christie Park, Alexandria
- 4.4** It is envisaged that the memorial gardens will include a natural stone memorial with a plaque, seating area, floral beds and will be located in an area of the park that is suitable for peace and reflection.

- 4.5** The group will engage with the Communities and Corporate Communications teams to develop a consultation strategy that will allow all residents to have a say in the layout and development of the memorial gardens.
- 4.6** Communities will also be consulted on the wording for the memorial plaque and there is an opportunity to have further plaques on the benches within the seating area.
- 4.7** The consultation feedback will be presented to Council for consideration in relation to the design and layout of each memorial garden including the wording on the plaques, layout of the seating area and planting.
- 4.8** The Service will also work with our communities to develop and design the planting areas to maximise perennial planting maximising year round greenery and reducing maintenance requirements.
- 4.9** In addition there is a Covid Community Memorial programme recently launched by Greenspace Scotland. This is a national programme of remembrance called “Remembering Together” managed by Greenspace Scotland, bringing together communities and artists in collective acts of reflection, remembrance, hope and healing.

Supported with £4.1 million provided by the Scottish Government, memorial projects will be co-created in every local authority area of Scotland as communities work with artists to honour those that have lost their lives to Covid 19 and reflect on their own experiences.

- 4.10** “Remembering Together” will be managed in two phases. Phase 1 is a period of co-creation in each local authority area between communities and artists selected following responses to an advertised brief. In phase 2 the co-created ideas in each area will be realised in whatever way communities feel is the most appropriate for them. This could include not only physical structures but also work that is digital or can exist in many locations.

Artists and communities can find out how to be part of “Remembering Together” at [www.rememberingtogether.scot](http://www.rememberingtogether.scot).

- 4.11** A national advisory group has been established to work with Greenspace Scotland in the delivery of the programme which includes LGBT Health and Wellbeing, Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland, NHS Charities Together, Age Scotland, Diversity Scotland and other stakeholders.
- 4.12** Each local authority area will have its own page on the programme website for local updates with details on the website of “Remembering Together” events including advice for communities on getting involved and online briefings for artists intending to apply to the programme.
- 4.13** Further information will be provided to members as the programme develops

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** There are no direct people implications resulting from this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

**6.1** The motion of 25 May 2021 agrees that Council will contribute to the cost of creating the memorial gardens and will also open this up to public subscription. The costs will be established as the garden design and layout is detailed and reported to Council for consideration.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** No risks identified at this stage in the development of the project.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** An initial screening confirms there is no adverse impact.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** As detailed in section 4.5 of this report a full public consultation strategy will be developed to allow all resident to have a say in the development of the memorials.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** This report supports the Councils Strategic objective of efficient and effective public services that improve the lives of residents.

### **Gail Macfarlane**

Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood Shared Service

Date: 26 January 2022

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**Person to Contact:** Ian Bain, Greenspace Manager

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All