



# The Edinburgh Graveyards Project

*A scoping study to identify strategic priorities for the future care  
and enjoyment of five historic burial grounds in the heart  
of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site*

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Greyfriar's Kirkyard, Monument No.22  
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The scoping study was led by Dr Susan Buckham of Kirkyard Consulting, a specialist with over 15 years experience in graveyard research and conservation. Kirsten Carter McKee, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Architecture at Edinburgh University researching the cultural, political, and social significance of Calton Hill, undertook the desktop survey and contributed to the Greyfriars exit poll data collection. Thomas Ashley, a doctoral candidate at Yale University, was awarded the Edinburgh Graveyard Scholarship 2011 by World Monuments Fund. This discrete project ran between July and September 2011 and was supervised by Kirsten Carter McKee.

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The project management team was composed of David Gundry, Projects Director at World Monuments Fund Britain; Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage; and Dorothy Marsh, former Senior Conservation Officer at the City of Edinburgh Council (retired from post April 2011).



EDINBURGH WORLD HERITAGE

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I-spy symbol trail at Old Calton Burial Ground

# Contents

- 12 Acknowledgements
- 12 Introduction and Project Development
- 12 The Issues at Play and Main Recommendations
- 12 Part 1: The Edinburgh Graveyards Project
- 12 Part 2: The Graveyards
- 12 Part 3: An Improved Understanding
- 12 Part 4: Increasing the Audience
- 12 Part 5: Forward-Looking Site Maintenance
- 12 Part 6: Delivering Community-Led Change
- 12 Conclusions



Burial enclosure in St Cuthbert's Kirkyard

## Introduction and Project Development

The five historic graveyards of Canongate, Greyfriars, St Cuthbert's, Old Calton, and New Calton, all of which are within Edinburgh's World Heritage Site, represent an important, if largely untapped, cultural resource. At present, millions of visitors walk past the gates of Canongate Kirk on the Royal Mile, for example, without being aware of the graveyard to the rear of the church. In many views around the city they are clearly an integral part of the historic fabric and character of Edinburgh, the World Heritage Site, and of what the city has to offer visitors.

In 2009, the potential opportunities that the five graveyards presented to the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) together with their stewardship burdens, resulted in a successful application to include the graveyards on the 2010 World Monuments Watch. This is an international list of heritage sites in need of timely action that World Monuments Fund (WMF) advocates for toward a sustainable future.

Established in 1965, WMF is an international non-profit organisation based in New York that advocates for and finances the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage in countries around the world. The organisation has an affiliated office in London, WMF Britain, responsible for managing the organisation's projects undertaken within the British Isles.

Edinburgh World Heritage is the charity responsible for the coordination of action for the Edinburgh World Heritage Site. It works through (i) conservation and repair, (ii) education, outreach, and interpretation, and (iii) influencing decision making, working closely with stakeholders at all levels.

In selecting the five Edinburgh graveyards for inclusion on the 2010 World Monuments Watch, the selection panel recognised that these were exceptional burial sites within the historic urban landscape of the World Heritage Site, but that their extraordinary heritage was facing growing pressures as a result of rising costs at a time of declining revenues and increased needs in terms of maintenance due to general wear and misuse by the public.

The inclusion on the 2010 Watch enabled the development of a partnership between CEC, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWH), and WMF. This led to a series of meetings in Edinburgh with the project group and members of the lay and professional community. At these meetings a strategy was agreed whereby a consultant, with specific expertise in graveyard conservation management, would be engaged to investigate the issues at play and to suggest a possible way forward towards a sustainable future.

This report represents the edited results of the consultation phase and should be considered a working document open to review and comment. It is anticipated that this document will present a series of strategic recommendations that CEC might follow in order to enhance the management of the graveyards and enable them to capitalise fully on their potential as cultural amenities for the City of Edinburgh.

## The Issues at Play and Main Recommendations

The five historic graveyards face a number of interlinked issues that combine to leave them apparently unloved and neglected and in a self-enforcing cycle of decline, with the danger of casting blight around them. In a wealthy, well-visited capital city centre there is little excuse for this.

The starting point for the spiral of decline is innocent enough—routine everyday maintenance of the graveyards being based around tending the grass and similar activities with no remit to address the physical fabric.

The natural process of decline in the physical fabric is not managed, as it is with elements of the built environment that have a clear and valued purpose, such as dwelling houses, meaning that decline is readily visibly measurable to the public, whereas the obstacles to caring for these sites—practical, legal, and economic—are less readily appreciable. Decline is accelerated by the interpretation of health and safety procedures, with the laying flat of stone considered potentially dangerous. A fallen or flattened headstone is a highly visible sign of a lack of care by relatives (where they survive) and of a failure of other agencies to come forward where relatives can no longer be traced. The public generally avoids neglected spaces, allowing other activities to take over.

Consequently, the activities that have filled the vacuum vary. At the extreme end of the scale are drug-taking, prostitution, and teenage drinking—havens for the excluded. Exclusion also covers the lack of opportunity for people to engage with the sites. At the less headline-grabbing end, unregulated tourism also creates pressures in some areas of some of the grounds, such as guides standing on tombs to address tour groups. This enforces the perception of the graveyards as spaces for the nefarious, not as spaces for everyone.

As such, the burial grounds represent a series of missed opportunities, to help improve the city around them, for the community, tourism, and general economy. Their well-being supports the well-being of their users and of the city centre. The problems are not insurmountable, but can be addressed through sustained—and sustainable—action.



South wall of Greyfriars Kirk

# Report Recommendations

1. Undertake new research for each of the graveyards to fill gaps in knowledge about their natural heritage, local importance, archaeological value, and historic appearance, and also to create a typology of gravestone designs.
2. Make the information about the graveyards developed by this project available online as part of wider strategy to broaden participation and collaboration in the study of these sites and to help coordinate output.
3. Develop a better understanding of the significance of the two Calton Hill burial grounds, and New Calton in particular, by examining in more detail the hypothesis that these sites influenced wider cemetery design within the UK during the nineteenth century.
4. Increase the visitor welcome at the graveyards to encourage greater footfall and to improve visitors' perceptions of safety.
5. Develop group marketing of the five graveyards, capitalising on the visitor interest in Greyfriars to encourage people to visit multiple sites, and to raise awareness of the other graveyards, particularly New Calton Burial Ground.
6. Deliver a regular programme of events at all five graveyards to increase visitor numbers and to create a deeper understanding of, and involvement with, the sites.
7. Appoint a development officer to work with a graveyard trust and 'friends of' groups to promote the use of the sites by target audiences and to develop promotional, outreach, and educational services as well as partnership projects.
8. Create an 'audience development plan' to create a detailed strategy aimed at increasing future audience involvement by developing partnerships. The plan should be likened to an interpretation strategy.
9. Develop a large-scale education project to create an events and outreach programme, including schools' resources and a package for volunteer training, to create resources for the future management of the graveyards.
10. Draw up and implement conservation management plans for all five graveyards.
11. Create a more integrated system for maintenance that includes graveyard buildings and involves all stakeholders.
12. Reallocate resources to help implement steps to tackle the antisocial use of the graveyards, and therefore enhance the visitor experience of all sites.
13. Develop a large-scale conservation project involving repairs and restoration work to all five graveyards, including the watchtower at New Calton Burial Ground.
14. Initiate biodiversity management at all five sites.
15. Establish a graveyard trust with associated 'friends of' groups. Trustees and members of the management board to include the main stakeholders and also be representative of the heritage and cultural values exemplified by the sites and of the constituent groups within the local community.
16. The process of establishing the graveyard trust and 'friends of' groups should be launched through a media campaign of well-publicised public meetings and other events to enable members of the local communities to contribute their ideas and be involved from the outset.
17. The initial priority of the trust will be to agree and set down its mission, values, constitution, and strategic aims.
18. A memorandum of understanding should be drafted between the trust and CEC to outline the principles of partnership working



# Part 1: The Edinburgh Graveyards Project

## Project Aims and Study Strategy

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project (EGP) is concerned with five historic graveyards in the heart of Edinburgh—the three kirkyards of St Cuthbert’s, Greyfriars, and Canongate, and the two burial grounds of Old Calton and New Calton. A scoping study was commissioned in recognition of the need to improve the care currently given to these sites, and with the aspiration that they might become well-loved community resources as well as ‘must-see’ attractions for visitors to the city. The study had the following aims:

**Aim 1:** To develop a body of knowledge that will help improve our understanding and valorisation of the graveyards.

**Aim 2:** To assess the current patterns of ‘use’ of the five graveyards and the potential for positive improvement.

**Aim 3:** To recommend options for the improved practical care and management of the graveyards.

**Aim 4:** To examine the potential for enhanced community participation in order to create a more financially sustainable model of stewardship.

**Aim 5:** To reach out to members of the community to gauge the nature of public interest in the graveyards and to raise awareness of the importance of this initiative.

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project set out to draw together existing information on the five sites and to develop current knowledge with new research. It aimed to encourage wider input into considering the graveyards’ future within the realms of available resources. The four themes identified in the project aims—understanding, promotion, care, and involving the community—are all interrelated within the practice of good graveyard management. Accordingly, the study also sought to understand the dynamic between these different areas to determine which, if any, held the greatest strategic importance to the future care and promotion of the graveyards.



Northeast wall of Old Calton Hill Cemetery

## **Build on previous work to develop detailed thinking of what future change might look like**

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project is part of a longer-term process of collaborative working. At the time EGP was commissioned, these previous efforts had achieved a broad consensus among the key stakeholders (described below) for the need to improve graveyard maintenance and to deliver on their potential to visitors. However, the detail of what change might actually look like in practice for the graveyards had yet to be fully explored.

The focus on improving the five graveyards was led initially by the CEC Graveyard Regeneration and Marketing Project (GRAMP), which ran during 2007–08. GRAMP considered how a large-scale graveyard project might be delivered by CEC and who potential project partners might be both within the council and across the city more widely. However, it didn't include a detailed design brief for a regeneration and marketing project. GRAMP successfully brokered an agreement in principle between the CEC, EWH, the churches at Greyfriars, Canongate, and St Cuthbert's, and the former graveyard trust at Greyfriars, to establish a new graveyard trust. This new trust would have a specific remit for the five graveyards within the World Heritage Site that are owned by the CEC (the aforementioned kirkyards at Greyfriars, Canongate, and St Cuthbert's, and Old Calton and New Calton Burial Grounds). CEC agreed to produce the legal documents to establish the trust as an official entity and this work remains in progress. GRAMP also triggered the successful application by CEC to WMF for the five graveyards to be included in the 2010 Watch.

## **Widen community input**

While GRAMP and subsequent roundtable discussions have brought together the main organisations with a stakeholder interest in graveyard management, to date there has been less of an opportunity for the wider community to help shape the future of these sites. Active community participation is fundamental for these graveyards to be transformed into successful community places. Recognising the community as the key stakeholder is a primary principle in placemaking<sup>1</sup>. Gaining an understanding of the extent to which local people presently feel connected to these sites is an important first step in the process of enabling locally led action.

## **To deliver maximum benefits the overall strategy must secure public participation within an integrated approach to graveyard management**

The project's aims outline four separate themes for consideration (knowledge, use, management, and community participation), but in practice the ways in which sites are understood, used, and managed are interrelated. Appreciating how changes in one area can help to deliver positive benefits in another enables the most effective deployment of resources. The study proposes that Aim 4 (involving the community) is of greatest overall strategic importance since it offers the best means to attract ongoing resources and expertise for the sustainable management of the graveyards. Most essentially, this aim underpins the primary principle of heritage—that it should be available for all to participate in and benefit from<sup>2</sup>.

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1 GreenSpace Scotland What is Placemaking? [www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/.../What%20is%20placemaking.pdf](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/.../What%20is%20placemaking.pdf), consulted October 2011.

2 Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) Scottish Ministers Vision for the Historic Environment 1.12 to (a) realise the full potential of the historic environment as a resource—cultural, educational, economic, and social—across every part of Scotland and for all the people; (b) make the best use of the historic environment to achieve their wider aims of economic and social regeneration; (c) broaden access to the historic environment and break down intellectual, physical, and economic barriers.

## Project methods

The study comprised five main areas of work: a desktop survey; research on graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups throughout the UK; an exit poll of visitors to Greyfriars and St Cuthbert’s kirkyards and Old Calton Burial Ground; an investigation of current community involvement with the graveyards; and an assessment of present graveyard management.

In addition, a linked research project was carried out as part of the WMF-sponsored 2011 Yale Scholarship. The EGP Team also undertook several tasks for the general promotion of the project, including participation in Doors Open Day 2011 and the creation of a graveyards trail leaflet.

During the project period a number of meetings were held with community members in order to canvas feedback and to inform the public of the project’s progress. Within this context Dr Susan Buckham also presented the findings of the project at the inaugural Edinburgh History Festival (November 2011) and future public lectures were planned.

- **A desktop survey** pulled together information on the five graveyards held in main archives and libraries, and identified any academic or heritage management studies previously completed.<sup>3</sup> As well as making this information more accessible to others, this survey has improved our understanding and interpretation of the five sites and identified significant gaps in our present knowledge and how these might be filled in the future (see Part 3). Map regression analysis was also completed for each site. The survey and the production of ancillary site reports were carried out by Kirsten Carter Mckee.

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3 Archives and libraries consulted included: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland; National Archives of Scotland; Edinburgh City Archive; Edinburgh Central Library (Edinburgh Room) and online databases and catalogues including: PASTMAP; COPAC; National Library of Scotland; British Library; City of Edinburgh Council Library; University of Edinburgh Electronic Journals; University of Edinburgh Theses online; Library of Congress; British Library Electronic Theses Online Service; JSTOR; ADS; Google Books; and Internet Archive.



Volunteers clearing vegetation at Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol



Community survey respondent filling out questionnaire in Old Calton Burial Ground

- **Research on graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups** aimed to identify how communities elsewhere in the UK have organised themselves to become actively involved in caring for a local graveyard. The study looked for evidence of best practices to act as inspirational models and to assist with an assessment of the educational and promotional potential of the five EGP sites (see Parts 4 and 6). Information on graveyard groups was gathered from their annual accounts and promotional information.<sup>4</sup> Documentary research was followed up with detailed interviews, either by telephone or in person, with trust or group chairpersons or senior management staff. This study was complemented by a series of fact-finding visits to historic graveyards in London during July 2011, linked to the Yale Scholarship project.
- **An exit poll at Greyfriars Kirkyard, together with a questionnaire on community use of all five graveyards,** aimed to provide qualitative information on current visiting patterns (see Part 4). Greyfriars was specifically selected for the poll to help explore how the substantial appeal of Greyfriars Bobby (c.240,000 visitors per annum<sup>5</sup>) might be expanded to include all five graveyards.

4 Promotional information included graveyard trust and ‘friends of’ websites, group leaflets, newsletters, constitutions, etc., as well as submissions to the Eighth Select Committee Review On Cemeteries (2001), Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe handbook (2004), and the National Federation of Cemetery Friends website, [www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk](http://www.cemeteryfriends.org.uk) .

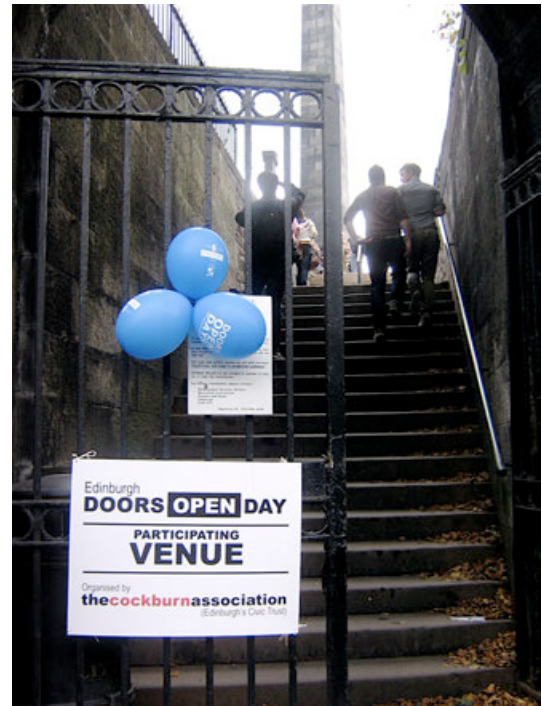
5 Greyfriars visitor figure provided in Burial Ground Information, Consultants Pack, GRAMP 2007-08.

- **As well as using a questionnaire, an assessment of community involvement with the graveyards** collected feedback through interviews and group meetings. Consultation sought to understand how the graveyards' future potential might be grown from current public participation (see Part 6). This task, along with the Greyfriars exit poll, was designed to create a method to establish baseline information on visitor experience and satisfaction that could be used for future evaluation of the sites. EGP also spoke to local organisations involved with heritage-related educational work and graveyard trusts from elsewhere in the UK to explore future options for educational activities centred on the EGP sites (see Part 4). Neighbourhood profiling was carried out to explore potential barriers to audience development at a local level.<sup>6</sup>
- **An appraisal of current management** involved visiting all five graveyards to assess each site's overall condition, and to identify any management issues evident (see Part 5). Meetings were held with key CEC staff to establish current management regimes and policy. Recommendations for improving both the care of the graveyards and current visitor experience, draw on best practice guidance (UK and, as appropriate, international), as well as examples of good practice from case studies at other sites.

6 The neighbourhood profiles were completed as ancillary reports for the local area surrounding Canongate, St Cuthbert's, Greyfriars, and the Calton areas.



Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery  
Park winter beastie walk



Doors Open Day 2011 at Old  
Calton Burial Ground



Tour of Canongate Kirkyard in support  
of EGP community consultations

## THE EDINBURGH GRAVEYARDS PROJECT

### FIND HIDDEN TREASURES IN FIVE OF EDINBURGH'S WORLD HERITAGE GRAVEYARDS



Our inner-city graveyards are doorways into a richly evocative world full of hidden treasures that tell us about the people who lived here and how the City developed.

We invite you to explore these wonderful places, to take a break from the hustle and bustle of city life and enjoy the peaceful views.

Graveyards trail leaflet

## CALLING ALL FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH'S HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS!

### PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

The Edinburgh Graveyards Project is looking at new ways to care for the City's most important burial grounds and to increase community involvement with these sites. Please let us know your views and experience of these graveyards by filling out a short online questionnaire at:

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/MMCT9WP](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MMCT9WP)

### THE EDINBURGH GRAVEYARDS PROJECT

CANONGATE KIRKYARD  
ST CUTHBERT'S KIRKYARD  
GREYFRIARS KIRKYARD  
CALTON NEW BURIAL GROUND  
CALTON OLD BURIAL GROUND



If you would like further information on the graveyards, to find out how to get more involved yourself or for us to let you know how we are progressing over the next few months, please include your contact details on your completed questionnaire or email [graveyards@ewht.org.uk](mailto:graveyards@ewht.org.uk)

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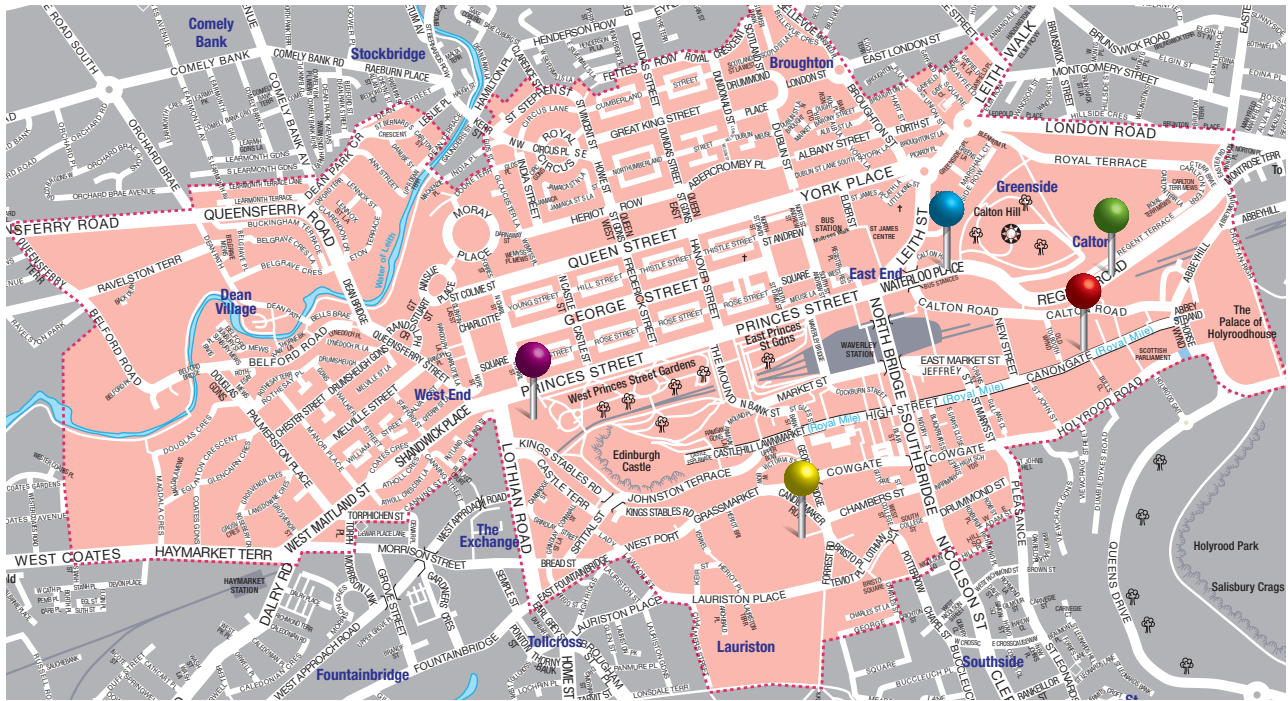
EDINBURGH WORLD HERITAGE

Image: Monument No. 22 in Greyfriars Kirkyard to George Foulis of Ravelston and Janet Bannatyne (c.1633). A couplet records that "Though Black Death had torn them asunder, a firm bond unites them now that both are blessed in Christ."  
© Robert Reinhardt 2011

Postcard to promote an online community survey

- **The promotion of the project** to support of Aim 5 (*'To reach out to members of the community to gauge the nature of public interest in the graveyards'*) was a team effort. The delivery of this element was tempered by available resources rather than any latent interest in the historic graveyards among the public. Participation in Edinburgh Doors Open Day drew around 2,000 people to Old Calton Burial Ground on the weekend of 24–25 September 2011. Guide tours were provided, as well as a family 'I-Spy' trail on gravestone symbolism. WMF staff greeted visitors to St Cuthbert's Kirk, and collected feedback from visitors using the EGP community questionnaire. To support Doors Open Day, a leaflet and postcard were created to encourage people to visit all five sites and to complete an online visitor survey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MMCT9WP>). EGP participation in the inaugural Scottish History Festival, with an evening talk on 29 November 2011, was supported by the circulation of both the postcard and leaflet to the Canongate, Greyfriars, and St Cuthbert's churches, Edinburgh libraries, and the offices of heritage organisations. Publicity has also included a short radio interview on BBC Radio Scotland's *'Café Culture'*, and a cover article for the Autumn 2011 edition of WMF Britain's *Monumentum*. This work has benefited from contributions made by project volunteers.<sup>7</sup>
- **The Yale Scholarship 2011** was awarded by WMF to Thomas Ashley, whose study examines the depiction of the five graveyards within nineteenth-century guidebooks. His research traces examples of continuity and change in the public perception of the sites over the nineteenth century, and adds a further layer of appreciation of the graveyards' relationship, both physical and social, to the City of Edinburgh.

<sup>7</sup> Volunteers who contributed to the Doors Open Day event included David Fiddimore and Stephen Dickson. Bob Reinhardt provided photographic material for the tour leaflet.



## Part 2: The Graveyards

### Site descriptions

#### St Cuthbert's Kirkyard

The graveyard of the 'Kirk below the Castle' is an intrinsic part of the story of Christianity in Scotland from the Dark Ages onwards, and its establishment during the eighth century predates the first records. Despite its busy city centre location, the site feels secluded and secret. The kirkyard contains approximately 747 headstones, monuments, tombs, and other structures.<sup>8</sup> The watchtower is of historical importance as it provides evidence of changes to burial traditions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries arising from the practice of 'bodysnatching'. An early area of the kirkyard known as the 'Knowe' has an interesting and important collection of eighteenth-century headstones.

- St Cuthbert's Kirkyard
- Greyfriars Kirkyard
- Old Calton Burial Ground
- New Calton Burial Ground
- Canongate Kirkyard



St Cuthbert's with Edinburgh Castle in the background



Gravestone of David Gray (d. 1717)

<sup>8</sup> Figures for the number of monuments etc. at all five sites are taken from Burial Ground Information, Consultants Pack, GRAMP 2007-08.

## Old Calton Burial Ground

Described as ‘One of the most significant and important of Edinburgh’s graveyards’<sup>9</sup> this site is unusual as it was not established by an ecclesiastical body, but by the Incorporated Trades of Calton. Laid out in 1718, the graveyard was later divided in two by the construction of Waterloo Place in 1817. Its resulting layout in two parts is highly significant as evidence of the development of the New Town and Calton Hill area.

The scenic value of the southern part of the site from the Old Town and North Bridge is outstanding. The burial ground contains approximately 412 headstones, monuments, tombs, and other structures dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are of exceptional quality, including three nationally important monuments; the Lincoln Statue, Martyr’s Monument, and Hume’s Mausoleum.



Burial enclosures next to David Hume’s Mausoleum

The site contains several eighteenth-century headstones with well-executed trade and mortality carvings. The graveyard is also noted for its high quality screen walls facing onto Waterloo Place. Internally, almost all boundary and compartment walls are lined with burial enclosures resulting in a picturesque setting, which, it has been suggested, influenced the layout of Highgate Cemetery in London.<sup>10</sup>

The site’s value architecturally, as a work of art, and its historical importance are outstanding.



Stone to the parents of Captain Thomas Grey (1747)

## New Calton Burial Ground

New Calton was established in 1817 and was also founded by the Incorporated Trades of Calton. The site is of outstanding historical importance and its association with Old Calton constitutes a significant and integral part of the historical development of Calton Hill. It is also considered important because of its nature as a transitional type of burial landscape, which was a precursor to the modern cemetery movement.<sup>11</sup> It is a well-designed site with distinctive terraces and a striking south-facing slope affording outstanding views over the Scottish Parliament, Palace of Holyroodhouse, and Holyrood Park. The burial ground contains approximately 1,000 headstones, monuments, tombs, and other structures of high quality spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including a watchtower that is currently burnt-out but which could be developed for some complementary use.



View of terraces and watchtower



‘Misfortune consoling Wisdom’, detail from Andrew Skene’s stone (d.1837)

9 Listed Building Description HB Number 27920.

10 Calton Hill Conservation Plan, August 1999, Appendix 7: *Architectural Gazetteer* prepared by Law & Dunbar-Nasmith p53.

11 Boyle A *et al*, 1985, *Ruins and Remains: Edinburgh's Neglected Heritage*; Curl, James Stevens, ‘John Claudius Loudon and the Garden Cemetery Movement’. *Garden History* Vol. 11, No. 2: 133-56.





View of the rear of the kirkyard from Regent Road. Detail from the 'Coachdrivers' Stone (c.1765).

### Canongate Kirkyard

The graveyard of the 'Royal Kirk' was established in 1687 and has significant local amenity value. Distinguished persons buried at the site include the economist Adam Smith and the poet Robert Fergusson. In 1953, the mercat cross was relocated to within the kirkyard's boundaries. The kirkyard contains approximately 352 headstones, monuments, tombs, and other structures. Burial enclosures line the western and southern walls in the north section, and are also found in the northeast corner of the site. The graveyard is important for the contribution it makes to the greening of distant views in the Old Town and for retaining an impression of how the Canongate may have looked when it was first developed. The kirkyard is a key element within a group of buildings that survive as the historic core of the former Canongate Burgh.

### Greyfriars Kirkyard

The kirkyard was founded on the site of a former Franciscan friary in 1562, following a grant of land by Mary, Queen of Scots. The graveyard predates the establishment of the kirk in 1620. Although popularly associated with Greyfriars Bobby, this site was the setting for many historical events of national significance, including the signing of the National Covenant in 1638 and the imprisoning of Covenanters after the Battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679. The kirkyard contains approximately 716 headstones, monuments, tombs, and other structures. It also incorporates a stretch of the Flodden Wall, part of the City's sixteenth-century defences. The graveyard makes a significant contribution to the greening of distant views in the Old Town and to the setting of the surrounding buildings.

Greyfriars holds exceptional importance because of the range of architectural styles found at the site, spanning the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The monuments include evidence of transitional periods, examples of datable stylistic change, designs attributable to the influence of pattern books, and evidence for the diffusion of styles and motifs from this site across the Lothian area. The monuments show exceptional quality in terms of their materials and execution, and represent the work of leading masons and architects. As so little sculpture survives from seven-



Seventeenth-century wall monuments to James Chalmers (foreground) and Elizabeth Paton (background).



View of the Covenanters' Prison.

teenth century, the collection at Greyfriars is a major resource.

## Cultural Significance

Old and New Calton burial grounds and Greyfriars, Canon-gate and St Cuthbert's kirkyards are all of exceptional cultural significance to both Edinburgh's historic urban landscape and Scotland's heritage. Each graveyard holds multiple statutory designations relating to the architectural, historical, and landscape values embodied within the site, denoting their national and international importance. The burial grounds contribute to the high levels of integrity and authenticity of Edinburgh's outstanding universal value as a designated World Heritage Site.

All five graveyards are unique in their instigation, development, and relationship to the City of Edinburgh. When considered together, their association with local and national civic, religious and political events throughout the last 500 years constitutes them as a vital resource in understanding the development of the city and the events that have shaped both Scottish and British society into its present day state. Other early Edinburgh graveyards have not survived. These five sites taken as a group document the major social and cultural revolutions of the modern period—the Reformation, the Enlightenment, globalization, and the onset of the industrial revolution—at a human scale to demonstrate how they touched people's lives. Together their chronology offers a genealogy for the City of Edinburgh that dates from the early Christian period into the first half of the nineteenth century.

The surviving architecture and stone-carving display developments in both funerary practice and traditional crafts now largely lost to modern society. Each of the burial grounds commemorates many notable persons from Scottish social and political history, as well as those successful local merchants and craftsmen who helped Edinburgh prosper. These figures are celebrated through the highest quality architectural and artistic forms. Being preserved within their original setting further enhances the gravestones' value as cultural documents and enables them to be visited and experienced by all, as was intended at the time of their construction. At the same time, the graveyards' common and mass graves afford a final resting place to all social groups, and as a result hold evidence for all levels of society.

The burial grounds display important landscape values that help characterise the spatial structure of the Old and New Towns. Canon-gate is situated on the Royal Mile, which forms the spine of the Old Town, and is a major thoroughfare linking the castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. The development of Greyfriars Kirkyard is closely linked to the development of Edinburgh itself, with the graveyard's extension demarked by the city's boundaries of the Flodden and Telfer walls. The New Town contains a series of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century park-sized town gardens that reflect neoclassical planning and the picturesque aesthetic tradition. The two Calton burial grounds and St Cuthbert's are located within this internationally important designed landscape area. In modern times these green spaces make an important contribution to the natural environment, the city's biodiversity, and are valuable local amenities.

Despite the significance of the burial grounds and the unique qualities of many of the monuments with them, they remain under-researched and vulnerable due to the very nature of their construction and materiality, from misuse, and inadequate protection. Successful long-term conservation requires a strategic approach combining the efforts of public and private agents.



Cannongate Kirk, Alexander McCrae ESQ



Old Calton Hill Cemetery, Burial Enclosure

# Current Graveyard Management

This section outlines the legal and policy framework for managing the graveyards as heritage assets, open spaces, biodiversity areas, and as sites for burial provision. The specific CEC thematic plans and strategies described below are identified as having particular relevance to management of the graveyards.<sup>12</sup>

## Strategic and legal framework

All five graveyards are owned by CEC. They are managed within a strategic policy framework that includes CEC regional and local development plans and strategies<sup>13</sup> and Scottish Government policies for the historic environment and planning.<sup>14</sup> The management of the graveyards takes into account national legislation<sup>15</sup> and the statutory and non-statutory designations that apply to these sites individually, which are set out in the table below.

Site	Designed Landscape (Non-Statutory)	Listed Building	Conservation Area	WHS (Non-Statutory)	Natural
Old Calton	National Inventory and Local list	Category: A	New Town	√	SSSI
New Calton	National Inventory and Local list	Category: B	New Town	√	SSSI
St Cuthbert's	National Inventory and Local list	Category: A Category: A Group	New Town	√	
Canongate		Category: A Category: A Group	Old Town	√	
Greyfriars	Local list	Category: A Category: A Group	Old Town	√	

Table 1: List of Statutory and Non-Statutory designations applying to the graveyards.

## City of Edinburgh Council Open Spaces Strategy 2010

In accordance with national policy, the CEC Open Spaces Strategy aims to ensure a coordinated approach to protecting and developing the city's network of open spaces. The strategy covers all of the city's cemeteries (including Old Calton and New Calton Burial Grounds) and several of the larger kirkyards (including St Cuthbert's, Greyfriars, and Canongate) where they 'make a significant contribution to townscape' and in some cases 'where there is a tradition of heavy public use for informal recreation and rest during daylight hours'. The action plan sets out the actions needed to improve the quality rating of the two Calton burial grounds from 'poor' to 'fair'.

12 Other policies relating to the heritage management also include the structure plan which sets out the long-term vision and framework for land use development. Together with local plans, they form the development plan, against which all applications for planning permission are assessed. In due course these will be replaced by the strategic development plan and local development plan respectively. See also the Edinburgh Partnership Single Outcome Agreement 2009-12, Outcomes 11 and 12, Edinburgh City Local Plan (4.2).

13 For more detailed descriptions of the regulatory framework for the management of built heritage in Edinburgh see The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan 2011–2016, CEC Guidelines for Managing Edinburgh's Built Heritage, CEC Edinburgh Planning Guidance Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

14 Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) sets out Scottish Ministers' policies for the historic environment see also Scottish Planning Policy, notably SPP 23: Planning and the Historic Environment, and the National Planning Framework For Scotland 2.

15 The role of the planning system in the protection of the historic environment is reflected in the following primary legislation: Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)(Scotland) Act 1997; Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997; Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.



Canongate Kirkyard

### **City of Edinburgh Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-15**

The core objectives of the action plan are to protect and enhance priority habitats and species in Edinburgh, and to raise awareness of biodiversity in local communities. Specific targets for graveyards include increasing community involvement and biodiversity management planning at selected cemeteries and kirkyards, although the sites to deliver these targets have not yet been selected.

#### **Grounds maintenance—CEC Bereavement Services**

By the end of the nineteenth century, the deterioration of the graveyards' condition raised concerns over public health. Their upkeep had become more onerous and as a result their ownership and the responsibility for their day-to-day care began to be transferred into the hands of the Edinburgh Corporation.<sup>16</sup> Today, CEC Bereavement Services Section manages the sites on behalf of the council. None of the EGP sites are in active use for interments, although the occasional burial of cremated remains might still take place in cases where lair (grave) rights exist. The Bereavement Services Section, which is based at Mortonhall Crematorium, carries out grounds maintenance works on a rolling basis to all the graveyards in CEC ownership (see Part 5 for more details).

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<sup>16</sup> 'Cemetery Administration and Practice in Scotland'. Paper by John T Jeffrey, City Superintendent of Parks and Recorder of City Burial Grounds Edinburgh, presented at the Seventh Joint Conference of Cemetery and Crematorium Authorities 1938.

## Part 3: An Improved Understanding

Understanding the graveyards is the basis for local communities, visitors to the city, and graveyard managers and funders to be able to value, enjoy, and support these sites—an outcome exemplifying key national and local objectives for Scotland’s historic environment.<sup>17</sup> With good knowledge of the range of the interest areas, and associated values that a graveyard holds, it becomes easier to develop fundraising potential. Being able to articulate the significance of a particular graveyard or feature strengthens the case for support with competitive funding bids. Funding may also be allocated on the basis of greatest need, as well as importance, therefore it is desirable to be able to document the current issues facing a site, for example, in terms of their condition or excluded audiences.

**Aim 1: To develop a body of knowledge that will help to improve our understanding and valorisation of the graveyards.**

### **What does a sound ‘body of knowledge’ look like for graveyards?**

Graveyards are arguably among the most complex of all historic assets to understand. They embrace a wide range of interest areas relating to both the built and natural environments. While it can complicate interpretation, this diversity is one of their greatest strengths as cultural amenities. To manage a graveyard in a balanced way, the relative importance of individual areas of value need to be weighed against one another, so that an informed decision can be made about what is most important to protect on the ground.

### **We need to be able to convey a graveyard’s complexity in an inclusive way to others.**

If asked what is important about a historic graveyard, a family historian, local dog walker, student of architecture, tourist, church member, lichenologist, academic, or office worker on a lunchtime break may well respond very differently. Yet by connecting to what one audience finds most interesting and then placing this theme within a wider understanding of a site (what others find interesting) we might ensure that more people are successfully drawn into a graveyard. In this way they also leave with a better understanding of why a site might be important to others.



Taking a break at Canongate



Studying the gravestone carvings in Old Calton Burial Ground

<sup>17</sup> Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), July 2009. Key Principle 1.14 d. ‘all of the people of Scotland should be able to enjoy, appreciate, learn from and understand Scotland’s historic environment, and be assisted in that through access, research, knowledge, information and education and proactive conservation investment, without compromise to cultural significance.’ City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh World Heritage, *The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site—Management Plan 2011-2016*.

### What is the existing level of recognition?

Current recognition of the EGP sites can be seen both through the graveyards' designated status and from the strategic policies that apply to them. More generally, however, their recognition is evident through the ways in which they are documented in publications and other written records. When this information (Table 2) is compared to the potential values graveyards might hold (Figure 2), we see that only a fraction of their conceivable richness has been explored to date.

	Old Calton	New Calton	St Cuthbert's	Greyfriars	Canongate	Group Studies
Memorial Inscription	Y*	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y
Gravestone Designs	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y
Gravestone Surveys	Partial study			Complete survey*		
Graveyard Condition						Y
Heritage Management	Designed Landscape Survey	Designed Landscape Survey		Plans: • Conservation Management • Landscape Management		
Graveyard History	Y	Y	Y	Y*		Y
Thematic Academic Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hume's Mausoleum</li> <li>• Martyrs Monument</li> <li>• Link to Calton Hill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemetery Movement</li> <li>• Relationship to Calton Hill</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covenanters' Prison</li> <li>• Medical Figures Buried at the Site</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19th-Century Guidebooks</li> <li>• Church of Scotland Burial in 19th-Century Edinburgh</li> </ul>
Who's Who of burials	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y

Table 2: Overview of records and published material (\*denotes where sources are stronger)

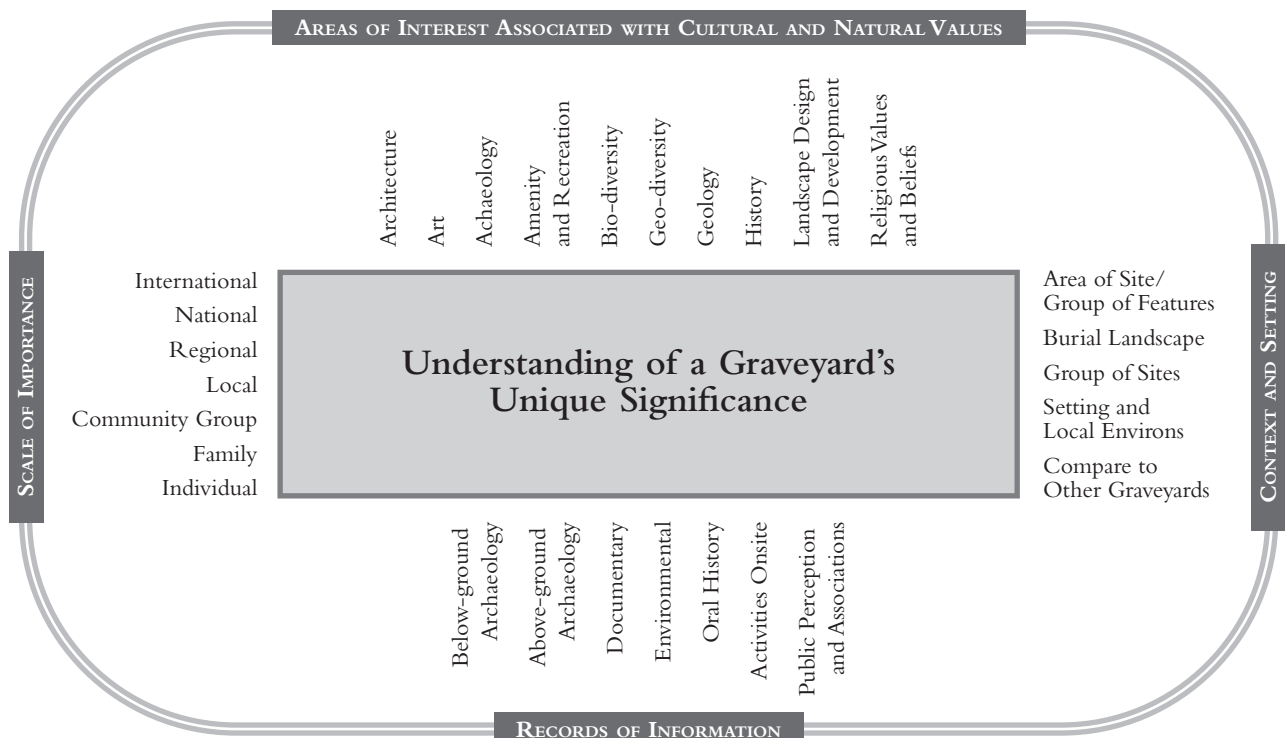


Figure 2: Matrix showing potential graveyard interest areas

While their architectural, historical, landscape, and amenity values are recognised locally, nationally, and internationally, the graveyards' natural heritage values have been less well considered, with no eco-surveys or other recording work carried out at any of the sites.<sup>18</sup> None of the graveyards is specifically included in the CEC biodiversity strategy, and although the two Calton burial grounds fall within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), neither graveyard is judged to hold particular ecological value.<sup>19</sup>

Our survey of published material and other written records on the graveyards (Table 2) also reveals a partiality towards the built heritage. There is a notable focus on the architectural qualities of their monuments, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestone carvings, and aspects of their landscape design and development. Attention has focussed on the material remains that survive above ground, and other sources of information are relatively neglected. No archaeological assessment of the sites and their setting has taken place and there has been very limited consultation with communities to capture public attitudes toward the sites or the nature of their use for amenity and recreational purposes.

A consideration of the graveyards' context and setting is similarly patchy. Some sites are better studied and recorded than others. Greyfriars is notably favoured in this respect, while Canongate is unique in that no detailed kirkyard history exists. Although Greyfriars is better studied, there is still little in the way of detailed, academic analysis of this site. This situation is indicative of the much wider neglect of 'Scottish death' as an area for academic endeavour.<sup>20</sup> A 1985 study sets out a chronology for the establishment and use of all of the city's main graveyards, including the five EGP sites. Research reveals how their development relates to other city-centre graveyards, to key developments in Edinburgh's history, and to wider burial and commemoration trends within the UK.<sup>21</sup>

Research undertaken for the 2011 Yale Scholarship on the depiction of the graveyards in nineteenth-century guidebooks shows how the attention paid to the sites has been remarkably consistent over the last 200 years. By far the greatest volume of coverage is dedicated to Greyfriars and the least to New Calton and St Cuthbert's, which have minimal appearance in tour guides. This balance (or rather imbalance in interest in the sites) bears very strong parallels to current visiting trends (see Part 4), as well as wider writings on the graveyards (Table 4.1).

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18 Pers. comm. CEC Biodiversity Officer.

19 DLS, not mentioned in the listing description.

20 Elaine Mcfarland, 'Researching Death, Mourning and Commemoration in Modern Scotland' *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 2004, Vol. 24, No. 1: 20–44.

21 Boyle A *et al*, 1985, *Ruins and Remains: Edinburgh's Neglected Heritage*.

**Which gaps in knowledge are the priorities to fill so that they can attract the greatest possible audiences and resources?**

Documenting what exists at a site is the first stage in being able to recognise a graveyard's range of values. The main gaps in current knowledge that should be a priority to address in future work include:

- **Improved understanding of the criteria for evaluating the importance of gravestones**, including the more mundane, but potentially informative, elements that are often overlooked.



Several of the small eighteenth-century headstones in Greyfriars have become displaced from their original positions



There is minimal information to identify which stones are the most important in New Calton Burial Ground (established 1817).

- **Identifying built features other than gravestones and buildings.** Important to help identify less well-known, and therefore more vulnerable, features at each site.
- **What did the graveyards look like in the past?** Gaining a full understanding of the evolution of a graveyard is essential before decisions can be made regarding which periods to give precedence to during conservation management planning.



Postcard image of Greyfriars Kirkyard in 1924





Headstone from Canongate



Robin perching on a headstone in St Cuthbert's

- **A better understanding of the condition of all aspects of the graveyard.** Important because it provides a baseline to map future changes in levels of preservation and to identify current threats.
- **Improved understanding of the graveyards' natural heritage.** Nature is a significant and diverse interest area for historic graveyards.
- **Improved appreciation of the local value of sites.** A more detailed understanding of what particular attributes are valued by the local community can be used to ensure these are protected for future generations. It offers a chance to draw in audiences by telling different, more socially inclusive stories about the graveyards.
- **More interdisciplinary studies are needed** to understand the relative importance of different areas of interests.
- **There is a need to coordinate knowledge.** At present there is no champion for the development and coordination of knowledge about the five graveyards.

*‘Sometimes you get some nice little stories on the gravestones, the rather tragic things are the ones that stick in your mind’*

—VISITOR TO GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWED  
ON BBC RADIO SCOTLAND

## Recommendations

The following recommendations will help to develop a body of knowledge that will improve our understanding and valorisation of the graveyards:

1. Undertake new research for all of the graveyards to fill gaps in our knowledge about their natural heritage, local importance, archaeological value, and historic appearance, and to create a typology of gravestone designs.
2. Make information on the graveyards developed by this project available online as part of a wider strategy to broaden participation and collaboration in the study of these sites and to help coordinate output.
3. Develop a better understanding of the significance of the two Calton burial grounds, and New Calton in particular, by examining in more detail the hypothesis that these sites influenced wider cemetery design within the UK during the nineteenth century.

## Part 4: Increasing the ‘Audience’

Developing an inclusive audience for the five graveyards supports the fundamental principle that heritage should enrich people’s lives.<sup>22</sup> Good public spaces should promote happiness, health, and well-being. Graveyard visitors want to go to safe, welcoming, and enjoyable places where they can relax and unwind or participate in educational activities. As more people are encouraged to visit the graveyards, this in turn will create a cycle of positive interest in them.

The local audience comprises all those who live, work, worship, study, or socialise within a graveyard’s neighbourhood. As these sites are cultural assets for Edinburgh as a whole, an inclusive community audience will embrace all of the city’s residents. The second major audience comprises visitors to the city. Edinburgh attracts millions of visitors throughout the year, and these numbers are currently at an all-time high, with heritage attractions playing a leading role.<sup>23</sup>

**Aim 2: To assess the current pattern of ‘use’ of the five graveyards and the potential for positive improvement.**

### What should ‘improvement’ be aiming for?

Improvement in use should achieve two goals. Firstly, to increase the audience in terms of the overall number of people going to the graveyards (footfall), but also in terms of the range of social groups using the sites. Secondly, to increase the quality and depth of public involvement by enhancing visitors’ understanding and appreciation of these sites, and also by ensuring that the graveyards are managed in a way that contributes positively to local community life. The initial target groups identified for EGP are:

- **Volunteers:** comprising both individuals and groups of people who participate, for example, through graveyard ‘friends’ groups, corporate volunteering, community outreach projects, and field-schools;



*“The graveyards give a space—a green space—in amongst the buildings, a peaceful and restful sanctuary.”*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY

Planting spring bulbs at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

<sup>22</sup> Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), July 2009. Key Outcome 3: ‘the people of Scotland and visitors to our country value, understand and enjoy the historic environment’. Scottish Government Single Outcome Agreement, National Outcome 12 ‘We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations’.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Capital enjoys tourism boom as number of visitors grows’, Edinburgh Evening News, 17 August 2011.

- **Formal educational groups:** including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and universities, as well as life-long learning institutions;
- **Informal learning groups:** for example, local history societies and other special interest groups for adults or children;
- **Specialist training and skills development projects:** that offer participants conservation-related training or more general life-skills development as part of community outreach initiatives.



Children's I-Spy trail at Old Calton Burial Ground



Greyfriars Community Project

### The current pattern of use

Prior to the EGP little information existed to document public use of the graveyards. Two EGP surveys (the Greyfriars exit poll and the community questionnaire) aimed to find out more about visitors and their experiences of the five graveyards, which sites people went to, their likes and dislikes, any problems encountered, and if the graveyards could be improved.

The antisocial use of sites is a principal factor in deterring people from visiting. Future management needs to balance the concern that that no social groups are excluded from the graveyards with ensuring that any behaviour that conflicts with other users' access is controlled. A 'virtuous circle' of use can be achieved with greater footfall. Seeing more people at the sites can help make visitors feel safer when they use the graveyards, particularly if they are alone, and also act as a deterrent to antisocial use.



Graffiti in Old Calton Burial Ground dating from 2009. It is frequently the detritus, rather than the antisocial activity itself, that causes the poor perception of the graveyards

*'Sometimes I can feel a little unsafe if there are no other visitors around—usually off the more visible paths... I would be less inclined [to visit] the more isolated parts if alone.'*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY

Graveyard User Groups	Old Calton	New Calton	St Cuthbert's	Canongate	Greyfriars
Tourists					
Church Members	X	X			
Local Residents	X				
Local Office Workers		X			
Schools Groups					
University Groups					
Special Interest Groups					
Training (Conservation)					
Outreach Projects					
Students					
Used as Thoroughfare	X				
Antisocial Users					
Volunteers					

Table 3: Breakdown of visitor types by site



An analysis of the socio-economic profile of each neighbourhood suggest that all sites have the potential to increase the numbers visiting from the current user groups (Table 3), as well as initiating use by new target groups.

**Visiting patterns**

Over 77% of visitors are regular graveyard users and more than half of these regular visitors go on either a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Greyfriars receives by far the greatest level of footfall (estimated at 240,000 per annum). New Calton is the least visited site, with St Cuthbert's and Old Calton also achieving lower scores.



Visitors walking through Greyfriars

*'Within each of them [the graveyards] are burial plots of some amazing thought and design.'*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY

**Visitor attitudes**

Over 87% of people agreed, or strongly agreed, that the graveyards are assets to the local community. In both surveys, participants clearly found the site's history and gravestones the most appealing aspects, but they also responded positively to the graveyard's amenity roles and atmosphere. An unexpected result was that over two-thirds of people who visited Greyfriars did so with no expressed interest in Greyfriars Bobby.

## Barriers to using the graveyards

Survey results showed that barriers to using the graveyards exist in three areas:

- **Awareness.** Tourists are largely unaware of the graveyards except Greyfriars. New Calton, followed by St Cuthbert's, are the least well-known sites to local as well as tourist audiences. Survey results show the lack of signposting as the fifth highest priority for improving the graveyards.



The entrance to New Calton on Regents Road; the site is almost invisible from the roadside.

- **Lack of facilities and activities for visitors.** The community survey found overwhelming support for activities and facilities to encourage more public use, with over 90% of people able to identify at least one item that would increase how often they visited the graveyards (figure 3).

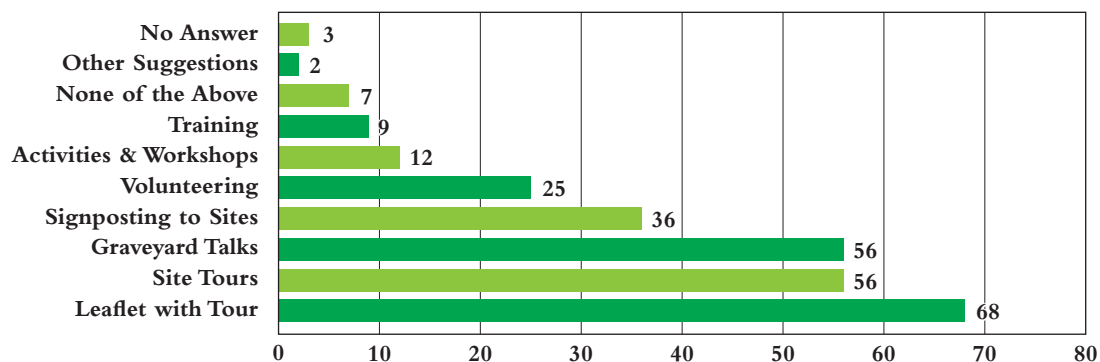


Figure 3: Community questionnaire results for future demand for graveyard-related activities and facilities

*'[I'd like] maps and guides on who's buried where, with info about local families as well as historic figures'*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY

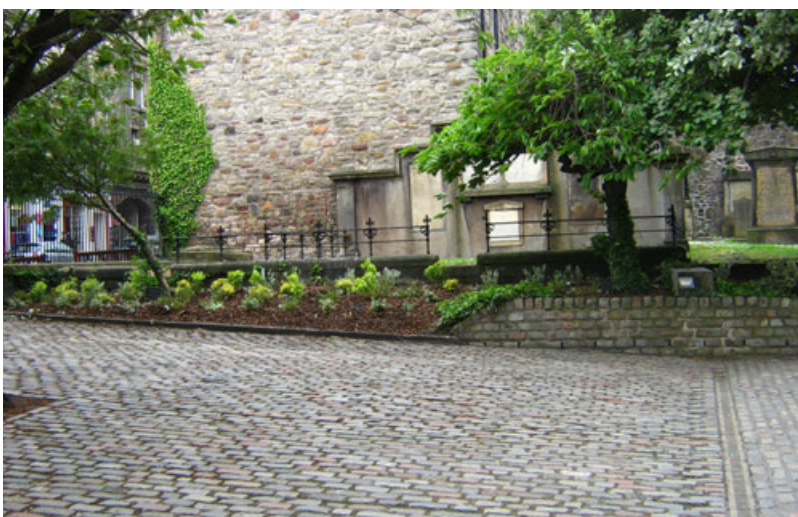
- **Physical Constraints.** Site visits indicated that each graveyard had areas that are likely to pose access problems for disabled visitors. At Old Calton the steep steps and lack of vehicle access means that there is no wheelchair access at all. Both surveys noted disabled access and footpaths as areas for improvement. Locked gates at New Calton Burial Ground and at Canongate significantly impede public access to these sites.
- **Perception of graveyards as safe and welcoming spaces.** Feedback recorded low scores for facilities, tidiness, and safety. More seating and interpretation, improved maintenance, and tackling antisocial behaviour were top priorities. Feedback from Doors Open Day tours and the CEC Adult Education Class on graveyards indicated many participants did not feel safe going to graveyards on their own and preferred to visit as part of an organised group. Negative perceptions of visitor safety can live on in peoples' minds as the result of a single isolated incident and long after more ongoing problems have been tackled.
- **Other perception issues.** Antisocial behaviour may not be the only barrier to using these sites. Graveyards embody highly specific cultural values relating to concepts of death, religion, sanctity, and sacredness. For those who have little or no experience of the historic environment or historic graveyards, the barrier may be a sense of uncertainty of how to engage with these places.

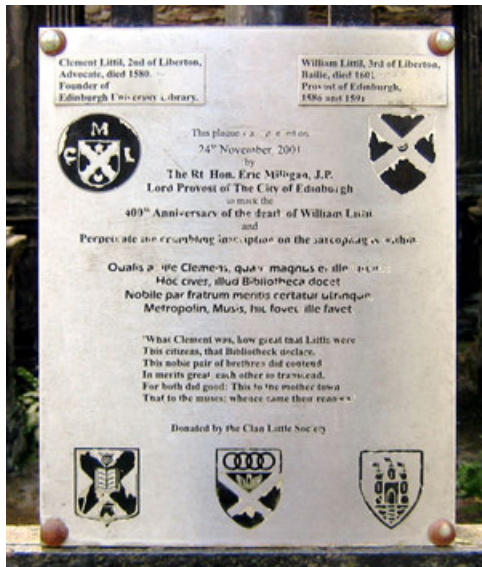


It is not clear from the entrance to the Old Calton orphaned section that this is a burial ground. The bins belonging to neighbouring businesses do not create the impression that this is a public space



Contrast the first impressions made by Canongate Kirkyard (to the left above and below) to that made by Greyfriars (below right). At Canongate a small public space has been carved out in front of the main entrance, where there are benches and art works. The church is open, with a welcome sign on display visible to passersby. The kirkyard with its monuments and trees is visible from the roadside and attractive planting beds are placed at the entrance.





*‘As well as signposting to the site there needs to be a welcoming sign at the sites—please come in, this is what you can see and do.’*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY



Clockwise from left: a damaged bench outside the church at St Cuthbert’s, a sign in Greyfriars so worn as to be illegible, and a burnt-out bin at the entrance of New Calton

*‘I love them [graveyards]. On odd occasions when I am on my own groups of teenagers or people drinking make me feel uneasy due to unpredictability of their reactions.’*

—RESPONDENT IN EGP SURVEY

*‘The incidence of vandalism has almost completely vanished since we are engaging with some of those people, who have been perceived at least, as part of the problem in being part of the solution to care for the place’.*

—RICHARD FRASER, MINISTER OF GREYFRIARS

**The extensive evidence of drug taking visible at Old Calton Burial Ground created concern among members of the public visiting during Doors Open Day 2011**



# Strategies to Increase Visitors

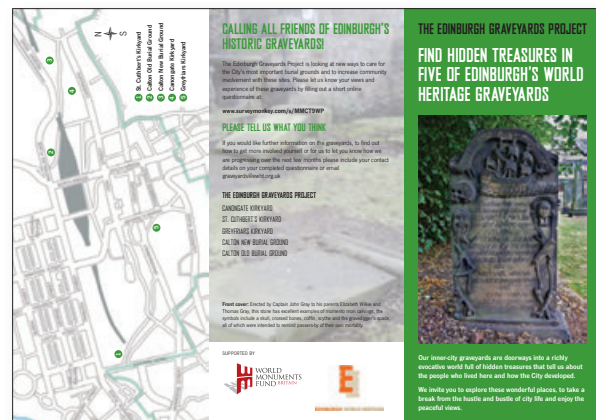
## How can current use be made to more closely match the ideal?

The principal strategy to improve use by existing audiences is to find ways to either increase the number of sites which are visited or the number of return visits made to the same site(s). Attracting new audiences requires raising awareness of the graveyards themselves and the reasons for visiting them.

- **Group branding** can help to direct footfall on from the more popular graveyards, like Greyfriars, to those that are less well known, such as New Calton Burial Ground. Promotional materials, such as graveyard trails and websites, can be designed to link sites together. Ideally sites need to be able to be walked as a circuit, and this could be achieved if the secondary gates at Greyfriars, New Calton and Canongate were all open. To encourage more visitors to both sites the two Calton burial grounds should be promoted together.
- **Provision of activities** as part of a coordinated and well-publicised programme of events, run on a regular basis at all of the sites, will increase the reasons for coming to the sites. Research on the work of graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups elsewhere indicates that the regular nature of events is more significant in the short-term to audience development than the quantity or range of activities delivered.

### A case study of Undercliffe Cemetery, Bradford

Undercliffe Cemetery Trust is an example of a body that has successfully resolved antisocial use of a historic graveyard. Several years ago the trust faced a problem at their site with antisocial behaviour involving local school children, predominantly from Muslim backgrounds. Trust staff worked with the local head teacher and police to address the issue. The school introduced a new behavioural policy, which helped bring about a change in the pupils’ behaviour. The significance of cemetery sites was explained to a non-Christian audience through school assemblies. Additionally, the trust developed contacts within the Muslim community, principally imams and the local mosques. To further increase an understanding of the local cemetery, schools became involved in cemetery visits and projects.



Edinburgh Graveyard Project's Five Graveyards trail leaflet

- **Remove the ‘reasons not to visit’ identified in the EGP surveys.** Future actions include providing seating, bins, and signage, and making entrances more approachable from an aesthetic and practical point of view. Access to up-to-date information is important to help visitors orientate themselves around sites, to identify one or two points of interest, and for finding out about any events or activities on offer. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance assessments should be undertaken to identify what solutions can be put in place to address site access issues. Feedback from graveyard trusts elsewhere indicated factors helpful to managing antisocial use included having staff or volunteers on-site, working in tandem with different council service teams, specialist organisations, and the police. Most critically, the evidence of antisocial use should be removed quickly from sites.
- **Evaluation.** Site and visitor evaluation can help ensure a balance exists between the use of sites as high quality, socially inclusive, amenity spaces, and tourist attractions while still protecting the integrity of the historic character of the sites.



Commercial tour in Greyfriars; EGP found some of these were criticised for the poor quality of their content



- **Communications and marketing** can help promote the recognition of the graveyards as community assets that contribute to the quality of life in Edinburgh. Using a variety of promotional formats can help to target different demographic groups, and taking part in wider initiatives such as Doors Open Day, The Big Draw, and Scotland’s History Festival can draw people into the sites.



One of the areas of herb garden delivered by the Greyfriars Community Project

- **Collaborative working** can help connect the graveyards into historic or green corridors in the city. Partnerships offer opportunities to introduce the value of graveyards to new audiences. They can be particularly effective in reaching hard-to-reach target groups, as well as offering a chance to tap into other organisations’ promotional networks. Partnerships can build and sustain creative learning opportunities that add value to the work of both parties.
- **Strategies to create deeper understanding and involvement.** Educational activities, promotional products, and even commercial services offer a diversity of engagement opportunities centred on the sites, which can be designed as both multi-linked or one-off experiences.

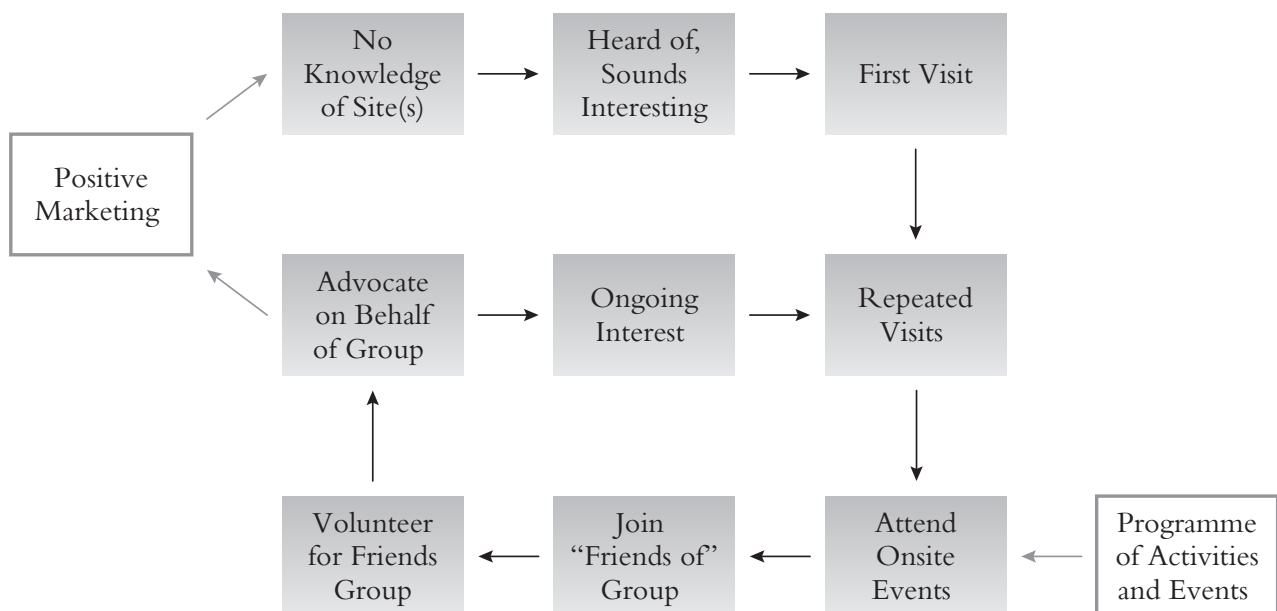


Figure 4: Example of pathway to increase involvement and learning

- **Understand the audiences' needs.** Some groups may need facilitated support, specific services or products, or in other cases groups may just want access to use the graveyards to run their own events. Future opportunities for developing visitor facilities may exist in the form of the buildings currently rented out or in need of restoration. Potential may also exist in less well-used areas of ground.



New Calton watchtower



Orphaned section of Old Calton

## Recommendations

Recommendations to improve site access, increase footfall, and to enhance learning and participation opportunities:

4. Increase the visitor welcome at the graveyards to encourage greater footfall and to improve visitors' perceptions of safety.
5. Develop group marketing of the five graveyards to encourage people to visit multiple sites to capitalise on the visitor interest in Greyfriars, and to raise awareness of the other graveyards, particularly New Calton Burial Ground.
6. Deliver a regular programme of events at all five graveyards to increase visitor numbers, and to create a deeper understanding of, and involvement with, the sites.
7. Appoint a development officer to work with a graveyard trust and 'friends of' groups to promote use of the sites by target audiences, and to develop promotional, outreach, and educational services and partnership projects.
8. Create an 'audience development plan' to develop a detailed strategy aimed at increasing future audience involvement through partnership development. The plan should be likened to an interpretation strategy.
9. Develop a large-scale education project to create an events and outreach programme, including schools' resources and a package for volunteer training, to create resources for the future management of the graveyards.

## Part 5: Forward-Looking Site Maintenance

A fundamental aim of good maintenance is to protect a graveyard's cultural and heritage values for the benefit of present users without hindering the ability of future users to enjoy and care for those spaces.<sup>24</sup> Good maintenance attracts resources: people want to visit well cared-for and welcoming graveyards, and funders look to support organisations with a strong track record in caring for sites in accordance with best practice standards. Good management makes the best use of existing resources by prioritising their allocation on the basis of both the most important values to protect and the greatest threats.

**Aim 3: To recommend options for the improved practical care and management of the graveyards.**

### **What does ideal maintenance look like for a historic graveyard?**

Ideal maintenance is linked to other aspects of graveyard management including visitor welcome, sustainability, conservation, promotion and marketing, and safety and security. Ideal maintenance takes place on a regular basis and includes caring for all elements of a site from gravestones and buildings, furniture and signage, trees and planting, to the grounds and infrastructure elements like pathways and drainage. A conservation management plan offers a practical way to draw information together to balance the different areas of interest a site might hold and to identify key aims for the future.

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24 Relevant policies include: Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), Key Outcome 1: *'that the historic environment is cared for, protected and enhanced for the benefit of our own and future generations'* and CEC Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan, which proposes that the quality of life is enhanced and maintained, and sustainable development is encouraged, through measures which include protecting and enhancing the built environment.



An example of good practice is Bunhill Fields, a historic burial ground in central London. Here the maintenance regime is integral to the site's management as a green space that adheres to the eight Green Flag standards: *A Welcoming Place; Healthy, Safe, and Secure; Conservation and Heritage; Community Involvement; Management; Clean and Well Maintained; Marketing; and Sustainability.*



**Fallen branches after stormy weather and graffiti covered monuments in Old Calton Burial Ground**

### **Graveyard maintenance should be regarded as curatorship**

Maintenance offers the best means to preserve graveyards in the long term.<sup>25</sup> An ongoing lack of maintenance can cause critical deterioration and decay, which ultimately requires large-scale repairs and restoration work. It should be directed by a sensitive conservation policy that provides a framework where all aspects of a site's significance (such as any archaeological, architectural, landscape, and ecological qualities) are balanced in accordance with their relative value. Evaluation should be based on sound knowledge of a graveyard's most important features, as well as an assessment of the most vulnerable aspects of a site.

### **Conservation management plans provide the means for holistic management**

A conservation management plan offers a practical way to draw information together to understand the graveyard's historical development, to balance the different areas of interest a site might hold, and to identify the key aims for the future. A good conservation management plan will identify appropriate maintenance techniques, highlight any examples of inappropriate intervention, materials or modern features that may need to be removed, and help to prevent scenarios where the ease of maintenance becomes the overriding management factor.

When seeking funding, demonstrating that management practices are informed by a good understanding of the site will also validate the organisation responsible for graveyard management. Good management means a funder can have greater confidence that the work they support will be sustainable and have an ongoing positive effect on peoples' lives.

### **Current management by CEC**

The Bereavement Services Section of CEC carries out grounds maintenance works on a rolling basis to all graveyards under CEC ownership. Its team of fabric inspectors test the condition of all headstones and memorials in accordance with health and safety procedures. Any work required to the maintenance of fabric is procured via the Property Care Section of CEC. It is important to recognise that the resources available to Bereavement Services are limited. There are 26 employees who look after 46 graveyards, with key staff on call 24/7 for the reporting of problems. Recently two members of senior management have been lost through retirement. Staff morale has been affected by staff changes and threats to jobs from spending cuts. Five personnel within the Bereavement Services Section are qualified to re-erect historic headstones.

<sup>25</sup> CEC Guidelines for Managing Edinburgh's Built Heritage, 6.3 states 'Any building is best and most economically maintained by establishing a consistent level of good repair and maintenance'.

## Recent CEC successes

- An internal CEC **Green Flag Assessment 2011**<sup>26</sup> passed three kirkyards (with Greyfriars rated 'very good', St Cuthbert's 'good', and Canongate as 'fair').
- **Enhanced maintenance carried out in 2010** included:
  - A contractor removing high-level vegetation from many of the larger lairs;
  - Fewer stones were being laid down;
  - Some repair work was undertaken by a team of skilled offenders on community service (not at the EGP sites);
  - More regular inspections and interventions by the night-time environmental wardens to move on rough sleepers and other 'illicit' users;
  - Continued general 'garden' maintenance throughout the year;
  - Continuing data entry of burial records into a database;
  - Various voluntary schemes have been encouraged which have resulted in a number of isolated repairs being undertaken.
- **Acceptance to the 2010 World Monuments Watch.** In 2009, CEC made a successful application to have the five EGP sites included on the 2010 World Monuments Watch, helping to raise the profile of these graveyards nationally and internationally.

## City of Edinburgh Council future priorities

In 2007-08, GRAMP identified the following issues as the main CEC priorities for the future regeneration and marketing of the five EGP sites:

- Security;
- Public awareness;
- Ongoing maintenance costs/requirements;
- Visitor safety;
- Maximisation of potential;
- Raised profile at local and national level.

Security and safety were particularly important, as these issues had been brought to the fore by bouts of vandalism that had been reported in local and national press. Consultation with Bereavement Services identified current priorities to include better signage in the graveyards and fabric conservation to gravestones and structures.

### What are the principles and resource issues that define current management practices on the ground?

- **Gravestone ownership.** While CEC bears responsibility for the maintenance of a graveyard's grounds, along with health and safety at a site, the legal ownership and statutory responsibility for the upkeep of monuments falls to the heirs of the lair owners. In the case of historic gravestones, heirs are often unable to be identified, or may no longer even exist. The lack of a legal procedure for dealing with 'unclaimed' stones limits the capacity of Scottish local authorities to manage historic gravestones.<sup>27</sup>



Robert Burn Mausoleum (1816), Old Calton

<sup>26</sup> CEC Internal Green Flag Assessment results supplied by Stuart Fagan, CEC Bereavement Services and other findings are set out in EGP Tender Document, WMF 18 January 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Review of Burial and Cremation Legislation, PAPER 1, B&C Review Group, 16 May 2005 (DRAFT), [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0013079.doc](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/924/0013079.doc) consulted October 2011.

- **Health and safety** is a significant driver for the allocation of resources across all areas of graveyard management, particularly gravestone stability testing, fabric maintenance, and arboriculture work. The existing budget for fabric maintenance only extends to urgent repairs, rather than the preferable approach of regular monitoring.

- **Security** is an issue at all of the graveyards, and particular problems relate to alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, and the number of rough sleepers. All sites are left unlocked at night at the request of the police.<sup>28</sup>

- **Budget.** There has been chronic, long-term under-investment in graveyards within the UK. During the course of EGP, CEC has undergone two rounds of spending cuts. The impact of these cuts on Bereavement Service resources and their future work in historic graveyards is not yet known. Income currently generated from tours, filming and other graveyard services goes into the common CEC ‘pot’ rather than being directed specifically toward caring for these sites.



**Headstone laid flat as part of health and safety, New Calton**

- **Conservation policy and planning.** Conservation management plans are not used to structure CEC work programmes and no plans have been prepared for four of the EGP sites. There is no biodiversity management at any of the sites.

- **Working with the local community.** CEC staff are willing to work with community and church groups. However, there are currently no formal means of regular contact between Bereavement Services staff and church staff and volunteers. A graveyard trust could ensure regular communication between stakeholder groups.

<sup>28</sup> Reported by Stuart Fagan, CEC Bereavement Services. The ‘Golden Gates’ entrance to St Cuthbert’s are sometimes locked by CEC park staff, and the minister at Canongate has a key that allows him to lock the main gates at night.



**Evidence of antisocial use at St Cuthbert’s Kirkyard, including graffiti, a toppled headstone, and a burnt-out bin**



Above: area of ornamental perennial planting, with squirrels, at St Cuthbert's. Right: Robert Fergusson's gravestone, Canongate, the sign records 'The Saltire Society on its 50th Anniversary, with the support of Edinburgh District Council, commemorates the three Roberts by inscribing Stevenson's words'



- **Non-CEC site management.** In practice, church staff and volunteers are involved with kirkyard management, almost by default, by virtue of their regular onsite presence. They may carry out maintenance tasks, undertake special projects,<sup>29</sup> and be an initial point of contact for visitors to the graveyard. They have a significant role in building good relations with all site users, including the homeless and other socially vulnerable groups. The lack of coordination between the work of CEC staff and the efforts of the churches is not conducive to clarifying areas of responsibility, common priorities, or sharing good practice to make best use of resources.

### Overview of the management issues facing the graveyards

The management of the five sites does not conform to standards of best practice for caring for historic graveyards, particularly those within a World Heritage Site. There is scope to improve aspects of the overall strategic approach taken to graveyard management, as well as to individual elements of the day-to-day care delivered on the ground.

It is of significant concern that no policies and plans are in place to ensure that the historic graveyards in CEC ownership are specifically managed in a way that recognises their heritage value. This has led to the deterioration of stonework and landscapes at all five EGP sites. Anti-social behaviour at the graveyards is not being managed and is also having a detrimental effect on condition and public access.

At present there is no mechanism to bring together parties with responsibilities for, or an interest in, the management of these sites (key stakeholders include CEC Bereavement Services; Planning, Parks, and Greenspace Services; Canongate, St Cuthbert's, and Greyfriars churches; and EWH). Specific problems include the significant number of fallen and broken gravestones at sites, the high incidence of pieces of 'orphaned' stonework, and the dependence on chemicals for grass management, and the lack of general visitor welcome.

<sup>29</sup> Projects include restoration (e.g. Bannantyne Monument, Greyfriars in 2004 and Fettes Tomb, Canongate in 2007), interpretation (e.g. braille plaque to Robert Fergusson, Canongate in 2008 and wall monument to Playfair, Old Calton in 2010), community outreach and training (e.g. herb garden project with Grassmarket Mission, Greyfriars in 2010), and repointing of the Hume Mausoleum with Penicuik House apprentices,

# Recommendations for Management Changes

The recommendations below aim to improve current maintenance regimes to create better protection for the whole burial landscape, as well as for each site's gravestones.

10. Draw up and implement conservation management plans for all five graveyards.
11. Create a more integrated system for maintenance that includes graveyard buildings and involves all stakeholders.
12. Reallocate resources to help implement steps to tackle the antisocial use of the graveyards and therefore enhance the visitor experience of all sites.
13. Develop a large-scale conservation project involving repairs and restoration work to all five graveyards, including the watchtower at New Calton Burial Ground.
14. Initiate biodiversity management at all five sites.



Clockwise from above:  
The welcome sign to St Cuthbert's Kirk, a fallen stone at Canongate, and the plan of Greyfriars Kirkyard erected by Greyfriars Kirk





## Part 6: Delivering Community-Led Change

Establishing a graveyard trust with ‘friends of’ groups will provide an effective mechanism to coordinate and deliver EGP aims one, two, and three. It offers an inclusive way to bring together a wide variety of people working collectively to care for the five sites in a way that can balance the graveyards’ many different interest areas. As a locally led initiative, a trust would ensure that graveyard management encompassed local needs, helping to place the sites at the heart of community life. Community-led stewardship delivers key local and national outcomes for the historic environment, placemaking, and the third sector.<sup>30</sup> It is a model that affords the greatest opportunities for attracting resources and support. Securing greater economic benefit from the historic environment also achieves key local and national policy outcomes.<sup>31</sup>

**Aim 4: To examine the potential for enhanced community participation in order to create a more financially sustainable model of stewardship.**

*“Space which is clearly neglected at the heart of the community has an impact not just on the community itself and its own feelings of value but, also, on investors in the area and on people coming to the area.”*

—EVIDENCE PROVIDED TO 8TH SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW ON CEMETERIES 2001, PAM ALEXANDER, EH. Q450

### **What model of stewardship should we be aiming for to draw in community participation and to deliver financial sustainability?**

Community involvement offers sustainable stewardship through the public’s role as both graveyard users and supporters who offer resources such as volunteer manpower and income from graveyard-related educational services and promotional products. Public support testifies to the graveyards’ ability to make a tangible contribution to wider placemaking. As a result, the graveyards can more readily attract funding and secure a higher priority within the allocation of existing resources.

### **An overview of graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups in UK**

Research found that graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups are a successful, tried and tested means for local communities to be involved in the care of historic graveyards and no other significant models were identified.

### **What is the difference between a trust and a ‘friends of’ group?**

Graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups are usually both involved in fundraising, the promotion of sites to visitors, and with educational and conservation projects. ‘Friends of’ groups tend to champion a graveyard within the local community and seek to complement and influence the work of a site’s manager. Graveyard trusts tend to take on a more strategic level of engagement with stakeholders and have a greater role in partnership development.

### **What types of resources can trusts and ‘friends of’ groups attract?**

There is no straightforward business model for a graveyard trust or ‘friends of’ group, as each organisation reflects a localised response to a particular set of circumstances. However, research showed how resources such as income, staff, and volunteers, and organisational capacity are important to the working of all groups.

30 Edinburgh Partnership, Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2009–12. National Outcome 11: ‘We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others’. Edinburgh Outcome: ‘Edinburgh has strong, engaged and supported voluntary and community sectors that enable people to participate in their communities.’

31 Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), July 2009. Key Outcome 2: ‘to secure greater economic benefits from the historic environment.’

- **Income** (Figure 5). The annual income of ‘friends of’ groups usually ranges from tens of pounds to several thousands of pounds, whereas most trusts fall within a band of £25K-£100K per annum. The picture for individual organisations can change greatly from year to year however, depending on factors like large scale capital projects and staffing levels.

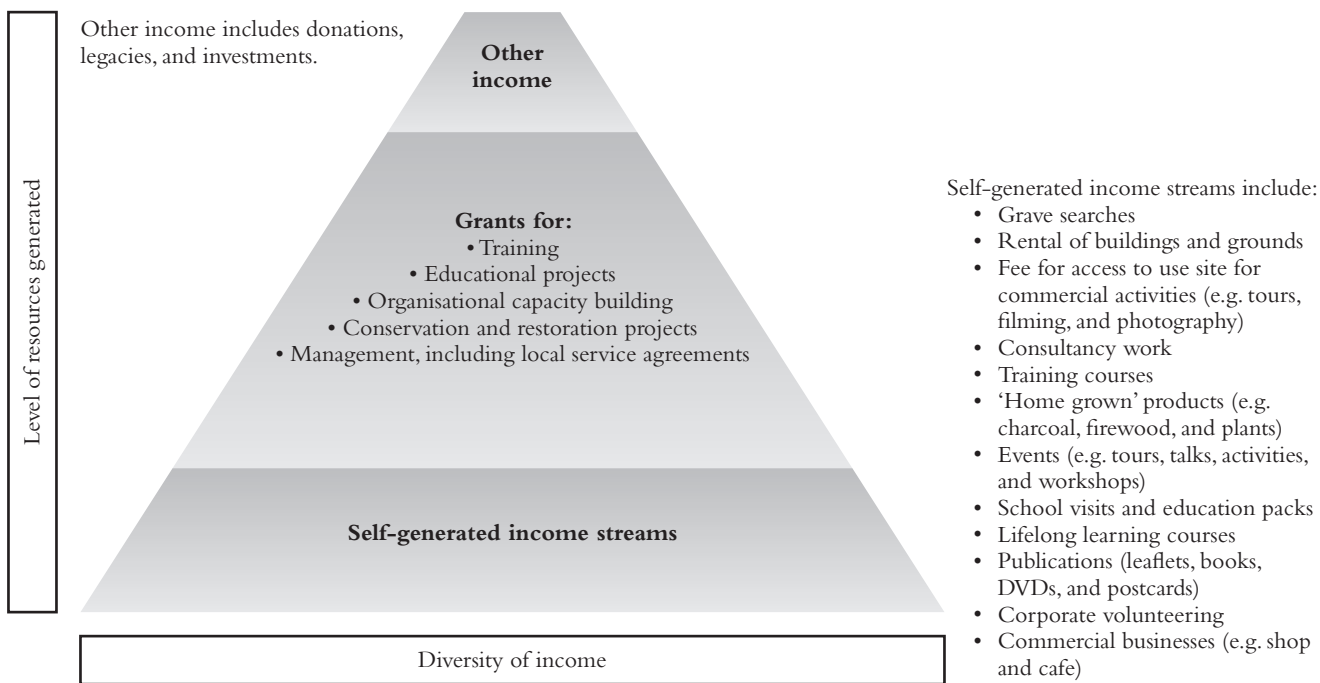


Figure 5: Overview of the income of graveyard groups studied

Three main types of income are typically enjoyed by graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups:

1. **Self-generated income from educational activities, promotional products and commercial services.** Educational activities and promotional products provide the main source of income for ‘friends of’ groups. An analysis of trusts’ annual accounts showed that self-generated funds variously contributed between 10% and 29% of total income.
2. **Grants** may be secured for educational work, conservation projects, organisational capacity building or training, and for site management, including Service Level Agreements (SLA). Grants make up the majority of income for trusts.
3. **Other income** such as donations, legacies, investments, and gift aid tends to play a much smaller role in an organisation’s income.



Guide tour of Highgate Cemetery, London

- **Staff.** No ‘friends of’ groups in the study employed staff, whereas all of the trusts contacted had a least one part-time member of staff. As well as taking a lead in securing grants and delivering services, staff may be crucial to organisational capacity through their role in coordinating and supporting volunteers.
- **Volunteers** play a fundamental role in income generation and the delivery of educational activities, promotional products, and commercial services (especially grounds maintenance where SLA exist). Volunteers can raise significant levels of income and assist fundraising through ‘help in kind’ contributions. Several groups count on the help of volunteers from the local area, but other means to attract ‘hands-on’ support include corporate schemes and community outreach partnership projects (Figure 6).
- **Capacity.** Although nearly all groups have a ‘hand-to-mouth’ existence, this type of stewardship model remains highly resilient because of the level of commitment shown by communities in making their graveyard organisations work. Over the last 10 years changes within the third sector have required charities to become increasingly more business-like in their governance and work. This shift is also reflected in the graveyard trusts spoken to as part of this project.

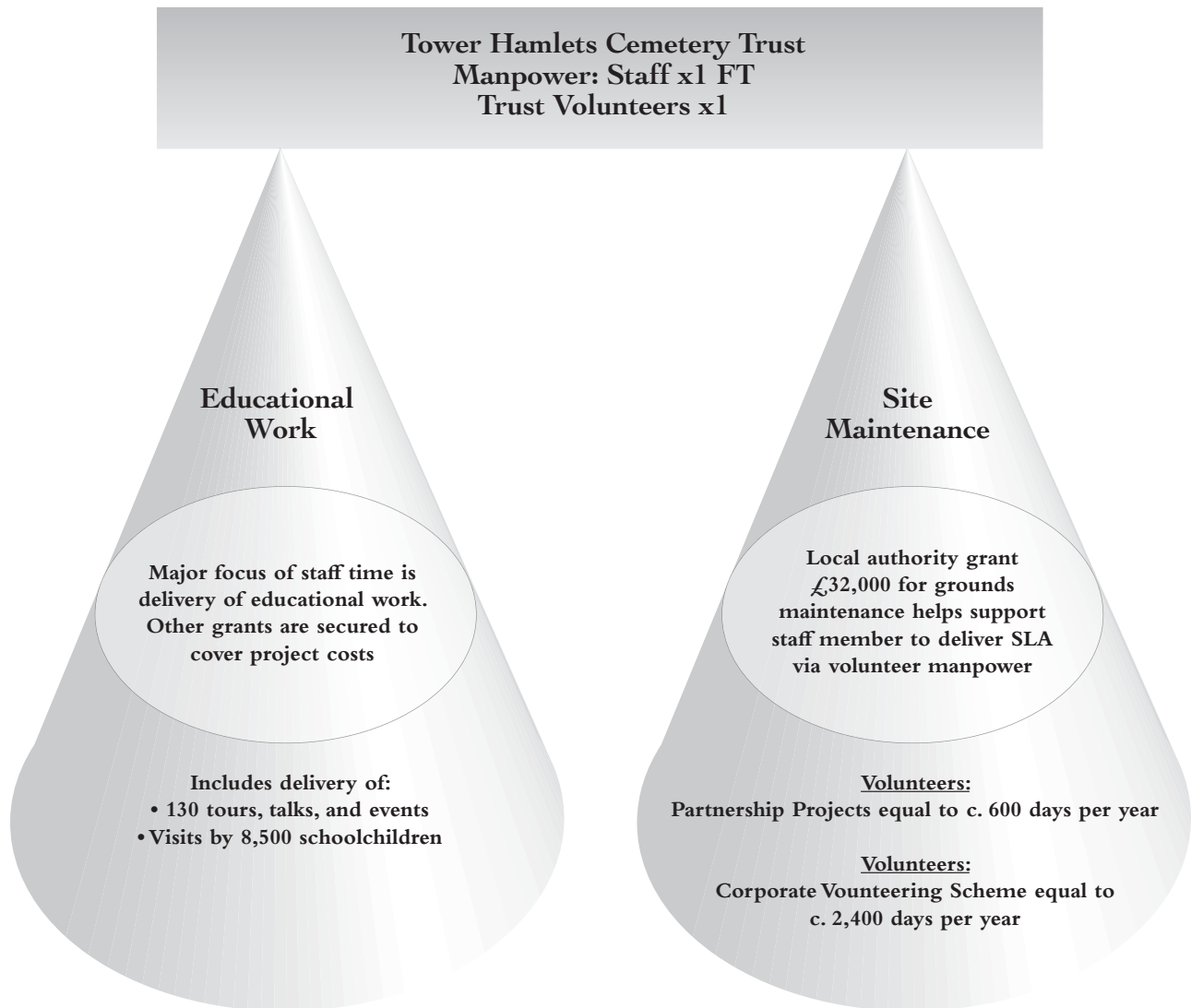


Figure 6: Simplified business model for the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park Trust

# The proposed model for Edinburgh

There is no directly transferable ‘off-the-peg’ model for a graveyard group for Edinburgh. The proposal for Edinburgh is a combination of a graveyard trust and ‘friends of’ groups (Figure 7). This structure is designed to engender the widest possible community participation by drawing on the support and resources that exist for each site individually, as well as the backing for the five sites that exists more generally.

- **The trust oversees the ‘business end’ of operations.** Its trustees and separate management board hold a strategic role and a coordinating function. They are responsible for attracting and directing resources and for setting strategic priorities in conjunction with other stakeholders. Their aim is to add a layer of value to work completed by the individual ‘friends of’ groups through their membership of a wider network.

## Overview of proposed graveyards trust structure

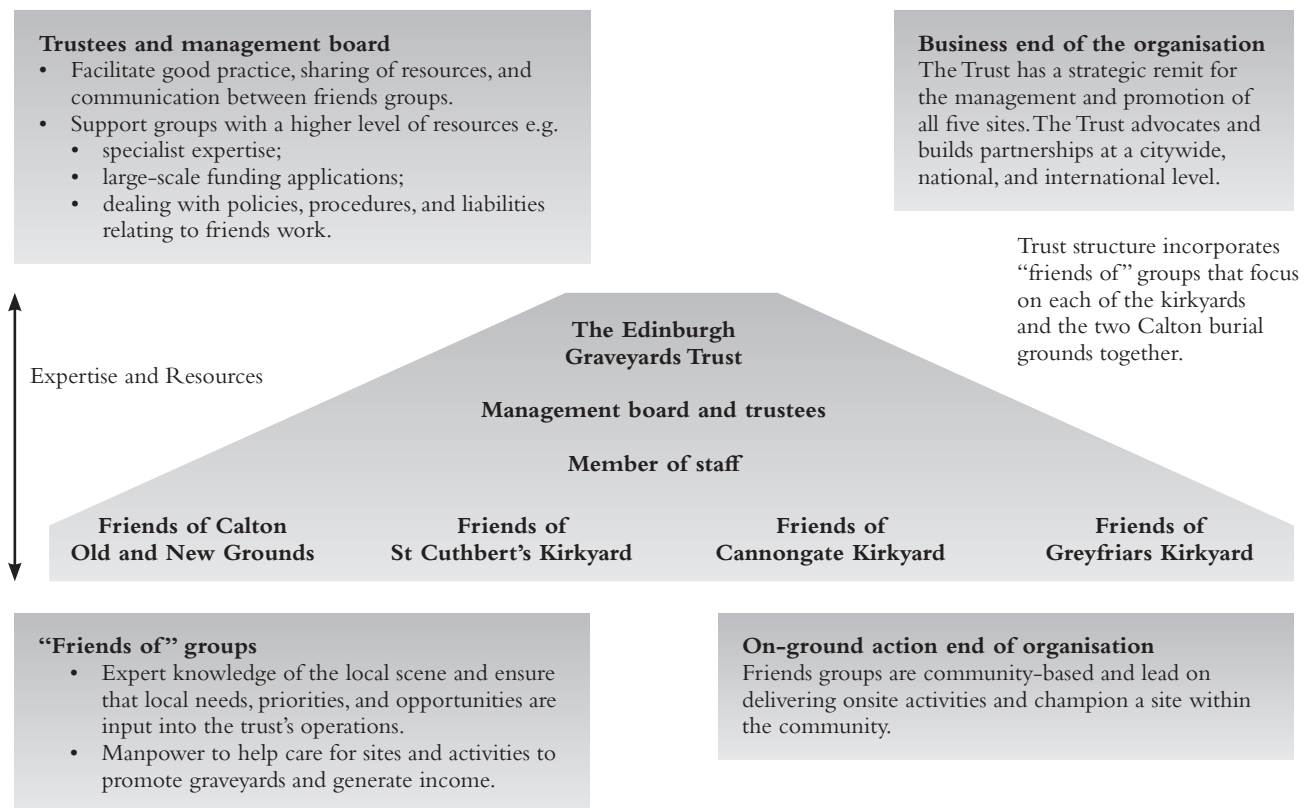


Figure 7: Proposed model for an Edinburgh graveyard trust

- **The ‘friends of’ groups carry out the hands-on activities at the sites.** Volunteers are involved in activities to care physically for sites and with promoting the graveyards to others. The ‘friends of’ element will result in membership groups that offer a bridge between church members, local residents, businesses, special interest societies, and other local amenity groups.
- **How will a trust be funded?** The strongest possibilities for Edinburgh in the short-term are grants for educational projects, capacity building, and an annual grant from CEC. Options for a self-generated income include membership subscriptions and revenue from graveyard-related activities, products, and services, notably corporate volunteering. Several of the areas where an Edinburgh graveyard trust could generate an income already have commercial interests in operation. At present none of the income generated is directed towards the care of the five graveyards. Options for income derivation for a trust in the longer term include the provision of specialist training and skills development and taking on a lease for all or part of the site(s) for landscape management or a building reuse project.

## What are the strengths and weaknesses of the volunteer organisations and other agencies currently on the ground?

- **Local graveyard trusts.** The Greyfriars Kirkyard Trust, the only such trust in Edinburgh, was established in 1978 and ceased to operate in 2009.
- **The churches.** There are churches at three of the five EGP sites (St Cuthbert's, Canongate, and Greyfriars), and all have shown interest in participating in a new graveyard trust. Some reservations have been voiced over the capacity of church staff and volunteers to dedicate their time toward developing kirkyard activities and attending meetings. However, each of the churches already has in place a point of contact for graveyard-related matters. Furthermore, all of the churches are already involved in at least one or two kirkyard-related activities that could be adapted to support the work of a new graveyard trust. At present, a notable area limiting capacity is the paucity of existing forums linking local residents and the church. It is important to establish a way for those who live and work locally to come together to work collaboratively with church members to identify common priorities and break down any barriers, such as the sites being seen as 'the church's space'.
- **The creation of a 'friends of' group for the Calton sites** in some ways is more complex than for the three kirkyards, as there are no members of an associated church, with the expertise described above, to help build groups. However, EGP consultation work identified several candidates willing to take an active role within a Calton 'friends of' group.
- **City of Edinburgh Council.** Several CEC departments are involved in the management of the graveyards, and accordingly there is a great deal of expertise potentially available to a new trust, notably in the areas of biodiversity, parks and open spaces, heritage management, conservation, and cemetery management. However, EGP found that a joined-up approach to cross-departmental working could be variable in practice. Strong expertise exists within the CEC Parks and Open Spaces Services who have their own 'friends of' scheme to enlist community involvement with Edinburgh's parks.
- **Edinburgh World Heritage.** Over the last five years EWH has supported several projects to repair funerary structures at Greyfriars and at Canongate, as well as producing an interpretation plan for Greyfriars and interpretation panels at Canongate. EWH is also working with a community gardening project at Canongate Kirkyard.
- **Special interest groups.** A small number of groups are known to have carried out one-off conservation projects at EGP sites. Only one group appears to have ongoing contact with the graveyards. At present it is not clear whether individual sites might have greater appeal to specific special interest groups, and further work is required to begin engagement with the membership of various groups.
- **Community involvement among local residents, schools, and businesses.** Canon-gate appears to be the site best used by local residents. Other sites show fairly limited local use at present. However, the study did not identify any significant barrier to establishing strong community links at any of the sites.

### **Priorities for setting up a trust**

It is clear that the success of the proposed stewardship model will depend on attracting widespread community support. However, the number of people willing to participate in care of the graveyards is largely untested. Previously there has been no serious attempt to grow this strong latent interest into action, and no obvious route for interested members of the public to proactively come together to become involved with the graveyards. Unlike the other graveyard trusts and ‘friends of’ groups studied, there is no imminent threat to the Edinburgh graveyards, either from redevelopment or other modes of destruction, to marshal the public into action. Raising awareness of the management issues detailed in this report will help inform the public and encourage their involvement. Communication must be two-way and offer inclusive opportunities for local people to help shape the future management of sites.

More detailed decisions about the nature of an Edinburgh trust can only be taken once volunteers have come forward and an idea of resources is better known. Examples of areas where the finer detail requires further development by trustees and a management board include:

- the trust’s role, remit, and mission;
- long-term strategy and short-term priorities;
- details of governance including internal structure for membership and ‘friends of’ groups;
- staffing;
- whether to lease all, none, or part of the graveyards’ grounds or buildings.

## **Recommendations**

Since achieving consensus in 2008, the process to establish an Edinburgh trust has lost momentum, resulting in the lack of a collective focus for developing the trust’s mission and short-term goals. The following recommendations should be implemented without further delay.

15. Establish a graveyard trust with associated ‘friends of’ groups. Trustees and members of the management board should include the main stakeholders and also be representative of the heritage and cultural values exemplified by the sites and of the constituent groups within the local community.
16. The process of establishing the graveyard trust and ‘friends of’ groups should be launched through a media campaign of well-publicised public meetings and other events to enable members of the local communities to contribute their ideas and be involved from the outset.
17. The initial priority of the trust will be to agree and set down its mission, values, constitution, and strategic aims.
18. A memorandum of understanding should be drafted between the trust and CEC to outline the principles of partnership working.

## Part 7: Conclusion

The purpose of EGP is to identify the strategic priorities for the future care and enjoyment of five historic burial grounds in the heart of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site. This involved carrying out new research to establish what makes the kirkyards at Canon-gate, St Cuthbert's and Greyfriars and the burial grounds of Old Calton and New Calton so very special and what qualities in particular attract visitors to them.

*Cemeteries that are run down, neglected, and uncared for become places not for quiet contemplation and reflection, but rather shadowy areas in which visitors cannot even feel safe. This creates a vicious circle of decline in which neglect becomes in the eyes of the local authority justified because no one visits. If cemeteries are to regain their value as urban 'oases', the very first step [that] has to be made is to ensure that they are made safe. In this way the vicious circle can be replaced by a virtuous one, as the value of such places is recognised and the local community realises that cemeteries are worth looking after'*

—EVIDENCE PROVIDED TO 8TH SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW ON CEMETERIES 2001, PAM ALEXANDER, EH. Q450

Community engagement has revealed how these sites are currently used, and, together with site visits, this evidence has identified opportunities to improve how the sites are cared for and managed. Community groups across the UK were contacted to find out about their experience of managing historic burial grounds. These groups provided first-hand accounts of how they were able to successfully transform their local graveyards into urban green oases, tranquil spaces, and family-friendly places for learning and leisure.

By drawing this work together it becomes possible to see in a more nuanced way how and why the great potential of the EGP sites is not being fully capitalised upon. This report makes a total of 18 recommendations, which together propose a way that the graveyards may be revived into well-loved community resources and become 'must-see' tourist attractions.

### Strategy for Implementing Recommendations

#### **Stage one. In the short term.**

The establishment of the graveyard trust is this report's overarching recommendation and the primary output in the strategy. By its very nature, community stewardship will ensure that future graveyard management is sustainable because this will be shaped by ongoing local needs.

The second key recommendation is to develop a small, community-based project to help galvanise the local interest in the graveyards into a critical mass of support for 'friends of' groups. Delivering tangible improvements at all stages of the strategy is crucial to keep people on board as volunteers, partners and graveyard visitors.

Another recommendation for implementation during stage one is to disseminate the information developed to date by EGP. This will help with advocating most effectively on behalf of the sites and assist with the 'buy-in' for the project by the local community based on a sound knowledge of the underlying issues.

The whole strategy could falter if there is not sufficient positive engagement. There needs to be strong media coverage and direct engagement, as well as public meetings and questionnaires. The appointment of a development officer would be an asset to the delivery of stage one of the strategy.

#### **Stage two. In the short to medium term.**

Stage two sees a series of relatively small, practical steps taken to improve the landscapes' appearance, visitor safety, and facilities. The results of these changes contribute to the improved quality of life in the local neighbourhoods.

The graveyards' strategy ensures that knowledge about the sites is continually being developed in order to inform actions taken on the ground, but also to prepare for stages three and four. The main risk to the strategy at this stage is if an insufficient number of 'volunteers' are recruited to help deliver graveyard-related activities, promotional products and commercial services, and to help manage and govern the trust and 'friends of' groups. Partnership-working can help to secure practical support for activities through alternative volunteer models such as participants in community projects and corporate volunteering schemes.

### **Stage three. In the medium term.**

The medium-term outcomes are designed to support larger-scale, longer-term changes to the graveyards and to consolidate the trust's business model. The creation of a conservation management plan, audience development plans and interpretation strategy will help to ensure that the graveyards are managed to WHS standards.

An important route to reach target audiences is via volunteering. The strategy, as currently designed, means it is possible to proactively seek out partnership opportunities with other organisations that have expertise in working with socially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It would also be possible to deliver practical activities on an 'in-house' basis through facilitating school visits, collaboration with the University of the Third Age, and family workshops.

The major threat to the strategy at this stage is from insufficient resources to carry out the conservation planning work and to allow for fundraising for stage four.

### **Stage four. In the long term.**

The focus of the proposed project is to make good the long-term effects of weathering and neglect, as well as ensuring that graveyard access is socially inclusive. An education project should be developed in tandem with a scheme to carry out repairs and restoration, so that resources, partnerships and marketing strategies can be developed to generate revenue towards the overall project's costs. Such an approach will offer benefits on an ongoing basis for the future management of the graveyards and their monuments.

### **How EGP recommendations fit with local strategic priorities.**

The CEC Open Spaces Strategy demonstrates that CEC has been engaged in positive thinking about the future of their historic graveyards. However, proposals could take up to 15 years to become a reality due to the lack of available resources. The creation of an Edinburgh Graveyard Trust could help accelerate and enhance this process by generating new resources.

This report's graveyard strategy places volunteerism and community activism at the heart of the way forward and recommendations have looked to opportunities for self-generated income and what the actions of volunteers can deliver.

*'Residents and visitors value and enjoy these open spaces and we want to protect them and enhance them for future generations. It is important that we look at our current use of open spaces and consider how we might use some differently in future to get the best from them.'*

—COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDRIDGE, CEC ENVIRONMENT LEADER QUOTED IN THE EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS 19 FEBRUARY 2010





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