



Lychgate and Cemetery Gates Renovation Completion Report

Background

In November 2024 Councillors agreed to appoint a specialist joiner to undertake the repair of the Lychgate and to commission the design, creation and installation of new gates for both the Lychgate and the side entrance. The project has now been completed, and this report provides an overview of the work undertaken, the challenges encountered and a clear breakdown of costs.

The works were commissioned following concerns regarding the structural condition of the Lychgate. The supporting wooden beams were showing advanced signs of decay and given their importance for the structural integrity of the structure, a decision was made in October 2024 (*Minute Number: 2024/171*) to prop the Lychgate as a safety precaution. In November 2024, approval was given for renovation. (*Minute Number: 2024/189*)

Contractors

Due to the specialist nature of the work, securing quotations proved difficult, with a number of potential contractors unable to quote. A local specialist joiner with the relevant skills and experience was appointed, having submitted an initial quotation of £11,575.

Challenges Faced

Choice of materials - Oak was chosen for the replacement beams and iroko for the new gates. Both are durable hardwoods suitable for long-term use. The kiln-dried European oak beams required additional drying time before they could be worked, during which some natural splits in the wood became more visible. The supplier confirmed these would not affect the strength or lifespan of the beams. However, it has had a disappointing impact on the aesthetics.

Gate design and weight - The iroko gates were designed to be in keeping with the sensitive setting of the cemetery while providing durability. Additional iroko was required to achieve the necessary strength and a more robust gatepost was also installed to support their weight.

Project logistics - As with many bespoke projects, scheduling and resourcing required flexibility. Support from the Council's amenities team was used at key stages to help deliver the works efficiently and to keep costs down.

Ground conditions - The quality of the ground around the cemetery entrances created challenges for the installation of the new gates. Following completion,

resurfacing works were commissioned to improve the surrounding area and ensure a quality finish.

Costs Breakdown

- Stabilising Lychgate – £420
- Labour and Wood Supply – £12,280
- Supply of heavy-duty gatepost and welding – £1,128
- Ancillaries (paint, stain, etc.) – £381.36
- Installation of gatepost – £858
- Resurfacing works – £810

Total: £15,877.36

These costs are inclusive of VAT where applicable and were funded from the Cemetery Improvements EMR, which had sufficient budget allocated. It is anticipated that the project may incur some minor additional costs, such as further timber treatment, but otherwise it is now complete.

Conclusion

Although the project took longer than first anticipated, the outcome is a significant and lasting improvement. The Lychgate is now structurally secure, and the new iroko gates provide an elegant and respectful entrance that is more in keeping with the cemetery's setting. The investment has not only safeguarded an important structure but has also enhanced the overall appearance of the cemetery. The collaboration between the appointed contractor and the Council's amenities team ensured the project was delivered to a high standard, with additional costs kept proportionate to the specialist nature of the work.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

September 2025

Lychgate prior to works



Wooden beams showing signs of woodworm/rot and once removed



Completed Project

