

Baby Memorial Working Group
Monday 13 January 2020 at 6pm
Brunton House, Cowdenbeath

Baby Memorial Working Group

This was the second meeting of the group. The meeting was attended by 4 parents plus stakeholders.

Meeting Summary

The principle purpose of this meeting was to provide an update on activity that had taken place since the first meeting of the group in May 2019.

Discussion was frank and it was made clear by the parents and representatives from Fife Sands that they felt there had been insufficient engagement in relation to the Angel memorial proposed for Townhill Park for them to support the proposal.

It was agreed that an anonymised survey of the information provided by Thompsons should be shared.

The council advised the decision to pause the consultation agreed in May 2019 had been taken to avoid a potential conflict with the survey undertaken by Thompsons.

Acknowledging the strength of feeling from parents, it was accepted that a more inclusive approach to communication would be adopted going forward.

Commenting on the proposals, a number of stakeholders observed in their experience the idea of an angel as memorial figure could be divisive. They also observed that other locations might be considered in addition to Townhill Park. It was observed that in their experience, families responded differently to different environmental features, symbols and other stimuli and that a memorial garden with different spaces could sometimes be a useful medium to bring together a wide range of views and wishes. Within the spaces of a garden they also noted a number of fixed elements could be incorporated, to include perhaps an angel if that was the collective wish.

It was recognised that Fife Council required to accept full responsibility for the past practices at Fife Crematoria. It was confirmed the Council was fully supportive of creating a baby memorial in Fife. It was also confirmed the Council was not committed to any particular form of memorial and was keen to ensure that broad agreement was reached with as many parents as possible on the best way to mark the passing of their babies.

Subject to the support of parents, the Council confirmed it was prepared to take overall ownership for the commissioning, funding and long-term maintenance of the memorial. It was also confirmed no budget had been set for the memorial and this would follow agreement on the form of the memorial.

Advice and guidance was provided by a couple of stakeholders on considerations that could be given on the best way to engage and consult with parents moving forward. It was noted that a fully inclusive series of workshops could be used to help parents define what

they would like to see from a memorial. In turn it was suggested this could form the basis for a tendering exercise for designers and landscape architects.

Next Steps

It was agreed the Council would:

- Develop an engagement plan through which families were invited to contribute their ideas for a baby memorial. Communication would initially be by letter and social media
- Revise the text of a draft letter and media release with the assistance of the group
- Establish a website or equivalent to support better communication.
- Share the anonymised survey information
- Attempt to broaden attendance so that the group was as representative as possible of the views of parents
- Arrange monthly meetings of the group to help maintain momentum.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 13th February 2020 at Lecture Theatre, Education Centre, Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline