

Midlothian Council submission of 1 December 2022

PE1941/F: Stop the destruction of headstones within community cemeteries

Thank you for your enquiry.

Unfortunately communication with lair holders in older cemeteries is a challenge.

Midlothian Council does not routinely communicate with lair owners regarding potential impacts on maintenance as a result of their health and safety works. However whenever we undertake memorial works in a Cemetery we have signage in place concerning the works being undertaken.

We also write to lair holders to raise our concerns regarding unsafe memorials when we have current lair holders details. However this is often not the case.

Headstones of concern have stickers placed on them.

We would advise that Midlothian Council are not responsible for the destruction of headstones as our working practice is not to lay unsafe memorials flat. We generally make safe headstones that fail the topple test by 'Sheughing them in'.

This involves either sinking the headstone upright in the ground by approx. one third of its height. Or sinking the top section in the ground by approx. one third of its height leaning against the headstone base.

This ensures that headstones are not damaged by users or maintenance machinery and therefore preserving our heritage and history. This is also more aesthetically pleasing as headstones are kept in the correct location and are all kept upright with most inscriptions still visible. Furthermore the grounds maintenance of the Cemetery is not impeded.