Introduction

This is the latest in a series of newsletters from the Directors of the General Cemetery Company (GCC) intended for all those with an interest in Kensal Green Cemetery.

A sustainable future: Royal Assent for the General Cemetery Act!

We are pleased to report that we have now completed the parliamentary process and our private Bill has received Royal Assent and become an Act, effectively passing into law.

Image showing the team at Westminster Hall after the successful committee meeting

Members of the GCC team, advisors and interested stakeholders attended a House of Commons Unopposed Bill Committee meeting on Monday 13th October 2025 that was chaired by Ms Nusrat Ghani, Conservative MP for Sussex Weald. The committee of several MPs and junior Ministers asked various questions of the team but the meeting was remarkably quick with proceedings completed in 30 minutes with a positive outcome for the cemetery.

Following the committee meeting the Bill moved swiftly back to the House of Commons for its third and final reading which took place at the start of proceedings on Thursday 16th October 2025. The Speaker of the House opened the Commons session for the day, promptly raised third reading which then passed in a matter of seconds with no objections. The next and final step was for the Bill to pass across to the King for Royal Assent which happened on Monday 27th October 2025.

The Directors of the GCC would like to pay special thanks to Nicholas Evans from TLT Solicitors who acted as our Parliamentary Agent and shepherded us through the process, heritage consultants Ross Ingham and Kate Pinnock, of Ingham Pinnock Associates, whose guidance has been invaluable on our quest to find a secure and sustainable future for the cemetery, and to the Cemetery Manager Kelly Farrington for her detailed contributions to the two parliamentary committee meetings.

The next steps in the journey now are to set up the charity to which the site will be transferred and a Steering Group is in place to lead on this with three new recruits from outside of the cemetery and crematorium sector; we look forward to introducing you to the team in the next newsletter. We expect to submit an application to the charity commission later this year and for the charity to be established in 2026. The transfer of the site will be subject to the agreement of the GCC's shareholders and work is ongoing on this in the background.

We are always interested to receive applications from people who understand and can embrace our vision for Kensal Green Cemetery and who can bring a spirit of optimism and positive energy. If you think you could play a role in the future of the cemetery please email a CV and cover letter to: office@inghampinnock.com

Chairman of the Board set to retire

With the major milestone for the cemetery having passed in parliament and the site set on a trajectory for a brighter, more sustainable future, our Chairman, Chistopher Johns, has decided that now is the right time to step back and he will be retiring from the Board at the AGM in December.

Chris' career in the cremation industry stretches back 50 years throughout which time he has worked in both the public and private sectors across the UK. He is a Past President of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, a Diploma holder, Fellowship and Life Member awarded for services to the sector.

In 2011 Chris was recruited to the Board of the General Cemetery Company. He became Vice Chairman in 2016 and took over as Chairman of the Board in 2020. It has been under his stewardship over the last five years that a course of truly transformational change has been set for the Cemetery. Chris's leadership has been central to securing the future of this remarkable place and, by extension supporting a community of many thousands of people across west London who have loved ones buried or cremated at Kensal Green.

Chris's impact at Kensal Green Cemetery will endure long into the future. He has led the board with dedication, integrity and no shortage of good humor through a period when many others could have baulked at the challenge. The Board and the whole team at Kensal Green Cemetery owe Chris a huge debt of gratitude and will be sorry to see him leave for a quieter life in the south west. We wish him well and look forward to updating him on the transformational process in which he has played such a pivotal role.

Canalside development

It has come to our attention some local residents may be under the impression that the proposed changes to the governance of the cemetery and its proposed transfer to charitable ownership are in some way linked to the canalside development sometimes known as 'project flourish'. The Directors of the cemetery would like to clarify to residents and confirm that there are no links between the changes at the cemetery and the canalside development which are both happening entirely independently.

As set out in our previous newsletter the team at the cemetery want to reassure everyone that despite the work on the new charity and the new General Cemetery Act coming into force, they do not expect there to be any disruption to the operation of the cemetery and crematorium for the surrounding community and the friends and families of the deceased. Whilst the legal status of the site may change and it will hopefully be better equipped to care for the buildings and landscape, Kensal Green Cemetery and the West London Crematorium will remain first and foremost a place of burial and cremation for our diverse community and this remains the number one priority.

With regards to the canalside development the Directors of the Cemetery have been consulted by the developers at several points over the last few years and have at times made representations about the detrimental impact the scheme will have on the setting of the cemetery. This concern remains and Directors are keen to explore what mitigation measures the developers can put forward as part of their proposals.

Contact

If you would like to receive future newsletters or opt out of future newsletters, please e-mail the GCC office using the following address: peter.humphries@kensalgreencemetery.com