

Avonhead Park Cemetery renaming proposal - community views and preferences

The Council resolved on 14 February 2019 to consult on a name change from Avonhead Park Cemetery to Avonhead Memorial Cemetery.

They were considering a recommendation from the Waimāero / Fendalton-Waimairi- Harewood Community Board, which had earlier received a request for the name change from the Friends of Avonhead Cemetery.

During early engagement in June 2019 the Quake Families Trust was briefed on the Council's resolution. After being sent the Council report and submission from the Friends of Avonhead Cemetery, the Trust responded with an email on 1 July 2019 saying that all those members who expressed a view supported the name change to Avonhead Memorial Cemetery.

Consultation opened on 2 December 2019 and closed on 22 January 2020 to extend over the Christmas holidays. Have Your Say leaflets and flyers were displayed in libraries and service centres, and placed in folders attached to three signs in and around the cemetery.

Flyers were delivered to residents in the vicinity of the cemetery, and the nearby Kisfirst Kindergarten and Summerset retirement complex. Emails were also sent to 45 stakeholders including community organisations and funeral directors.

Four advertisements about the consultation were also placed in the Western News and Nor'West News.

Submitters were asked to choose which name they supported: Avonhead Park Cemetery or Avonhead Memorial Cemetery. Some suggested a combination of the two or indicated another preference. The list of submissions is grouped by name preference.

Consultation results

Of the 114 responses received:

- 51 supported the name Avonhead Memorial Cemetery.
- 52 supported the existing name Avonhead Park Cemetery.
 - Four of these submitters stated that the interment site for earthquake victims could have a separate name such as the Ballantynes Fire Memorial in Bromley Cemetery.
- 10 submissions supported a combined name – Avonhead Park Memorial Cemetery or Avonhead Memorial Park Cemetery.
- One submitter was happy with either name.

Those who supported changing the name to Avonhead Memorial Cemetery said:

- The proposed name respects victims of the earthquakes and significance of the site.
- Avonhead Memorial Cemetery is a more appropriate name.
- The cemetery is a memorial to both earthquake victims and other families buried there.

Those who wanted the Avonhead Park Cemetery name retained said:

- They were happy with current name / no need to change.
- Avonhead Park Cemetery reflects the leafy, peaceful setting next to Avonhead Park.

- Plots were purchased because of the “park” vision.
- Most people buried or interred in the cemetery were not earthquake victims.
- There is already an official earthquake memorial in the city.

Eight submissions queried the cost of the consultation and proposed name change, including signage.

Nine submissions referred to the need for better maintenance in the cemetery, while four others made positive comments about its upkeep. (One submitter who had provided negative feedback during the consultation later commented that she had noticed a marked improvement during a later visit.) This feedback, which is not related to the name of the cemetery, has been forwarded to the Council’s Parks Operations Unit.