

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on
Thursday 26th September 2013 in
The Centre, Fenkle Street at 6.30pm.**

Present: Cllrs D Farrar (Chairman), S Allcroft, J Humphries, S Mavin, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk.

CEM13/16. Apologies: Cllrs K Moore, B Grisdale.

CEM 13/17. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

CEM 13/18. 2013/14 Budget Update

The clerk circulated the 2013/14 budget for the Committee with expenditure as at 25th September 2013. This showed expenditure of £19,702 and Income of £13,230 and he explained that this was the likely mid-year position Councillors went through the budget line by line and the budget appeared to be on target for the year. In addition to the budget sheet, year-to-date cemetery activity data was circulated. This showed that there had been 17 burials and 6 ashes interred. Out of the 23 burials, 10 had resulted in new plots being purchased. During the year 6 new plots had been purchased by individuals making burial arrangements. The cemetery chapel had only been used on two occasions. Councillors found the activity data useful and requested it be submitted on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

CEM 13/19. Future Tree Planting

Councillor Farrar informed the committee that he has made the application to the Woodland Trust for 400 free trees which would be used in the proposed hedge at the back of Cawledge View. It was thought that the hedge was a mixed hedge and if successful we would hear in early October and receive the trees in November. Councillors also discussed tree planting in parts of the old cemetery in gaps created by trees that had been removed, in particular on the main avenue. It was agreed to involve Tom Pattinson and other tree experts to obtain suggestions. It may be that budget provision could be made this financial year.

RESOLVED: To receive the update.

CEM 13/20. Volunteer Scheme Update

It was reported that a press release had been published in the local paper and so far 6 residents had responded expressing an interest in joining a volunteer scheme. Councillors were pleased with this response and discussed the type of work that they may be able to do having regard to health and safety. In the first instance, the clerk agreed to contact the volunteers and discuss with them their skills and abilities with a view to drawing up a scheme, he also agreed to check with the Council's insurers. It was also suggested that the volunteers may be able to help with the tree planting in the new area.

RESOLVED: That the clerk contact the volunteers and draws up a suitable scheme for consideration at the next meeting.

CEM 13/21. Cemetery Leaflet.

Councillor Farrar circulated a revised draft leaflet that had been prepared giving useful information and background details of the cemetery. This would be further refined and then

could be professionally laid out. Councillor Allcoft emphasised the need for good quality paper to be used.

RESOLVED: To note the progress made

CEM 13/22. New Area

Since the cemetery visit the clerk had been investigating the requirements to get the new area into use. He had checked with NCC regarding the planning status and had been advised that there were 2 applications in relation to the site in the late 1980's but due to the time period since these applications, they were now stored at Woodhorn Archives. He would visit to check details. These records would hopefully indicate if planning permission was needed for the site and in the event that permission was in place, details of any conditions placed on the application. He had also contact a firm about the stages involved in getting the site into use. Planning permission was a key stage and if required would mean the need to carry out a ground water audit to satisfy the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency would be a statutory consultee on any planning application and the Town Council would need to show that the risk to groundwater is acceptable. Councillors discussed this and felt that if in the event that planning permission was in place, they thought it was still prudent to carry out a groundwater audit. An illustrative quote had been received and this indicated the cost of the groundwater audit to be in the region of £3300 whilst completing the design and planning permission stage was some £6850.

RESOLVED: the clerk progress matters as appropriate depending on the planning status of the new area.

CEM 13/23. Chapel of Rest

Following the cemetery visit councillors felt that it was important to ensure the Chapel of Rest was kept in excellent condition. To meet this it was felt that some redecoration was needed and an area of dampness near the entrance door needed to be remedied.

RESOLVED: To proceed with the redecoration and remedying of the damp patch in the Chapel.

CEM 13/24. Use of Weed-killer in the Cemetery

At the last meeting it had been agreed to bring a report to this meeting regarding the use of weed-killers in the cemetery. It was reported that Glyphosate was used around headstones and was applied with a hand sprayer. This killed the grass and weeds but left a brown area. Enquiries with Northumberland County Council and Amble Town Council had revealed that they used glyphosate based products for the same purpose. Councillors discussed this and the merits of using other products, strimming or leaving the grass to grow longer around headstones

RESOLVED: That the clerk, in discussion with the cemetery superintendent identifies an area of the cemetery to undertake strimming around headstones on a trial basis, to enable comparisons to be made.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm