

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on
Thursday 17th July 2014
in the Committee Room, Clayport Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs D Farrar (Chairman), S Allcroft, P Allcroft, J Humphries, S Mavin, K Moore and M Swinbank.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Administration Assistant.

CEM 14/08 Apologies

Cllr A Symmonds.

CEM 14/09 Declarations of Interest

None.

CEM 14/10 Cemetery Activity, 2014/15 budget update

The Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at July 17th 2014. So far in 2014/15 there have been 11 burials and 6 ashes interred. Out of the 11 burials, 5 had resulted in new plots being purchased whilst 2 new plots had been purchased without burial. The Chapel had been used on 2 occasions and 2 burials had an out of parish surcharge. These compare with the 2013/14 outturn figures 42 burials and 6 ashes interred. The expected outturn figures are predicted to be the same as last year or slightly lower.

The Town Clerk circulated the 2014/15 Cemetery Income, Expenditure and Estimates sheet as at July 17th with the expenditure at £17180.85 and income at £10160.85. He commented on certain items of expenditure within the budget: Building repairs will include another tree survey; The Grounds budget is mainly for trade waste and Electricity covers the heating in the chapel. The income figure includes the £200 contribution from Denwick Parish Council.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget figures and update.

CEM 14/11 New Cemetery Area, Ground water audit, possible designs and benches

Ground water audit - The Town Clerk reminded councillors about the ground water audit carried out in April, when the results had shown the whole site suitable for single burials and sites TP2 and TP4 suitable for double burials. Monitoring has been carried out twice since in the four monitoring test pits showing that TP2 and TP4 remain ok for double burials, TP3 remains ok for single burials but as the water level was higher in TP1, at this stage, it is not suitable for any burials but could be used for cremation burials.

Councillor Moore felt that data needed to be collected for a whole year before we could really get a proper picture. The Town Clerk confirmed that data will be collected and sent to Paul Godbold at Bold Environmental at the end of September 2014 to interpret the results.

Possible designs - a site visit took place on July 12th at which the Committee looked at the new area and how this might connect into the

existing cemetery. Rough measurements had been taken and draft plans drawn up. Councillors were taken through the thinking behind these and gave some initial comments. It was felt that it would be useful for councillors to get copies of these for review and comment.

Benches - examples of recycled standard and tree benches had been requested by the Chair and details received from Marmax (Durham based) were distributed. Information and costings for wooden benches has been requested from local companies who source their wood locally including Hulne Mill and a company in Hexham who work for the Forestry Commission.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the groundwater monitoring update and continue monitoring, ii) to report findings at the September committee meeting then send to Bold Environmental for analysis, iii) to email draft layout designs to councillors for their comments at September committee meeting, iv) to advise councillors of locations of Marmax recycled benches and send out information on wooden benches when received.

CEM 14/12 Denwick Parish Council contribution to the cemetery

Denwick currently pay a contribution of £200 per year which enables Denwick residents to be buried in Alnwick cemetery without paying out of parish surcharge. Councillors had questions / comments about the contribution:

Councillor Swinbank asked if the Denwick churchyard was still in use. Councillor Moore asked if business rates go to Denwick. Town Clerk confirmed they don't.

Councillor Farrar felt that Denwick Parish Council needed to understand that the new Greenfield development would be in Denwick and will therefore increase the number of people who may want to use the cemetery.

RESOLVED: Town Clerk to write to Denwick Parish Clerk with suggested revised contribution then arrange a meeting.

CEM 14/13 World War 1 Commemoration

The Town Clerk gave an update on the activities that had been carried out. Poppies have been planted around some of the WWI graves. He also confirmed he had had an enquiry from someone from the Coldstream Guards asking for the location of a grave of a WWI soldier buried in the cemetery as they want to ensure it is maintained. Due to the work the Town Council had carried out he was able to provide this information easily.

The other action identified was for the Friends of the Cemetery to tidy graves and headstones of WWI graves. Councillor Farrar said we need to be careful what we use to clean the headstones and suggested that we make enquiries as the correct cleaning materials to use. Councillor S Allcroft felt that some of the headstones should not be cleaned as they are in more wooded areas.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the update, ii) to make enquiries regarding suitable cleaning materials for headstones.

CEM 14/14 Friends of the Cemetery (FOTC)

The next programmed date for the volunteers is 19th July at 9.30am. Suggestions for work schedule included: litter picking; removal of wreaths / dead flowers; weeding around new planting; cutting back around beech hedging in new area; work around the drive and tidying edges.

No programmed date in August but will be 3rd Saturday in September, October and November.

Councillor Swinbank asked if something could be put in the newspaper? Councillor S Allcroft asked if we could take a picture. The Town Clerk confirmed he already had one of the new planting being done

Councillor Farrar commented that if Alnwick in Bloom won a Northumberland in Bloom award they would invite FOTC to attend the award ceremony.

RESOLVED: To send a press release / planting photograph to Northumberland Gazette.

CEM 14/15 Building Works, pointing, fencing, chapel, replacement bins

Pointing - Town Clerk confirmed the pointing work had been done. He also confirmed that Chris Bowden would do the next section of wall for the same price of £2000.

Councillor Swinbank asked if a survey of the whole wall could be undertaken to get an idea of the expenditure needed over the next few years. Town Clerk confirmed he would arrange for this to be done.

Councillor Moore asked if any work had been done at the Sawmill end. Town Clerk confirmed it hadn't.

Councillor Farrar asked if an approximate cost could be obtained for the extra work that needs doing. Town Clerk confirmed that we know the costs of a section of wall so this could be worked out. He confirmed that the next area of wall that would be done was the front wall section with ivy on it so we need to find out how to remove this without causing too much damage to the wall.

Fencing - Town Clerk confirmed he had received one quote for the work but needed another one or two. Chair and Vice Chair will then make decision.

Chapel - Town Clerk confirmed that the path to the right of the chapel needs work and that the superintendent will use the pile of gravel inside the gate to do this work.

Replacement bins - Town Clerk gave out examples of types of replacement bins available. Councillor Moore asked if something could be used inside the bins like a 'dumpy' bag? Town Clerk said he would enquire.

Councillor Swinbank asked if we could use a wooden structure outside the bins and we could ask the fencing contractors to quote for a compound for each bin with an opening door.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the updates, ii) to make enquiries of the fencing contractors for prices for bin compounds, iii) contact NCC about bags for use in the bins.

CEM 14/16 Any matters for next joint NCC/Town Council meeting

Councillor Farrar updated the committee that NALC had circulated a newsletter in which Hexham Town Council had flagged the issue of cemetery ownership. They had stated that they did not want to hand back the cemetery and that NCC should pay a contribution to non NCC owned cemeteries. He stated that the question is 'does Alnwick Town Council want to keep its cemetery?' Councillor S Allcroft said that financial sense would say no but it is an historic cemetery so we should keep it.

Councillor Farrar also said that although last year there was a deficit of around £14,000 this could be made up through slightly increased cemetery costs. The Town Clerk said Alnwick's cemetery costs were still some of the lowest in the county.

RESOLVED: To write to NCC stating that 'Alnwick Town Council are minded to keep the cemetery but that it would seem fair and equitable to get a contribution from NCC'.

CEM 14/17 Any Other Business

Councillor Moore commented that vegetation had been thrown into the new cemetery area from Cawledge View. The Town Clerk stated that this had happened between Friday and Saturday.

RESOLVED: Town Clerk to write to the residents of Cawledge View explaining that this was the new cemetery area and asking them to refrain from throwing things into the area.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm