

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015  
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

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

**In attendance:** W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk, J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

**CEM 15/01 Apologies**

Cllr K Moore.

**CEM 15/02 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**CEM 15/03 Question from the public**

None.

**CEM 15/04 Cemetery Activity, 2014/15 budget update, plots purchased and still be used**

The Town Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at May 19th 2015. So far in 2015/16 there have been 17 burials. Out of these 8 had resulted in new plots being purchased (7 in the new part and one in the children's area). 1 new plot had also been purchased without burial in the new part. The Chapel had been used on 3 occasions and 2 burials had an out of parish surcharge. There has also been 1 burial of a child.

The outturn figure for 2014/15 was 61 (27% up on 2013/14). This figure was made up of 51 burials (42 in 2013/14) and 10 ashes burials (6 in 2013/14).

PLOTS: There had been 49 plots bought in the new area, 43 in the old area and 7 in the ashes area which have not yet been used. 35 new plots were bought in 2014/15 and if this carries forward into 2015/16 the new area will be needed in approximately 18 months' time.

The Town Clerk circulated the 2015/16 Cemetery Income, Expenditure and Estimates sheet as at May 19th 2015 which showed expenditure at £8,468.49 and income at £11,845. The figures include carry forward figures of £2,000 for Building Repairs, £7,000 for Grounds and £500 for New Area.

**RESOLVED: To receive the budget figures and update.**

**CEM 15/05 New Cemetery Area (Ground water audit, design update & delivery plan)**

**Ground water audit** - The Town Clerk gave an update. He issued the latest monitoring data and reminded councillors of the colour coding:

White - suitable for double burials  
Yellow - suitable for single burials  
Green - unsuitable for any burials

The latest monitoring data from the test pits done on May 21st, following 3mm of rain on May 18th and 5mm on May 19th, showed two areas Yellow and one area white.

Comparative data was also shown for rainfall over the last 12 months and the average rainfall between 1981 and 2010.

The Town Clerk advised that he had checked with BOLD Environmental who had quoted Environmental Agency guidance which advises burying no shallower than a 4 foot depth.

### **Design update and delivery plan**

Hedging - the Town Clerk confirmed that the beech hedge will be moved across to Willowburn during the autumn.

Councillor Swinbank asked if the contractors had replaced any of the hedging they had damaged. The Town Clerk advised that the hedge that had been moved was still alive and that the contractors had tidied up the path.

Paths - the Town Clerk confirmed he had a meeting with NCC at Cawledge View the following day to discuss paths and their continued use.

Green burial area - the Town Clerk advised the committee that all four cherry trees had now been taken down. The beech shrubs taken out to form the gap had been replanted around this area to form screening.

Councillor Farrar felt that a policy for the green burial area was needed.

Councillor S Allcroft advised that it costs £100 to join the Association of Natural Burials.

Councillor Symmonds advised that he had spoken to funeral directors who had confirmed that not everyone gets embalmed nowadays. He felt it was important that the green burial area should be kept clean and suggested that the Town Council produce a manual about Alnwick Cemetery Green Burials. This could include a DIY section and give links to other relevant services such as manufacturers of green coffins. He also felt that there should be no formaldehyde in the green area.

Councillor S Allcroft agreed with Councillor Symmonds about the use of formaldehyde in the green area. She also suggested a reduction in cemetery fees if people used their own coffin.

Councillor Farrar advised that he would send the relevant link for green burials to the committee.

Councillor S Allcroft felt that a standard price should be charged. She also liked the idea of scrapping back the grass to plant bulbs in the area.

Councillor Symmonds felt that marking individual plots might be an issue.

Councillor Humphries advised that some green burial areas have a grid showing the location of burials within it.

**RESOLVED: i) To note the update; ii) To join the Association of Natural Burials; iii) Ban the use of formaldehyde in the proposed green burial area.**

**CEM 15/06 Cemetery Benches**

The Town Clerk explained that two memorial benches that had been requested for the cemetery.

The first is for Eric Hately which the Town Council will purchasing and will be located at the top of the grass path, in the existing area, once the hedge has been turned 90° towards Willowburn.

The second request was for a memorial bench in the children's' area from Aidan Jackowiak Smith's parents. It was felt that recycled benches should be discussed with the family and that a choice of bright colours be offered.

**RESOLVED: i) To circulate a document to the committee giving details of suggest recycled benches with the link to the Marmax website; ii) To forward the document to Aidan's parents for discussion.**

**CEM 15/07 Update on Tree Works**

The Town Clerk confirmed that some tree works had been carried out. He also reminded the committee that a decision was needed with regard to the pollarding work.

**CEM 15/08 Building Works (path, fencing, soakaway, replacement bins)**

Drive - the Town Clerk advised that the work had been done and that the gravel had been moved to the path in children's area.

Bin stores - the Town Clerk confirmed that the agreed bin stores were now complete and had received positive comments. A couple of locations in the cemetery – the back of the Chapel and two more up the driveway, could benefit from additional bin stores. They would cost £160 each.

Soakaway – still to be done.

Councillor Farrar asked if budget could be set aside in 2016/17 to do more drive works.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

**CEM 15/09 Waste Contract**

The Town Clerk advised councillors that he had been in touch with MaxRecycle to review the current price. They have reduced their fee to match the quote from NCC, reducing the cost by £200 per year (£2 per lift x 50 lifts plus the duty of Care fee of £100).

Councillor Farrar asked when the green waste bins were being put back in the cemetery. The Town Clerk confirmed this was planned for the following week.

**CEM 15/10 Friends of the Cemetery (FOTC)**

Councillor Farrar requested that dates were circulated to remind people of the dates for 2015.

**CEM 15/11 Update on use of Glyphosate trial and rabbits in the cemetery**

Glyphosate - The Town Clerk informed councillors that the next Glyphosate free area would be areas 38, 39 and 40 in the current burial area. He explained that the area would be strimmed but this would need to be done carefully as there a lot of headstones in those areas. The first strim would be carried out the following week and be reported at the next committee meeting in July.

Rabbits – the Town Clerk reminded councillors of the letter they had received at the last meeting with regard to killing rabbits in the cemetery. Shooting rabbits in the early morning has stopped and if rabbits become an issue for residents than the subject will need to be addressed again. Councillors discussed alternative methods and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would find out how other councils deal with this issue and report back.

**CEM 15/12 Any Other Business**

The Town Clerk advised that he had been approached by Margery Brown about giving a talk on the History of Alnwick Cemetery. Councillor Swinbank suggested it could be on one of the Friends of the Cemetery Saturdays.

Meeting closed at 8.39pm