

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on Thursday 16th July 2015
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs D Farrar (Chairman), S Mavin, K Moore, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

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

CEM 15/13 Apologies

Cllr P Allcroft and S Allcroft.

CEM 15/14 Declarations of Interest

None.

CEM 15/15 Cemetery Activity, 2015/16 budget update

ACTIVITY

BURIALS: Town Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at July 15th. So far in 2015/16 there have been 24 burials and 1 ashes interments. Out of these, 14 had resulted in new plots being purchased (12 in the new part, one in the ashes area and one in the children's area). 3 new plots have been purchased without burial all in the new part. The Chapel had been used on 3 occasions and 3 burials had an out of parish surcharge. There has also been 1 burial for a child.

So far the figures for 2015/16 are 41% of the total outturn in 2014/15.

PLOTS: There are currently (as at July 15th) 47 plots remaining to purchase (37 in the new area and 10 in the old area plus plots in the ashes area).

Councillor Moore had been to the current burial area and though it looked almost full. The Town Clerk advised that the next area to be opened would probably be required in about a year and will be when the hedge is swung around towards Willowburn. This should provide an extra 100 / 120 plots.

BUDGET

The Town Clerk circulated the 2015/16 Cemetery Income, Expenditure and Estimates sheet as at July 15th 2015 which showed expenditure at £22,827.41 and income at £18,880. The Wages figure is ahead of budget due to usual summer overtime, Stationery / Phone figure is ahead of budget as some new stationery has been purchased but will give a supply for around 10 years. Sundries figure is over budget as it includes the membership fee of £100 for the Association of Natural Burials.

RESOLVED: To receive the budget figures and update.

CEM 15/16 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 July 15th (following a dry spell) showed all monitoring points being White. The previous reading on July 3rd showed three monitoring points as White and one (TP01) as Yellow. He reminded councillors that TP04 will be used first and that of the 16 readings taken this has been White on 15 occasions and Yellow on one.

Design update and delivery plan

Hedging - the Town Clerk confirmed that the beech hedge will be moved across to Willowburn in October. He also advised that some of the trees in front of the hedge don't line up with headstones and the committee may need to consider what is done with these. Councillor Farrar asked if a couple of councillors would look at the trees in question and feedback at the September meeting.

The Town Clerk also reported that some of the hedging had been covered in aphids and that these had been sprayed with organic spray. He also reported that one of the trees seemed to be dying. This would be reported to the nursery where it was purchased for advice.

Councillor Farrar asked Councillor Moore to request another 100 hedging plants from The Woodland Trust.

The Town Clerk reported that the fence between Cawledge View and the new area had been taken down by NCC. This seemed to have increased the amount of dog fouling in the new area and advised that a gate, similar to that at the other end of Cawledge View, might be needed.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a gate was needed.

Councillor Swinbank asked whose responsibility a gate or fence would be. The Town Clerk advised that if they were inside the boundary of the new cemetery area it would be the Town Council's responsibility. If the fence and gate replaced the previous fence in Cawledge View then it would be NCC's.

Councillor Moore asked if NCC had indicated if they would be replacing the fence. The Town Clerk reported that NCC had not given any indication.

Councillor S Mavin felt that a sign saying 'No dogs' might stop the problem.

Councillor Farrar asked that, in order to decide if a gate and fence were needed or just a fence, he asked if councillors would take a look and advise of their suggestions for a gate.

Paths - the Town Clerk confirmed that the next path across the new area towards Cawledge View would be done in September.

Water supply - Councillor Swinbank asked about water supply for the new area. The Town Clerk advised that the nearest tap was in the existing burial area but that there was a meter opposite Tustain Motors so there would not be a problem putting in taps in the new area.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

CEM 15/17 Green burial area

The Town Clerk advised the committee that all four cherry trees had now been taken down and cleared.

Councillor Farrar advised that the Town Council had joined the Association of Natural Burials. He also advised that the Guide to Green Burials (policy for the green burial area) was not yet done.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

CEM 15/18 Cemetery Benches

The Town Clerk advised that the councillors had been sent the link to the website with the proposed benches for the children's area and that most had preferred the multi coloured benches. He advised that these details had been sent to Aidan Jackowiak Smith's parents for them to choose the colour they liked best. The bench would be provided at cost to the family and that the Town Council would fit the bench free of charge.

Councillor Swinbank asked if they produced benches in other colours. The Town Clerk advised that they also produce them in black and brown which would be used in other areas of the cemetery.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the multi coloured benches were a good choice as the rainbow was a very religious symbol all over the world.

The Town Clerk also asked councillors to take a look at the items which were appearing in the children's area such as solar lights and toys.

Councillor Moore asked if Cemetery Guidelines were given out to people. The Town Clerk advised that the ones given out covered headstones and edging.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

CEM 15/19 Update on Tree Works

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had asked NCC tree officer to take a look at the trees that had been identified as needing pollarding.

Councillor Symmonds felt that this can look a mess if not done properly.

Councillor Farrar asked if vehicles currently brushed against the trees. The Town Clerk advised that the buses did sometimes.

Councillor Farrar advised that a decision would be needed at the September meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

CEM 15/20 Building Works (path, fencing, soakaway, replacement bins)

Soakaway – will be done shortly.

Bins - the Town Clerk confirmed that the new bin covers were done and are just awaiting the wire baskets.

Councillor Moore asked if a wheelie bin was still being used in the new area. The Town Clerk advised that it was and that one of the new bins has also been put there.

Councillor Farrar felt that the wheelie bin could be replaced with a bin and cover and that a carton holder could be added as on some of the other bin covers. The Town Clerk advised that he would look to see if the wheelie bin could be removed or replaced.

Pointing - prices being submitted by contactors without materials which the Town Council will provide.

RESOLVED: To accept the update and give delegated powers to the Town Clerk and Chair of Committee to take decision on pointing contractor.

CEM 15/21 Friends of the Cemetery (FOTC)

Councillor Farrar requested that the next date for the FOTC was Saturday 18th July. He also advised that he had considered asking the new Cemetery Superintendent to look after the FOTC. Councillor Symmonds felt that, as the FOTC met on a Saturday, they would need to find hours from their normal working week to do this. He felt this needed to be looked at more closely. He also wondered if one of the volunteers could supervise the FOTC.

Councillor Farrar felt that the time would be no more than the equivalent of one hour a week.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

CEM 15/22 Update on use of Glyphosate trial and rabbits in the cemetery

Glyphosate - The Town Clerk advised that the current burial area had been strimmed and that this had taken five hours. During strimming a plastic edging had been damaged and a complaint had been received. The Town Council had advised the owner that they would pay for the replacement edging.

Councillor Moore asked if Town Council staff could remove weeds on graves. The Town Clerk advised that they had to be careful as the plot did not belong to the Town Council but we do what we can.

The Town Clerk also advised that he had emailed Amble, Morpeth and NCC to ask about the use of Glyphosate. He had received a reply from Amble stating that they do use Glyphosate.

Councillor Symmonds said he would keep an open mind until more information was available on the use of Glyphosate.

Councillor Swinbank advised that he thought children's play areas should be a priority area for non use of Glyphosate.

Councillor Farrar advised that some of the thinking about the non-use of Glyphosate was from an aesthetic point of view.

Councillor Swinbank thought councillors could have a look round areas where Glyphosate had and had not been used then give their views at the September meeting.

Rabbits – the Town Clerk informed councillors that they had received one complaint about rabbits in the cemetery. He also advised that as part of the email to Amble, Morpeth and NCC he had asked about rabbits. Amble had said that they have a rabbit problem but do not know what do about it.

RESOLVED: To accept the update.

CEM 15/23 Any Other Business

Councillor Moore had been asked by a resident why the Council did not use apprentices from Kirkley Hall to carry out work in the cemetery. The Town Clerk advised that he would contact Kirkley Hall and report back at the September meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.21pm