

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2016
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs J Humphries (Chair), P Allcroft, S Allcroft, S Bell, S Mavin, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

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

CEM 16/01 Apologies

Councillor K Moore.

CEM 16/02 Declarations of Interest

None.

CEM 16/03 Cemetery Activity and 2016/17 budget update

ACTIVITY

The Town Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at May 19th. He reported that so far in 2016/17 there had been 8 burials (6 burials and 2 ashes burials) of which 3 had resulted in new plots being purchased (all in the new part. 1 plot has been purchased without burial (in the new part). The Chapel had been used on 1 occasion and 1 burial had an out of parish surcharge.

Remaining plots – there are 24 plots which can be purchased in the new burial area and 2 in the old area plus ashes plots. There is also a new row in the old section which will give an additional 20 plots.

BUDGET

The Town Clerk circulated the 2016/17 Cemetery Income and Expenditure sheet as at May 19th 2016 which showed expenditure at £10,285.47 and income at £7,245. He also explained that the following budget lines had carry over figures from 2015/16:

Building Repairs - £2,000

Grounds - £7,000

New Area - £5,500

Councillor Humphries asked if there was much staff training still to be undertaken. The Town Clerk advised that there was some chainsaw, digger and spraying training which needed to be carried out.

Councillor Swinbank asked what the carry forward figure of £7,000 was for. The Town Clerk advised that this the largest part of this figure was likely to be for tree works as another tree survey would be done during the year.

Councillor Symmonds asked when the tractor was due to be replaced. The Town Clerk advised this had a net cost of some £10 – 11k and would be done later in the year.

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

CEM 16/04 New Cemetery Area (Consecration, Ground water audit, design update)

Consecration – The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the last enquires from the Diocese Registrar had been answered on May 4th and that no further information had been requested.

She advised that she was expecting everything to be in order and for that confirmation that the consecration could go ahead would be received shortly.

She informed councillors that she had been to see Reverend Scott at St Michael's Church and that he was writing to the Bishop's Office to get suggest dates for the consecrations

She also explained that the outstanding items before consecration were that the new area needed fencing and marked from the current burial areas with boulder stones marked with the letter 'C'.

Councillor Swinbank asked if it was certain that the new area needed to be consecrated. The Town Clerk confirmed that they would write to the other churches / faiths to ascertain their views on the matter.

RESOLVED: To check with other ministers / faiths, by emailing Churches Together, to ask about their views with regard to consecration.

New Cemetery Area - The Town Clerk reported that dogs were still a nuisance in the new cemetery field. He advised that the main gate had a "No dogs" sign but as there were no gates on the new cemetery field there was no sign. He suggested that two new gates might help the situation as would enclosing the area. Councillor Symmonds suggested starting with what was enforceable and suggested the signs read "Dogs must be kept on leads. No fouling".

Councillor Swinbank endorsed Councillor Symmonds's comments and felt that the gates at Cawledge View and at Willowburn / Sainsbury would need to unlatching / self closing gates.

Councillor S Allcroft suggested that a kissing gate might be advisable.

RESOLVED: To install unlatching / self closing gates (with signs) at Cawledge View and Willowburn / Sainsbury's entrance and change the signs on the main gates.

Ground water audit - The Town Clerk advised that the last test done showed one area suitable for double burials, two for single burials and one area unsuitable for burials. He advised that he had sent all the data to Bold Environmental for their comments.

Design update

Hedging – the Town Clerk advised that 2/3rds of the hedging had been turned around and some additional hedging had been bought to infill gaps. He also advised that he was waiting for a date for the path to be put in towards Cawledge View.

Councillor Humphries felt that a new tap may be needed when the new cemetery field was being used. Councillor Symmonds felt that a push button one would be advisable.

CEM 16/05 Natural burial area update including consideration of fees

The Assistant to the Town Clerk gave out a sheet listing the possible cemetery fees for the Natural Burial area for review.

Councillor Swinbank felt that there should be parity with the current cost of a double burial in the existing burial area. He suggested that the double burial fee of £965 be used plus the additional cost for the standard stone which would be issued with all Natural burials.

RESOLVED: To delegate authority to the Chair in consultation with the Town Clerk to finalise the cost of a Natural Burials, based on the current Double burial fees plus the cost of the stone, then recommend to the Full Council meeting in June.

CEM 16/06 Building and tree works (trees, soakaway, pointing and other proposals)

The Town Clerk gave an update on the following:

Tree works – he confirmed that the next tree survey was due in the autumn.

Soakaway – he advised that the chapel drains and soakaways had been examined. There had been some chocking so they had been jetted and cleared. He added that the road gulley also needs clearing.

Chapel – he advised that some the gutters needed clearing and some pointing work needed doing.

Councillor Swinbank asked of the Chapel was listed, The Town Clerk advised it was not and also that there were no TPOs (Tree Protection Orders) in the Cemetery.

Councillor Swinbank asked if it was recommended that the soakaway be re-dug and cleared every few years. The Town Clerk advised that the drains be done annually.

Councillor Swinbank felt that chicken wire could be put into the gutters to stop leaves accumulating and blocking the downpipes.

CEM 16/07 Friends of the Cemetery work programme

Councillor Humphries advised that the dates for the Friends of the Cemetery (FOTC) sessions were usually be the 3rd Saturdays in each month and July but in order to enable two sessions to be undertaken before the Northumbria in

Bloom judges revisited on July 14th he suggested the 2nd Saturdays in June and July.

The Town Clerk advised that a press release would be issued to recruit more Friends of the Cemetery. He confirmed the dates over the summer would be June 11th, July 9th, August 13th and September 10th.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the Cemetery Superintendent would be consulted about the Friends of the Cemetery work programme. The Town Clerk advised that the new Cemetery Superintendent had the supervision of the Friends of the Cemetery in his job description.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the four dates for the FOTC sessions; ii) To write a press release to recruit more FOTC.

CEM 16/08 Children Area and Grave Decorations

Councillor Humphries noted that a policy was needed and suggested a meeting at the Cemetery to look at the areas concerned.

Councillor S Allcroft felt that the Town Council should be open about it in the first instance and could start by defining an area around the grave.

Councillor Humphries felt that it needed deciding and suggested meeting on June 1st at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED: To meet at the Cemetery on June 1st at 6.30pm to look at the grave decorations in the Children's area and other areas within the cemetery.

CEM 16/09 Wildlife Policy updates

Moles – The Town Clerk updated councillors on the issue of moles in the cemetery and the use of mole traps. He advised that mole traps were in use in the areas really badly affected.

Rabbits – The Town Clerk reported that rabbits were becoming a major issue and that something needed to be done to control them. He advised that a Risk Assessment would need to be undertaken before any control was undertaken. Councillor Swinbank suggested that the Town Council's insurance also be checked.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to discuss suitable controls for rabbits with the Cemetery Superintendent and ensure suitable Risk Assessments are undertaken.

CEM 16/10 Any Other Business

Hedgehogs – Councillor Symmonds reminded councillors that he had suggested hedgehog boxes in the cemetery.

Meeting closed at 8.16pm