

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on Thursday 21st July 2016
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs J Humphries (Chair), P Allcroft, S Allcroft, S Bell, 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 16/11 Apologies

None.

CEM 16/12 Declarations of Interest

None.

CEM 16/13 Minutes of Last Meeting – to raise any matters not covered by the agenda

None.

CEM 16/14 Cemetery Activity and 2016/17 budget update

ACTIVITY

The Town Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at July 20th. He reported that so far in 2016/17 there had been 15 burials (12 burials and 3 ashes burials) of which 8 had resulted in new plots being purchased (6 in the new part and 1 in the natural burial area. There was also 1 burial in the children's area). 2 plots have been purchased without burial (1 in the new part and 1 in the natural burial area). The Chapel had been used on 3 occasions and 3 burials had an out of parish surcharge.

Remaining plots – there are 21 plots which can be purchased in the new area and 2 in the old area plus ashes plots. There is also a new row in the old area which will give an additional 20 plots.

BUDGET

The Town Clerk circulated the 2016/17 Cemetery Income and Expenditure sheet as at July 21st 2016 which showed expenditure at £16,050.02 and income at £12,445. At the current rate this would be around £48k income for the year. He also explained that the following budget line:

Wages, PAYE – needs to have pension contribution added

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

CEM 16/15 New Cemetery Area (Consecration, marker stones and design update)

Consecration – The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the date had been agreed with the Bishop of Newcastle as Monday October 10th at 2pm.

She had been in touch with Reverend Canon Scott at St Michael's Church to

ask for a list of invitees.

Marker stones - The Assistant to the Town Clerk reminded councillors that the boundary of the area to be consecrated needs marking with boundary stones marked with the letter 'C'. She advised that she had contacted the local stonemason and received a quote of £48 each.

Unconsecrated area - The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that it was usual that an area of the cemetery remained unconsecrated. She advised that having looked at the cemetery records for the last 18 months the two burials in unconsecrated plots both services had been conducted by a Catholic priest. She advised that the 20 new plots that would be added in the old part were all in an un-consecrated area. She felt that it would be advisable to leave plots in the new area as unconsecrated. The plan of the new area was circulated and it was felt that area E4 (to the left of the current burial area) should have an area two plots wide left as an unconsecrated area.

Design update

Hedging – The Town Clerk advised that on a recent visit to the new area it had been found that people had been removing support canes to play games in the field. It had been found that the new hedging had been sprayed with weed-killer and about 25% of the new plants had died as a result.

Councillor Moore suggested that a letter be dropped into the houses adjacent to the new area advising that as the field is now part of the cemetery, and about to be consecrated, children are requested not to play on it and that dog walkers should keep dogs on a lead.

Councillor Humphries thought that the cost and options for fencing across the whole area might be the only solution.

Councillor Moore also felt it was important to notify the police about the incidents of vandalism and ask them to patrol the area.

Councillor S Allcroft suggested running a story in the Gazette about the new area and the consecration.

Councillor Symmonds felt that there should not be any gaps in the new area.

Councillor Swinbank agreed that publicity might help.

Arch - The Assistant to the Town Clerk circulated two drawings by Stephen Lunn, Blacksmith. Councillors reviewed these and agreed they preferred the ivy design. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that she would get a sample of the material to be used and the possible colourations available.

RESOLVED: i) To write to people adjacent to the new area advising of the consecration, ii) To find costs and options for fencing across the length of Cawledge View, iii) To notify the police about the vandalism, iv) To write a press release for the Gazette about the new area/consecration, v) To get colours and finishes for the arch for September.

CEM 16/16 Natural burial area progress

The Assistant to the Town Clerk circulated an updated Natural Burial Guide for councillor to review and feedback before the September meeting. This had been updated with information on marker stones, plot sizes and planting.

She added that she was still awaiting the cost of the memorial stones but that it was felt that these would be made of slate as would the memorial plaques.

She reminded councillors that the first natural burial had taken place on July 8th. A revised plan of the natural burial area was circulated showing more spaced out plots.

The Town Clerk advised that Chris Bowden was giving a quote to put in a low fence close to the wall in the natural burial area for memorial plaques.

CEM 16/17 Children Area and Grave Decorations

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that she had pulled together a draft Guidelines to Alnwick Cemetery document based on the draft grave decorations policy and the headstones, kerbs and planting documents. This document was intended to be used as guidelines for the cemetery as a whole, and have specific guidelines for the natural burial area and the children's area.

She asked councillors to review the document which would be discussed at the September meeting.

RESOLVED: To review the draft Guidelines to Alnwick Cemetery and give feedback at the September meeting.

CEM 16/18 Building and tree works

The Town Clerk advised that Chris Bowden would be undertaking repair work and pointing on the Chapel and the store and would also clear out the gutters.

CEM 16/19 Any Other Business

Councillor Moore advised that the application to the Woodland Trust for more hedging was due in September. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that to support the Cemetery's Wildlife Policy the Wildlife mix should be requested. Councillor Moore advised that he would submit the application.

Meeting closed at 8.31pm