

**Minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on Thursday 20th November 2014  
in the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

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

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

**CEM 14/28 Apologies**

None.

**CEM 14/29 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**CEM 14/30 Cemetery Activity, 2014/15 budget update**

The Clerk circulated the Cemetery year to date activity data as at November 19th 2014. So far in 2014/15 there have been 24 burials and 8 ashes interred. Out of the 24 burials, 12 had resulted in new plots being purchased whilst 4 new plots had been purchased without burial (3 in the old part of the cemetery and 1 on the new). The Chapel had been used on 4 occasions and 3 burials had an out of parish surcharge. These compare with the 2013/14 outturn figures of 42 burials and 6 ashes interred. The expected outturn figures are predicted to be roughly the same as last year although they are slightly down at present.

The Town Clerk circulated the 2014/15 Cemetery Income, Expenditure and Estimates sheet as at November 18th with the expenditure at £33,246.78 and income at £17,460. He commented on certain items of expenditure within the budget: Machine Repairs - the figure is higher than budgeted some additional repairs on cutter and tractor. He suggested that the proposed budget was increased slightly to £1,400 for 2015/16; Grounds - the figure is currently well below the budgeted figure but tree works resulting from the tree survey will take this up to budget; New Area - currently well down on budget but some of this will be spent on new surfaces and trees. Any budget not spent this year in this area will be carried forward into 2015/16.

Year-end expenditure and income figures are expected to be as budgeted.

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

**CEM 14/31 New Cemetery Area (Ground water audit, design update & delivery plan)**

**Ground water audit** - The Town Clerk gave an update. The monitoring data from test pits had been sent to Bold Environmental for analysis. Paul Godbold (Bold) had confirmed that the majority of the site can be used for double burials. He suggested that monitoring was continued but that there was no need for additional monitoring points at this stage.

He also confirmed that he had not yet had a conversation about depth of burials with Bold.

**Design update and delivery plan** - The Administration Assistant gave an update:

Trees - following the selection of trees by members of the Cemetery Committee and council staff 25 would be needed to create the new avenue, as screening in front of the Cawledge View houses and to add a few trees to the path between the existing burial area and the new area and replace a tree that is leaning. The costs of these trees would be around £720. She felt that it would be cost effective to order the trees as soon as possible but wait for delivery until early Spring.

Arches - images of different types of arches were issued showing ready to buy arches ranging in price. Councillors generally felt that these looked too much like garden arches and would not be sturdy enough for the new area. Councillor Swinbank thought that galvanised steel arches would be preferable. Councillor Symmonds felt that they needed to be substantial even if they would cost more money. The Admin Assistant confirmed that she had been in touch with a couple of local blacksmiths and one was visiting the cemetery the next day and would provide a cost. She also confirmed she would get more prices from other blacksmiths.

Paths - the Admin Assistant confirmed she had been in touch with NCC who had given the name of a local contractor who does work for them. She had spoken to them (Sanders of Pegswood) who confirmed they offer an eco-friendly product Green Pave that was made from recycled tarmac. A meeting has been arranged with them at the cemetery for them to cost the required work and give a quote.

Grave spacing - The Town Clerk advised the committee that the current grave plot size is 8' by 4'. He also advised that in the old cemetery area graves were around 3 metres apart whilst in the current burial area they are 2.6 metres apart. He had consulted with the Cemetery Superintendent who felt that the spacing should be increased to 2.75m in the new area. Councillor Farrar asked if we knew how much this increase in spacing would reduce the number of graves in the new area by. The Admin Assistant commented that it could be the region of 85 across the whole site. The Town Clerk confirmed more work would be done on this and presented at the January 2015 committee meeting.

**RESOLVED: i) To get more costings for a galvanised steel arch; ii) to get costings for eco-friendly paths; iii) to add grave spacing and tree density to January 2015 agenda; iv) to advise all concerned about the need to move the memorial bench in front of beech hedge where pathway needs to be made; v) to cut pathway in beech hedge; vi) calculations done using new grave spacing.**

#### **CEM 14/32 Update on Denwick Parish Council contribution**

The Town Clerk reported that no reply had been received from Denwick Parish Council. He confirmed he will chase them again for a reply.

**RESOLVED: To chase Denwick Parish Council for a reply.**

### **CEM 14/33 Friends of the Cemetery (FOTC)**

The Town Clerk reported that the Friends of the Cemetery had won an Outstanding Award in Northumbria in Bloom Your Neighbourhood Awards. He confirmed that there were now 4-5 regular helpers out of the original 7-8. He advised that another press release run in February would hopefully attract more people. The last article had been read by the Co-op Funeralcare Service who had offered equipment such as litter pickers to the FOTC. He confirmed that the next FOTC session would be in February 2015.

**RESOLVED: To accept the update.**

### **CEM 14/34 Building Works (pointing, path, fencing, soakaway, replacement bins, tree survey)**

Pointing - The Town Clerk advised that £4,000 had been spent to date on pointing and that another £500 was still to be spent (weather permitting).

Fencing - The Town Clerk confirmed that the work would be carried out the following week by Tait Fencing.

Path - The Town Clerk reported that the path by the Chapel and the Soakaway were still to be done.

Replacement bins - The contractor doing the fencing work will be asked to give a price for bin covers.

Tree survey - The Town Clerk confirmed that one quote had been received for the tree survey with two more to get. He pointed out to the committee that some have indemnity insurance and some don't, which means that in the event of a claim it may come back to the Town Council.

Councillor S Allcroft said she wasn't sure how the likelihood could be foreseen or negligence proved. Councillor Swinbank asked if the Town Council's public liability insurance would cover any damage. The Town Clerk confirmed that it would.

**RESOLVED: To accept the updates.**

### **CEM 14/35 Glyphosate policy**

Councillor Farrar reported that in the current trial (Phase 1) Glyphosate free area on the right hand side of the old cemetery additional strimming had been undertaken. He advised that he would like to suggest a Phase 2 further Glyphosate free trial area in the area being used currently for burials. The Town Clerk confirmed that Phase 1 had contained around 60 graves and had taken a couple of hours to strim. If a new trial area was set up in the current burial area this would take less time to strim and would have more impact.

Councillor S Allcroft felt the current burial area was a sensible Phase 2 trial area as this was a contained area.

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had visited Morpeth and Amble cemeteries and advised that Morpeth have set lines of concrete for headstones.

**RESOLVED: To set up a Phase 2 trial Glyphosate free area to current burial area.**

**CEM 14/36 Commonwealth War Graves - proposal to erect a plaque**

The Town Clerk issued a picture of the 'green plaque' and that it was 19" by 7" and free of charge to the Town Council. He also explained that the suggestion was that it would be put up on one of the gateposts.

**RESOLVED: To order the Commonwealth War Graves plaque and get it put up.**

**CEM 14/37 Cemetery Fees for 2015/16**

The Town Clerk issued an update sheet showing current prices across cemeteries in Northumberland. He advised that Amble will be increasing their cemetery fees for 2015/16 by around 20% and that the NCC already have high costs. Fees in Hexham are already higher than those in Alnwick. He suggested an overall increase of just under 10% on many of the cemetery fees in 2015/16 which would still put them well below the charges made by NCC in their cemeteries.

**RESOLVED: To recommend the revised fees to the Full Council meeting in December.**

**CEM 14/38 Draft Budget for 2015/16**

The Town Clerk explained the suggested budget figures to the committee:

Staff salaries - there was an increase in staff salaries. This was the likely 2% agreed increase plus £1,000 for a new member of staff starting work before Rob retires in August. Councillor Symmonds asked if the new member of staff would live in the Cemetery Lodge house. The Town Clerk advised that a full discussion needed to take place about staffing at the next meeting.

Building repairs - increased budget to cover costs of tarmac work needed.

Grounds - increased slightly to cover costs of any tree work needed.

New area - budget will include carry over from up to £8,000 not spent in 2014/15.

**RESOLVED: To take forward the recommended 2015/16 Committee budget which showed gross expenditure at £58,555 and income at £32,000 to the Finance & Policy meeting in December.**

**CEM 14/39 Feedback from NCC meeting on cemeteries**

Councillor Farrar advised the committee that there had been a working group of all the Towns and Parishes who manage their own cemeteries which the Town Clerk had attended on behalf of the Town Council.

The Town Clerk updated the committee on the meeting. All councils who manage their own cemetery's felt hard done by NCC. NCC had issued a document showing the overall cemetery income, expenditure and profit / loss and explained that each Town / Parish would get a share of the net profit based on the number of residents. Amble Town Council had produced a document, previously issued by NCC, which showed a big discrepancies in the amounts shown. He advised that comments need to be passed back to

NCC before the next meeting in December. It was envisaged that the outcome of these meetings would be a small payment to the Town Council.

The Town Clerk also asked for any items for the next joint NCC/ ATC meeting. There were none.

**CEM 14/40 Request for headstone - individual case**

The Town Clerk advised that he had received a request to erect a headstone on a grave of a resident who died in 1907. This was outside the 100 year period of burials rights whereby someone can erect a headstone. The current fee is £105 + headstone and base. As this was outside the burial right period, in effect, a new request for burial and the full charge could be the full £430. Councillors felt this was too high and Councillor Humphries suggested £150.

**RESOLVED: To advise the relatives of the charge of £150 to erect a headstone.**

**CEM 14/41 Any Other Business**

Councillor Farrar asked if Councillor Moore could acquire more hedge trees from the Woodland Trust for the proposed Woodland burial area. Councillor Moore to order more hedge trees.

Meeting closed at 8.56pm