

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KINGS HOUSE, THETFORD
ON THURSDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2016, STARTING AT 11.30 A.M.

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs S J Armes (Chairman) C R P Burnett
Mrs B J Canham (Vice Chairman) C Harvey

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Lewis Acting Deputy Town Clerk
Chris Crimmen Committee Secretary
Roger Stebbings Works Foreman

Minutes

236/16 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.

237/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J Hollis and J C Moorman.

238/16 MINUTES
Resolved the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 7th July 2016, received by the Council on 19th July 2016 to be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.

239/16 HEALTH & SAFETY
The Acting Deputy Town Clerk reported on the Cemetery Health & Safety audit and its findings. The next step is to produce a full risk assessment for the site, and then future audits will use this as the base document. The Clerk is currently reviewing the staff structure and responsibilities. It is hoped that maintenance staff will be given specific area responsibilities which will include core health and safety, maintenance and liaison roles. She asked for two volunteers from this committee to accompany the ALP Officer and the Cemetery Superintendent to the cemetery to help create the risk assessment. Councillor Mrs S Armes and C Harvey volunteered and were accepted by the Committee.

240/16 CEMETERY CHAPEL
The Acting Deputy Town Clerk reported that Andrew Gayton, Historic Buildings Officer had been approached to give his professional opinion on the work required to solve the damp problems of the chapel. His reply had been circulated to the committee on 31/08/2016. A local building specialist was then asked to provide an indicative cost of the work identified as required, particularly relating to the re-pointing of the flint work with lime mortar. His estimate was £95 per square metre. The Works Foreman has estimated that the area to be covered is 204 square metres. This gives an indicative cost of £19,000 + but does not include the internal plastering, guttering work and the drainage.
After a discussion a way forward was agreed:

- Appoint a surveyor to carry out a full survey and assessment of work required.
- Appoint professional project managers to provide a work specification based on survey.

- If the work required is valued above £10,000 implement a full tender process (if above £25,000 also post on contract finders website).
- Use appointed project managers to carry out the tender process and advise on appointment.
- Appoint contractor and phase work as recommended.
- Complete the exterior work first and then concentrate on the interior.

Councillor C Harvey proposed and Councillor C Burnett seconded that the Council agree to obtain the professional advice required to carry out essential work to the Cemetery Chapel, to provide an indicative cost and to request funding from the Building Repair Reserves from the Finance Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: The Council agree to obtain the professional advice required to carry out essential work to the Cemetery Chapel, to provide an indicative cost and to request funding from the Building Repair Reserves from the Finance Committee.

241/16

CEMETERY COTTAGE

The Chairman reported the initial work required to solve the damp issue in the Cemetery Cottage consists of re-pointing the walls of the cottage and replacing the cement mortar with hydraulic lime mortar. The Council have received three quotes for this as detailed below:

Company A £5,775

Company B £6,500

Company C £25,931

The Chairman stated that this was discussed at the cemetery sub group meeting on the 10th August 2016 the quote from Company A was accepted due to it being the lowest and was received from a contractor known to the Council, as he has done work of a similar nature for the Council in the past. The work has always been of a very good standard. The Cemetery Extension/repairs reserve of £10,000 will be used to finance this and the work is to be carried out as soon as possible.

In the spring the cottage will be inspected to see what additional work needs to be carried out to deal with the damp issues.

RESOLVED: To agree to appoint Company A, GMF, to carry out the first stage repairs to the Cemetery Cottage at a cost of £5,775. This will be financed from the Cemetery Extension/Repairs reserve.

242/16

REVIEW OF FEES & BUDGET SETTING

The Acting Deputy Town Clerk reported that to enable more accurate budget setting and with the Chairs approval:

- She had transferred to the cemetery budget an estimated cost of staff time, this includes 2 days maintenance per week and 1 day administration.. This has resulted in a transfer to cemetery budget of £14,214 (£8,974 from maintenance and £5,240 from administration) for 2016-17.
- Reviewed the fees to be carried out with the intention of the cemetery breaking even. The level of current burials to be used for budgeting purposes.
- Include a transfer of £5,000 per annum to reserves to cover significant building repairs of cemetery property.
- Fees would need to rise by 40% across the board to achieve break even, with the newly incorporated salary costs. This could perhaps be achieved by a rise of 15% for the next 3 years.
- Alternatively the Council could apply modest increases to interment and headstone costs but significantly increase the Exclusive Rights Burial

cost. Currently the ERB costs for burial is £205 and for cremated remains £150. This fee covers the maintenance of the grave area for 100 years plus and the yearly costs works out at £2.05 and £1.50 per plot. She had recommended raising the ERB for burials to £500 and Cremated remains £300.

- With these points in mind the Acting Deputy Town Clerk had produced three draft budgets for the committees consideration. One with 15 % per annum for three years, one with 40% in year one and inflationary thereafter and finally with the large increase in ERB and modest increases elsewhere.

After a discussion Councillor C Burnett proposed and Councillor Mrs B Canham seconded that the Council increase Option 3, the Exclusive Rights Burial costs as indicated.

The full new fee structure will be formulated on this basis and submitted to the committee for discussion and approval at the next committee meeting.

243/16

NON RESIDENTIAL BURIALS

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that due to the restriction on burials due to nitrate levels the committee should consider that the Council no longer carry out burials for non-parishioners. If the Council is restricted to 20 burials a year those places should be reserved for residents. After a discussion it was agreed that non-parishioner burials would not be restricted until it was absolutely necessary. The Committee considered whether elderly/sick residents who have had to move from Thetford for hospice or care reasons (i.e. suitable properties are not located within Thetford) should be treated as parishioners. Guidelines were required to aid staff to establish residency.

The following was agreed:

A letter must be received from the next of kin or person organising the burial confirming:

- The deceased lived in Thetford immediately before transfer to the nursing home/hospice (no time restriction was put on this).
- The address of the deceased immediately before the move.
- The letter must be signed and dated by the next of kin/person organising the burial

RESOLVED: To allow elderly/sick residents who have left Thetford to reside in hospices/care homes due to ill health prior to death to be treated as parishioners proving a letter from their next of kin is received to confirm their eligibility.

244/16

MEMORIAL TREE AVENUE

The Works Foreman reported that they are now ready to order and plant the flowering cherry trees that will form a memorial avenue from one end of the cemetery to the other. The Works team have calculated that the number of trees required are 55 at a cost of £12 each = £660. There will be a small additional cost for stakes and bore-hole pipes to assist the initial growth of the trees.

These will be ordered shortly and delivered in batches to fit in with maintenance team's schedule. Once planted, the trees can be offered to display memorial plaques for a small fee. The Chairman reminded the committee about the high nitrate level in the Cemetery and that it had been suggested that the planting of trees and bushes could help reduce this level.

RESOLVED: The Works Team will order and plant 55 flowering cherry trees at a cost of £12 each to form a memorial avenue from one end of the cemetery to the other at a cost of £660.

245/16

FENCE ADJOINING ICKNIELD WAY ALLOTMENTS

The Acting Deputy Town Clerk reported that 3 quotations were received for the fence:

- Company A
- Company B
- Company C

The Quote from Company C (G&G Fencing) was accepted but work has not taken place due to funding issues. It had been agreed that Cemetery and Allotments Committees will split the cost. This Committee can authorise the expenditure from its own budget (cemetery maintenance and/or hedge/tree maintenance). However the Allotments Committee have no suitable budget provision so are applying to Finance Committee to use reserves. This will be included on Finance Agenda in September. The Committee agreed to fund half the cost of the fence adjoining Icknield Way allotments of £1,293 from the current budget.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed to fund half the cost of the fence adjoining Icknield Way allotments (£1,293) from the current budget.

246/16

PRESS RELEASES

None.

247/16

ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

Chairman.