

A MEETING OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE,  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KINGS HOUSE, THETFORD  
ON MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2017, STARTING AT 10.00 A.M.

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs S J Armes (Chairman)  
Mrs B J Canham (Vice Chairman)  
C Harvey  
J Newton

C R P Burnett  
D M Crawford  
Mrs J Hollis

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Lewis  
Roger Stebbings  
Chris Crimmen

Deputy Town Clerk  
Works Foreman  
Committee Secretary

Minutes

- 548/16 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS  
None.
- 549/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE  
None.
- 550/16 MINUTES  
Resolve the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, received by the Council on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.
- 551/16 HEALTH & SAFETY  
The Deputy Town Manager reported that when the Cemetery Superintendent needed to change clothes for a funeral service he now uses the hot water and facilities in the Cemetery Cottage. The Works Foreman confirmed that in snow and frosty weather the cemetery paths were gritted.
- 552/16 CONSIDERATION OF BURIAL FEES FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN 5-11  
The Chairman led a discussion on reducing burial fees for children. Councillor Mrs J Hollis resolved and Councillor Mrs B Canham seconded a motion to reduce the fees by half:  
There followed a vote: For the motion = 3. Against = 3. The Chairman used her casting vote for the motion which was carried.  
**RESOLVED: To reduce fees for children between 5 and 11 years to half of the full fees from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.**
- 553/16 CEMETERY CHAPEL  
The Deputy Town Clerk reported that she had just received the condition survey on the Chapel that was carried out before Christmas and would send a copy out the Councillors as soon as possible and a way forward could then be planned.
- 554/16 CEMETERY COTTAGE  
The Chairman led a discussion on the Cemetery Cottage to agree future letting options. The Deputy Town Clerk reported the Council had an agent view the property for letting as either residential or commercial. He was of the opinion that a much higher rent would be achieved for residential. It could be easily marketed as adults only, probably to a professional couple.

This would be the better option financially but also would save time applying for change of use and would require less refurbishment as the configuration could remain with minimal work to bring up to a letting standard.

The work required and estimated costs where we have them would be

- Replacement windows
- Redecoration
- New flooring/carpets
- Minor improvements in kitchen
- Minor improvements in bathroom
- Repair to wood burner flue
- Draft proofing front door

The Deputy Town Clerk had received various estimates and reported the total cost of improvements would be around £7,000. If the committee agree to go ahead with the work she would obtain other estimates and proceed with the best quotations subject to funding being agreed. The Committee have £4,225 left in the cemetery reserve so may require further assistance from reserves. After a discussion Councillor D Crawford resolved and Councillor Mrs J Hollins seconded the motion which was carried:

**RESOLVED: Thetford Town Council appoint an agent to find tenants for the Cemetery Cottage for residential purposes stipulating no under 16's or pets in the property.**

Councillor D Crawford recommended and Councillor Mrs B Canham seconded that:

**RECOMMENDATION: Thetford Town Council carry out the necessary repairs to the Cemetery Cottage as soon as possible after obtaining quotations for the work to be carried out. The work should not exceed £7,000 and any shortfall would be requested from reserves.**

At this point Councillor C Burnett joined the meeting.

555/16

#### **BURIALS IN CEMETERY EXTENSION**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that burials in the new extension totalled 24 in 2016 which is at the higher end of the recommended limit of 20-25. By 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017 the Council had received 4 bookings for the new extension (all parishioners). Last January the Council had 2 so the average over 12 months stands at 26. Realistically the Council can only bury an average of 2 per month so the Deputy Town Clerk consulted with the Chairman and it was decided to accept no more burials in January, only two in February to bring the 12 month average to an acceptable level. This decision was communicated to committee members and funeral directors. There followed a discussion on the water level monitoring. The Works Foreman will investigate other usable burial areas in the old Cemetery and report back as soon as possible. The committee decided that they would refer a decision on limiting burials to two per month to Full Council.

Councillor Mrs B Canham resolved and Councillor Mrs J Hollis seconded that:

**RESOLVED: That no further burials are accepted in January 2017 and only 2 burials are accepted in February 2017 subject to the Cemetery Officers discretion.**

*Note: At Full Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and following the presentation from Ground Technology under agenda number 603/16 regarding burial numbers in the new Cemetery the Chairman reviewed the resolution above. After a discussion Councillor R Kybird resolved a change to the resolution (in red below) and this was agreed by Full Council:*

**RESOLVED: That no further burials are accepted in January 2017 and only 2 burials are accepted in February 2017. Subject to Officers discretion from March 2017 onwards, the 12 month rolling average limit of 25 burials per year will determine the number of burials each month and bookings will not be taken until the last week of the preceding month.**

556/16

**WATER MONITORING**

There has not been any further information from the company who reports on our nitrate levels but they have confirmed they would be able to attend Full Council to give an up to date report. It was agreed to invite the company to the Full Council on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The Works Foreman reported that all the cherry trees have been planted.

557/16

**LAWN CEMETERY**

The Deputy Town Clerk had tabled new draft guidelines and letter for plots Rand X deed holders for committee approval. She had given a longer time frame than suggested at last meeting to allow for infrequent visitors to clear the plots of disallowed items. For other lawn cemetery plots she suggested the Council display the new rules and a copy of the letter in each relevant areas. It was agreed to issue a press release to bring this issue to the public's attention.

Councillor Mrs B Canham resolved and Councillor Mrs J Hollis seconded a resolution:

**RESOLVED: The letter (Appendix 1) and the simplified rules (Appendix 2) were approved by the Committee.**

558/16

**PLANTERS AND PLANTS FOR MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The Cemetery Superintendent had suggested the Council improve the appearance of the cemetery by obtaining some brick and flint planters for near the entrance and car park. He is currently getting a quotation for these planters. It was suggested the committee we could ask for a one off payment from funeral directors to sponsor the planters while the council fill, water and maintain them. This would hopefully cover the initial outlay. Plants in the memorial garden need replacing and the committee approved expenditure for these plants from the remaining budget.

559/16

**PRESS RELEASES**

It was agreed to issue a press release to bring the issue at the Lawn Cemetery to the public's attention.

560/16

**ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**  
**LETTER FROM A RESIDENT**

The Deputy Town Clerk tabled a letter from a resident asking for his parents, who had lived away from Thetford for 9 years, to be buried in the cemetery. This was noted but the new rules regarding non parishioner burials must apply.

Chairman.

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>
To investigate other usable burial areas in the old Cemetery	Works Foreman	ASAP

<b>To invite Ben Armstrong to January Full Council to report on the nitrate levels.</b>	<b>Deputy Town Clerk</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
<b>To refer to Full Council restricting burials to 2 per month</b>	<b>Deputy Town Clerk</b>	<b>31/01/2017</b>
<b>To issue a press release regarding the lawn cemetery plots.</b>	<b>Deputy Town Clerk</b>	<b>ASAP</b>