

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Held at The Guildhall, Axminster on Monday 24th October 2016 at 7.15 p.m.

1. PRESENT : Councillors : Mrs. S.R. Spiller (Chairman), H.J.A. Jeffery (Vice-Chairman), I.L. Hall, D.R.H. Hull, Mrs L.A. Rowe The Town Clerk.

No members of the press or public.

2. APOLOGIES : Cllrs. P.G. Hayward (conflicting engagement) and Mrs. D.J. Hull and The Deputy Town Clerk.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS : the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2016, having been approved and adopted by the Town Council were signed by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC FORUM : On behalf of a member of the public, the Chairman raised the matter of damage to memorials. The resident believed the damage to have occurred as a result of the use of the ride on mower to cut the grass. Following discussion it was agreed that the Town Council should meet the cost of having the chipped corners of the plinth smoothed over as a goodwill gesture but that a letter be sent to point out that the ground adjacent to headstones is strimmed not mown in order to protect the headstones from damage and that the damage could have been caused by various other agents outside the Council's control.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18th JUNE 2015:

a) Leveling of Graves: The Chairman reported that agreement had been reached with various families regarding leveling of graves. The matter of placement of tributes on graves remains an on-going issue.

b) Scattering Bed – following discussion, it was agreed that well-rotted manure be obtained and applied to the bed every two years to mitigate the effect of the adjacent trees and that this be covered with a layer of topsoil. The bed will be dug over and some new plants obtained.

6. REVIEW OF WASTE DISPOSAL PROCEDURES: following comments from a local resident regarding bonfire smoke, consideration was given to alternative ways of dealing with various waste arising from the cemetery. Cllr. Jeffery, seconded by Cllr. Hall, proposed that the present practice of monthly bonfires be continued.

7. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK:

a) Trees and Hedges, Fences and Walls including rear boundary:-

It was felt that matters relating to fly-tipping and boundary security remained un-resolved. Cllr. Hall will seek further help from the District Council. Consideration should be given to sending a letter from the Town Council solicitor to the property owner regarding the damage to the hedge and illegal breach of the boundary. The blackthorn hedge will be replanted.

b) Chapels, Gates and Seats: –

i. An outside light had been provided for the chapels.

c) Paths & access to graves - quotations for the creation of an permeable/porous material or tarmacadam path into the Z section to enable all areas to have easier access were referred into Committee

d) Drainage – nothing to report.

8. MEMORIAL MATTERS:

a) Leveling of Soil on Grave Spaces – this had been covered under matters arising from the previous meeting.

b) Grass on Memorials after Strimming – following comments from some residents, it was agreed that the Caretaker should be asked to use the leaf blower to clear grass from the headstones once he had strimmed round them.

c) Ornaments on Graves and Disappearance of Same – the Chairman reported that the Regulations had been reworded to cover all items left on graves.

d) Clarification of Base Sizes for Memorials – nothing to report.

e) Clarification of Prior Purchase of Interment or G.O.R. Spaces – nothing to report.

f) Systems for Non-Conformist Interments – nothing to report.

9. REVIEW OF REGULATIONS INCLUDING ACCESS WITH DOGS: despite an increased incidence of dog faeces it was agreed that dogs on leads would still be permitted in the cemetery. It was resolved that regulation 28, relating to memorial tributes, be re-worded to include “Because Axminster Cemetery is open to the public at all times, A.T.C. wishes to advise members of the public who wish to place tributes on a grave that they do so at their own risk. A.T.C. regrets that it cannot guarantee that memorial tributes will not be disturbed or damaged by others”.

10. REVIEW OF CEMETERY FEES: No recommendations had been received from the District Council. However, it was resolved that the existing fee sheet be altered to indicate that no fees would be charged for the interment of those who were of secondary school age at the time of death.

11. NEW EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND REPAIR PROJECTS FOR NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET:: The Vice-chairman suggested that a replacement for the older the existing ride-on mowers would be a prudent investment and put forward recommendations. Cllr. Rowe, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that Cllr. Jeffery be asked to undertake basic servicing of the Cemetery equipment for a nominal fee. Agreed.

The Vice-chairman proposed that under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, (as amended by the Local Government Act 1972 the public, (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Agreed.

12. STAFFING MATTERS: The Chairman reported that the Cemetery Caretaker was now working fewer hours per week and the hours he worked on a Monday were being covered by the Town Handyman so there would be no loss of personnel cover at the Cemetery.

13. CONSIDERATION OF QUOTES RECEIVED: It was resolved:

a) TREE WORK - To accept a quotation to undertake works to trees at the Cemetery for the sum of £380.

b) REMEDIAL WORKS TO WALLS - To follow the advice from a contractor regarding removal of the ivy from the curved walls at the front of the cemetery to enable necessary remedial works to the capping stones. The Town Clerk will check whether the operative will need to have Chapter 8 qualifications for such work.

- c) REFURBISHMENT OF GATES - To accept a quotation to refurbish the iron entrance gates at the Cemetery for the sum of £xxx to include repairs as necessary, sandblasting, galvanising and painting.
- d) CHAPEL BELL – To seek further information before making a decision.
- e) ACCESS TO Z SECTION – To seek further information regarding prices for grass grid before making a decision.
- f) CUTTING OF CEMETERY FIELD – To continue the arrangement used this year whereby a local farmer cuts the field in exchange for the arisings therefrom. It was noted that a month's notice prior to cutting would be helpful from the farmer's point of view.

Signed Date