

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT

The Guildhall, Axminster on Monday 26th February 2018 at 7.15 p.m.

1. PRESENT : Councillors : Mrs. S.R. Spiller (Chairman), G. Alderson, D.J. Moore, the Deputy Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

No members of the press or public.

2. APOLOGIES : D.R.H.Hull (Vice-chairman), P.G. Hayward, and Mrs L.A. Rowe. It was noted that Cllr. A.E.J. Seward had tendered her resignation from this committee.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS : the minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2017, having been approved and adopted by the Town Council were signed by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC FORUM : None.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31st July 2017: None.

6. REVIEW OF CEMETERY RISK ASSESSMENT: the Chairman said that although this was in place, the Buildings and Finance Committee had just proposed that this be outsourced in future.

7. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK:

a) Trees and Hedges:- Cllr. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that an outside contractor be asked to clip the beech hedge and top the hedge marking the boundary between the Y section and the area where the skip is located. Agreed.

b) Fences, Gates and Walls including rear boundary:- the Chairman reported that:

- i. The contractor had touched up those areas on the gate where the black paint had not taken originally.
- ii. The walls will be inspected in the spring to monitor any over-winter damage and advice will be sought regarding the front wall.

c) Seats:- if there were to be a seat which was surplus to requirements at the Old Courthouse there would be room to place this in the Cemetery near the new Garden of Rest as this had been requested by some members of the public.

d) Paths:- aggregate has been used by the chapel to provide a firmer surface for the vehicles but the Chairman expressed concerns about possible damage to the mower blades if this is translocated to grassed areas on vehicle tyres. Quotations will be obtained to re-surface the path by the new garden of rest with options in asphalt and grass or aggregate grid to be investigated. The contractor will install the grass grid paths in the Z section as soon as he deems the conditions to be suitable.

e) Chapels:- the roofs of the work shop and chapel will be inspected using a drone to ascertain whether there are any slipped slates.

f) Security:- nothing to report.

8. MEMORIAL MATTERS: the Chairman reported that fertiliser had been applied to the Crescent Bed and that top soil would be added later in the year to try and improve soil conditions. Cemetery Regulations will be amended to include a clause prohibiting the use of Bio Urns.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a) Review of Regulations and Fees - the Deputy Town Clerk had circulated the latest East Devon District Council fee sheet to members. Recent searches of records had revealed that the duration of a Right of Burial had been reduced from 100 years to 50 years in 1975 and not after 2000 as had been thought.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that:

- i. The full Right of Burial fee be paid for any unsold, returned or expired unused plot in a non Garden of Rest area even if its intended use be only for interment of ashes and that it be

made clear that once any ashes were interred in such a plot it could not then be used to inter a body. Agreed.

- ii. The prevailing Right of Burial fee for ashes be charged for expired fully used plots in a non Garden of Rest area where there was only room for ashes to be added. Agreed.

In both the above situations the appropriate interment fees still apply.

- iii. That in a contested situation, the onus of proof of ownership of a plot lies with a member of the public if the Town Council Records show that previously the plot had been sold back to the Council by the family. Agreed.
- iv. That the fee for a search of the register to be £15 per half hour of staff time and subject to staff availability at the time. Agreed.

b) Copying of Cemetery Maps – the Town Clerk had not received any information from Cllr. Hayward as yet. Cllr. Moore suggested that the advice of the local records office be sought as to what firm they used for digitising similar documents.

c) Right of Burial Terms Review – covered under item a).

10. PROVISION OF SITE FOR WOODLAND BURIAL: it was resolved that it be noted that there was no suitable area within the Cemetery to make such provision.

Cllr. Spiller 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. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal. Agreed.

11. STAFFING MATTERS: The Town Clerk will undertake the annual appraisal for the Caretaker within the next month.

An advertisement for an assistant cemetery caretaker will be placed in a local paper and on Town Council noticeboards and the website.

Signed Date