

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT

The Senior Citizens' Centre, Axminster on Monday 4th March 2019 at 7.15 p.m.

1. PRESENT : Councillors : Mrs. S.R. Spiller (Chairman), A.L. Young (Vice-chairman), P.G. Hayward, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk.

No members of the press. 3 members of the public.

2. APOLOGIES : G. Alderson, A.E. Bourner, D.R.H.Hull, D.J. Moore and Mrs L.A. Rowe.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS : the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2018, having been approved and adopted by the Town Council were signed by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC FORUM : Two members of the public expressed their unhappiness that written letters had not received written acknowledgements from officers or Councillors, though verbal responses had been given. Representations were made regarding the dimensions of memorials in the Garden of Rest and that these had arisen from ambiguities in the wording of the Town Council's fee sheets over the years and that attempts to clarify and tighten up on the regulations would result in situations where it would no longer be possible to erect matching memorials. In addition, memorials had been selected on the basis of what had been seen visually as being permitted and that it was unreasonable to change regulations in the middle of a section when the Council had not required the removal of those memorials which were deemed to have broken the intended regulations. The Chairman explained that the Town Council tried to work from whatever regulations were current but that if it became apparent that an undertaker or memorial mason's interpretation of the dimensions deviated from the intention of the Town Council then the regulations were revised.

Councillors resolved to discuss a particular letter sent by a member of the public in committee because of the confidential nature of the matter. The member of the public would be informed of the outcome of the discussion once the minutes of the meeting were ratified by the full Town Council.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23rd JULY 2018: the Town Clerk asked that further matters relating to a request from a resident be taken in committee by virtue of the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller made the formal proposal, seconded by Cllr. Hayward. Agreed.

6. REVIEW OF CEMETERY RISK ASSESSMENT: The Town Clerk had circulated a copy of suggested amendments to the Cemetery Risk Assessment Document and it was resolved that these be approved.

7. MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK:

a) Trees and Hedges:- the Handyman had reported that the contractor had done an excellent job in cutting the beech hedge and reducing it to a height at which he would be able to maintain it in future.

b) Fences, Gates and Walls including rear boundary:- nothing to report.

c) Seats:- nothing to report.

d) Paths:- the Chairman said that there had been mixed comments regarding the eco-friendly path in the Z Section. A dumpy bag of gravel will be ordered for the tractor turning area.

e) Chapels:- the Chairman asked that a local builder be asked to quote for remedial works on the buttresses to the chapels.

f) Security:- the new padlocks had been fitted. The Deputy Clerk said that the hasp had been forced off a metal box used to store empty paint tins prior to disposal.

8. MEMORIAL MATTERS: nothing to report.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a) Review of Regulations and Fees – the Town Clerk had made a suggestion regarding clarification of what elements of a memorial constituted its height. It was agreed that this form part of the discussion relating to the letter from the resident to be considered in committee

b) Copying of Cemetery Maps – the Deputy Town Clerk supplied details of various available options. The Town Clerk will contact the Chief Executive of East Devon District Council to ask if the District Council would be prepared to fund a group licence from a mapping software supplier, as is done for parish councils by a Somerset authority.

c) Right of Burial Terms Review – Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Young proposed that the amendments to the terms of the Right of Burial suggested by the Town Clerk be approved. Agreed.

Cllr. Young proposed that 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.

10. STAFFING MATTERS: the Town Clerk will speak to a member of staff regarding absence cover.

11. LETTER FROM RESIDENT: a request from a resident to be permitted a headstone in the Garden of Rest area which did not comply with current regulations was considered.

The Chairman said that there were two options namely to refuse and say that the regulations would be reviewed at the site meeting in July or to agree to grant the request and change the dimensions for memorials in the Garden of Rest with effect from the approval of these minutes by the Town Council. Cllr. Hayward proposed that the request be granted. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal which was carried. The Chairman abstained. There was discussion regarding the wording on the fee sheet to ensure clarity as to the Town Council's expectations and Cemetery Regulations will be revised also to reinforce the Committee's discussions.

Regarding the further information which had come to hand regarding an earlier letter from a different resident, proof of transfer of the Right of Burial will be sought or the resident will be asked to sign a form of indemnity. The Right of Burial could then be extended for a further 50 years from the current date or the resident could wait until the existing Right of Burial expires and purchase from that point. The resident will be contacted to this effect.

Signed Date