



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, Bath BA2 8SN
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Minutes of the Cemetery Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 8.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: Fiona Carr; Mandy Clarke; Richard Clarke; Audrey Gillard-Sprake (Chair); Howard Hartley (Vice-Chair); Les Sprake.

Cllr. Jonathan Rich was also present at the meeting, in his capacity as Chair of Full Council. As the Committee was quorate, he did not utilise his voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West - Parish Clerk & RFO.

Public Session: There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Minute Ref.	Agenda Item	Action
CC028 – 13/02/2024	Attendance Roll Call and Declarations of Interest The attendance roll call was undertaken (those present are detailed above). No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared.	
CC029– 13/02/2024	Apologies for Absence Cllr Conor Ogilvie-Davidson was absent from the meeting without apology (although not summonsed).	
CC030 – 13/02/2024	Minutes & Actions i. The minutes of the Cemetery Committee meeting held on 17 th October 2023 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was resolved that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting. ii. The Actions Register on Planner had been updated, although as most of the tasks were ongoing and included on the agenda, the updates were received throughout the meeting. The Clerk to update the Cemetery Committee Planner board with any new actions after the meeting.	Clerk
CC031 – 13/02/2024	Items for Urgent Report Cllr Howard Hartley reported about a post on social media asking for advice on sunken graves at Ashgrove Cemetery. He had provided his councillor email address and residents had contacted him asking if two graves could be levelled as they had sunk following recent heavy rains. Both Cllr Hartley and the Clerk had contacted the residents advising that action would be taken by Caretaking staff this week.	Clerk
CC032 – 13/02/2024	Cemetery Related Policies & Procedures Councillors reviewed the suggested amendments to the Interment and Memorial Policy with a view to making any associated decisions. The Clerk to put a footnote on the application form to highlight that consecrated graves are for Church of England burials. The policy currently states that a <i>headstone must be not more than 2 feet 6 inches in height on a base not exceeding 1.5 foot by 3 feet. Any erection on the base may not exceed 8 inches projection by 12 inches in height.</i> The following amendments to the policy were agreed : 1. To put a sizing on the height of the base up to 6 inches. To an overall height of	Clerk Clerk

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	<p>the memorial and base to be no more than 3 feet.</p> <p>2. A statement to say that in exceptionally wet conditions graves will sink, and topping up will be done on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.</p> <p>The Clerk to share these amendments with the funeral directors and stone masons.</p>	Clerk
<p>CC033 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>Councillors reviewed the sections of the Risk Register associated with Ashgrove Cemetery and made the following comments for the Clerk to update the document accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ID 282 – Service dates of trailers, mowers, equipment to be included on the annual governance cycle. ➤ ID 285 – Fire extinguishers are checked annually, and the hazardous substances cabinet will be purchased and installed in March. ➤ ID 287 – Topple testing now scheduled for March 2024. ➤ ID 288 – Fire training for all staff was actioned in October (due again in March). ➤ ID 292 – Access gates are locked every evening and there is an intruder alarm on the building. Include details on whether councillor or staff access. ➤ ID 293 – New dog-waste bag dispenser appears to be helping with dog fouling at the cemetery. The situation will continue to be monitored. Signage to be created stating that the lower part of the cemetery is not a dog exercise area but should be respected as a lawn cemetery and that dogs must be kept on a lead at all times. Also, anyone seen with a dog off lead should be reminded of this fact. ➤ ID 776 – Burial records are now scanned and stored in digital format in the cloud. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk & HH</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk & All</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>CC034 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Review of Finances 2023/24</p> <p>Councillors reviewed income and expenditure reports for the 2023/24 financial year for those budgets specifically linked to the Cemetery Committee. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Income has met the budget for the current financial year. ➤ 605002 Cemetery Utilities: This budget will overspend as there is £18 remaining in the budget with two months usage still to be invoiced. ➤ 605003 Cemetery Waste Disposal: The invoice for the last waste collection from the bottom car park is still to be received. If sufficient budget is remaining another collection will be arranged for March 2024. ➤ 605004 Cemetery Tree/Hedge Works: This budget has overspent due to additional tree works required following windy weather. ➤ 605005 Cemetery Works: This budget has overspent due to having to replace faulty lights in the toilet. ➤ Other operational budgets have underspent which should be sufficient to cover any overspend. 	Clerk
<p>CC035 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Interments and Memorials</p> <p>Councillors received updates, and decisions were made as follows:</p> <p>i. Interments and memorials since the last meeting.</p> <p>There are three applications for memorials which will be processed in the next few days. An application for a specific plot in Section F was presented to Council at the request of a resident. It was noted that pre-allocating plots was against Parish Council policy, however, the circumstances were acknowledged by councillors. The non-uniformity of this section was also noted, which had been caused by burials being undertaken during times of heavy rain. It was agreed that the Council would be as sympathetic as possible and will try to accommodate this actual request as and when it arises. The Clerk was asked to establish whether a cremated remains interment would be an option for the resident. The stone mason had moved the memorials located in Row B of Section F, so they are in the correct line with the markers. This was done at their expense, as the mistake was theirs and they had contacted the families to advise accordingly. An analysis of the interment figures was requested to help for future planning of the cemetery. The Clerk to arrange a report on cremated remains vs. full burial interments and under which months there were undertaken.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

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	<p>ii. Photographing and documenting of the plots and memorials. The aerial images of the cemetery are still required to be actioned; Cllr Rich and the Clerk are planning to undertake this during March, weather permitting. The Clerk to notify residents of neighbouring properties beforehand as a drone will be used.</p> <p>iii. Digitisation of the burial records. Apart from the inclusion of recent interments and memorials these are complete. Once finalised the reports will be uploaded to the website.</p> <p>iv. Topple Testing of the Memorials. The stone mason is now scheduled to undertake the Topple Testing during week commencing 4th March 2024. Signs will be erected at the Cemetery advising and details published on Facebook this week. The Clerk will keep councillors updated on any memorials that do not meet the test requirements.</p>	<p>Clerk & JR</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk Clerk</p>
<p>CC036 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Garden of Remembrance Updates on the Garden of Remembrance were received, and decisions were made as follows:</p> <p>i. Removal of commemorative flowers/items/trinkets on graves. Not all the Christmas wreaths have yet been removed. The remaining ones will be actioned by the Caretakers this week (cut-off date was 31st January 2024). It was noted that people are beginning to conform with the rules on this and are keeping items on their graves and not on the area surrounding it.</p> <p>ii. Weeding and planting of the scattering area at the Garden of Remembrance. It was noted that the Caretakers had undertaken some weeding/tidying of the scattering area and had replanted any gaps in the formal Japanese Holly hedge. Further weeding is required, and it was hoped that weekly weeding sessions with the volunteers' group will help with this task.</p> <p>iii. To receive an update on the preparations of works to replace and extend the pathways within the Garden of Remembrance and make any associated decisions. It was noted that Kingsmere Surfacing were still on target for their proposed start date of week commencing 11th March 2024 (weather permitting) and a site meeting had been arranged for 22nd February 2024. Notices would need to be put up at the cemetery advising that there would be minimal access to graves during the works, and letters would need to be sent to properties on either side of the cemetery.</p>	<p>Clerk & CC</p> <p>Clerk & HH</p> <p>Clerk, DP & Cllrs.</p>
<p>CC037 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Cemetery Maintenance & Improvements Councillors received updates and made associated decisions on the general maintenance of Ashgrove Cemetery and considered any works to be undertaken, as follows:</p> <p>i. To consider any items that may require funding outside of operational budgets and to formulate a plan for such works e.g. irrigation, compost bins etc. It was agreed that the suggested improvements and projects requiring funding outside of operational budgets should be monitored for the time being, as priorities may amend once the pathways project has been completed and the volunteer group has been established.</p> <p>ii. Waste removal. The invoice for the last collection of waste from the bottom car park was still to be received. Further waste removal is likely to be arranged for March.</p> <p>iii. Trees, tree nursery and Trees for Climate Hedgerow Planting. It was noted that it is likely to be about five years before the saplings in the tree</p>	<p>Clerk & Cllrs</p> <p>Clerk</p>

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	<p>nursery are sufficiently large enough to be replanted elsewhere. The cherry tree near to the entrance of the cemetery has honey fungus. It is not dead but is dying. The Clerk to check the last tree surveys for updates and to ensure appropriate action is taken. The Clerk to update councillors accordingly. Cllr Hartley explained that since the last Full Council meeting the agreement for the <i>Trees for Climate Hedgerow Planting project</i> had been received from Forest of Avon Trust. However, the detail on the agreement, was different to what councillors had been informed at their site meeting. This was considered, and the general feeling was that as the Trust would still undertake the planting at no cost to the Parish Council, the only difference being that the level of ongoing maintenance provided would be reduced so any additional maintenance required would be covered by the volunteer group, and not the Parish Council staff, it was still worth proceeding with the project.</p> <p>iv. Wildlife survey results. The survey report from Avon Wildlife Trust had been circulated as pre-reading. It was noted that the Clerk and staffing team will work with Cllr Hartley and volunteers to apply the recommendations from the survey into practice. However, it is likely that the wilding of the lower area of the cemetery will be actioned using plug plants as opposed to seeding, due to practicalities.</p> <p>v. Formation of volunteer group to assist with works at the Cemetery. Cllr Howard Hartley explained that weather permitting, it is hoped to commence the volunteer group to work at Ashgrove Cemetery from Thursday 14th March 2024. It is planned to meet on a weekly basis from 10am until 1.30pm each week. Cllr Audrey Gillard-Sprake volunteered to make and serve coffee for the sessions. Cllr Hartley had supplied the Clerk with a list of equipment required for the volunteers, which would be purchased prior to the start date and costed at approximately £300. The scope of works the volunteers will undertake includes weeding, pruning, creation of compost bays for community composting area, planting of bulbs, removal of deadwood; maintaining hedgerow whips and saplings; planting of wildflower seeds, building bird and bat boxes, watering of flower beds, plant and wildlife identification etc. It is hoped to make the group as educational as possible with a variety of different jobs, although initially it is expected to be focused on weeding of flower beds.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>HH & Clerk</p> <p>Clerk & HH</p> <p>Clerk & HH & AGS</p>
<p>CC038 – 13/02/2024</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items The date of the next Cemetery Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 at Beacon Hall.</p>	

Meeting closed at 9.37pm

Signed..... Date.....