

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SIMPSON CENTRE, STOTFOLD**

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Committee Members present: Mrs J Hyde (Chairman)  
B Collier A Cooper  
Mrs M Cooper D Savill  
Mrs C Turner

Also present: The Clerk

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**3019. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Stoter and Mrs Wilding.

**3020. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of Members interests.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**3021. Gordon Goodwin Funeral Services – changes to Cemetery regulations and new Cemetery charges**

The Chairman advised Members of a letter from Gordon Goodwin Funeral Services regarding the new charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April, and queries regarding new regulations.

The first query concerns memorial safety following notification to all memorial masons and funeral directors that from September this year anyone carrying out work to install or repair memorials in the Cemetery must be BRAMM registered. The letter enclosed a copy of a page from a trade magazine which reports on the perceived excessive testing of memorials, and which advises that topple testing should be carried out as a last resort. Members were reminded that this is what will be carried out, as the first test is visual, followed by a hand pressure test and then the calibrated machine pressure test.

The second query was regarding infilling of graves and excess soil, following a reminder to funeral directors that they should be taking excess soil from backfilling graves away with them as there is no provision for depositing the waste soil at the Cemetery. Mr Goodwin has suggested that this Council provides a skip at the Cemetery for excess soil.

The third query was regarding the increase in memorial charges, as he felt that our increases seem excessive and compared our charges for a headstone with Milton Keynes and Sandy.

**Resolved** that a letter is sent to Gordon Goodwin Funeral Services to advise that with regard to the memorial safety issues a visual test is carried out first, followed by a hand pressure topple test, and finally a calibrated machine pressure test is carried out. With regard to excess soil removal, he is to be reminded of that it has always been our policy that excess soil is removed from the Cemetery and the original letter was reinforcing that policy. We would guard against providing an extra skip at the Cemetery as it is felt this would encourage fly-tipping. With regard to the increase in charges, these have been brought into line with charges of other neighbouring burial authorities. Advise that the Cemetery Committee budget currently runs at a deficit. The increase in

headstone and kerbstone charges is to cover the subsequent increase in grounds maintenance costs.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

### **3022. To consider purchasing a notice board for the Cemetery (see minute 3014)**

The handcrafted notice board has been ordered, but due to their busy schedule and staff illness we won't receive it until about June/July.

### **3023. To receive an update on the current situation regarding the future of the Cemetery (see minute 3015)**

The Clerk, Chairman and Councillor Cooper have not yet met with Rik Golder and Tim Miles Gravedigger due to holiday absence and sickness. A date is being pursued.

### **3024. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE CEMETERY. TO CONSIDER THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION WITH THE PRESENT LANDOWNER TO PURCHASE ADJACENT LAND FOR EXTENSION OF THE CEMETERY**

The Chairman advised that we have received an indicative value from the District Valuer of the bottom agricultural price and the top price for someone who has an interest in the land for a particular purpose.

Councillor Mrs Hyde declared an interest in the following discussions, and refrained from voting.

The Chairman advised that she had taken advice from a firm of Chartered Surveyors in Stanford regarding negotiating the purchase of the land for the extension. Their figures for the value of the land are very similar to those received from the District Valuer. The Chartered Surveyor is a distant relative of Councillor Mrs Hyde, but is one of the national experts on green burials and has set up three green burials around the country, which are commercial set ups by landowners. They advise that one acre for green burials would last approximately 20 years for 1,000 people.

It was agreed that we would require a professional to carry out the work to negotiate the purchase of the land, someone to design the layout for the extension and, if we pursue the idea of green burials, someone with the relevant expertise to advise on the process.

**Recommended** that initial informal enquiries are made of local Chartered Surveyors, and those on the District Council approved list, to establish if they are able to carry out the sort of work involved in purchasing land and designing a Cemetery extension with a green burial area, and ask how they would charge for the work. The information is to be brought back to the Committee in order that a tender document can be drawn up. Chartered Surveyors in addition to District Council approved list: Peacocks - Bedford, Savills - Southill, Shilcocks - Hitchin, Templars – Baldock.

### **3025. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE RENEWAL OF THE CHAPEL LEASE**

The current lease for the Chapel expires in August 2009, and our Solicitor advises that we can either serve Notice which terminates the existing lease and confirms that we have no objection to the grant of a new lease, if that is our wish. Or we can informally approach the tenant to ask if they would wish to continue leasing the Chapel. By serving Notice and terminating the existing lease we run the risk that the tenants will investigate their requirement for the premises. The current lease payable on the Chapel is £92.10 per month (£1105.20 per year).

**Recommended** that the current tenants of the Chapel are informally asked if they would like to continue leasing the building, and advise that the rent will remain at the current level for the next year rent period. If they wish to continue we are to instruct our Solicitor to produce the necessary paperwork.

**3026. TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FROM STEVE DEAR TREES TO CUT BACK THE THORN HEDGE AT THE BACK OF THE CEMETERY, AND CHIP BACK INTO HEDGE WHERE POSSIBLE OR SPREAD CLOSE TO THE FENCE, IN THE SUM OF £480**

This work is following a request by the landscape contractor to have the hedge cut as he is unable to maintain it at its present height and depth.

**Resolved** that the quotation from Steve Dear Trees to cut back the hedge at the back of the Cemetery in the sum of £480 be accepted, with works being carried out as soon as possible after the end of the nesting season.

**3027. TO CONSIDER ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN FROM THE INSPECTION OF THE CEMETERY CARRIED OUT BY COUNCILLOR MRS HYDE**

Councillor Mrs Hyde advised that the hedge around the skip is growing well. These were saplings which were donated for the purpose. The hollies which were cut in the last tree works are now sprouting. The Cedar Diodora, with a plaque in memory of Mr King, situated on the right hand side going up the hill from the car park, is dying.

**Resolved** that the following is carried out:

**Ian Summerfield**

- Give the men's and ladies toilets a good clean.
- Attend to the overflowing pipe from the men's toilet cistern.
- Clear the drains at the bottom of the Cemetery as they are filled with soil.

**Place on next agenda**

- The matter of temporary memorials and grave plot dressings will be considered at the next meeting in May, as there is currently a grave with an angel, glass plaque and wooden kerbing.
- The condition of the roadway by the children's section will be assessed at the meeting in May as it appears to have been damaged.

**Send correspondence**

- Send a letter to the owner of the memorial tree grant for Ivonne Slater and ask them to remove the temporary Christmas decorations.

**3028. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY**

The Chairman advised that Rik Golder had suggested that he cut back the Diana Beech hedge, shape the hollies and cut the Garden of Rest hedge following damage by heavy snow fall. As there are no funds available for this purpose in the current financial year, these matters will be considered further at the September meeting. It appears the Garden of Rest hedge has now recovered.

There being no further relevant business the meeting was declared closed at 7.57pm

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATED**