

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE, QUEEN STREET, CHASETOWN
ON THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2018 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT

Councillor Ms Brettell (in the Chair)
Councillors Birch, Drinkwater, Miss Fisher (from 6.03 pm), Mrs Stokes and Mrs Rigby

In attendance

Ms J Minor, Senior Administration Officer
N Caine, Direct Services Manager
Two members of the public

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Humphreys.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Drinkwater declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as he is the owner of one of the plot in Burntwood cemetery.

8. MINUTES

Councillor Drinkwater made reference to Minute No. 5 (Cremated Remains Plots) and in particular the implications to plot owners who have previously purchased plots. The SAO confirmed that there are no implications for existing plot holders.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Burial Grounds Committee held on 15 June 2017 (Minute Nos. 1-5) be approved and adopted.

9. BURNTWOOD CEMETERY/COULTER LANE BURIAL GROUND

Members received the Direct Services Manager's (DSM) report.

9.1 Burntwood Cemetery

Interments

It was noted that since the first interment in Burntwood Cemetery in 2007 there had been a total of 165 new adult grave plots purchased. There had also been 129 cremated remains plots and 7 child grave plots purchased.

Maintenance

Members were informed that as the cemetery does not carry out burials or cremated remain interments on Mondays, whenever possible and practical, maintenance is preferred to be carried out on this day. Members were informed that the cemetery continues to be maintained to a very high standard of workmanship by the appointed contractors namely Lichfield District Council's DSO (open spaces) and Grasslands (burial areas).

As part of the continuous maintenance programme, the horse chestnut trees in the spring season will require the lower branches to be cut, this will allow easier access for LDC's DSO to maintain this area of the cemetery. As all of these trees are protected (TPO) then the requisite permission will be required before commencement and Members will be advised when permission has been granted and the start date for such work to commence.

Burial Plots

Members were informed that burial plots are allowed to find their natural state and when this has been achieved, these plots are levelled to the surrounding area height, adjacent to the area and then turfed. Additional minor landscaping is included.

Memorial Stone Tests (Topple Testing)

Members were informed that topple testing commenced in autumn 2016 and tests were ongoing. All of these tests are carried out to ICCM guidelines. None of the results have proven negative.

Rules and Regulations

Members were informed that there have been no additions to the Rules and Regulations.

Brambles

Members were informed that concern was expressed by regular users of the cemetery to the DSM as to the close proximity of brambles at the exit and water supply areas. Costs were obtained and Members were advised and sanctioned the removal of the brambles. This work has now been completed which consisted of laying of turf and all spoils removed from site. This cost was £625.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for the removal of the brambles at a cost of £625.

Gates and Fences

Members were informed that the gates and fences were in need of a clean. The metalwork has attracted tree sap which has adhered to the surface and is in need of removal. There are areas of the laurel hedge that require replacement due to non-growth or decay. This is in the area of the compound.

RESOLVED That three quotations be obtained for the cleaning of the gates and fences.

RESOLVED That three quotations be obtained for the replacement of the laurel hedge due to non-growth or decay in the area of the compound.

Gulley Pots

Members were informed that the gulley pots had been emptied and cleaned of silt and associated debris by Burntwood Sweepers. The costs incurred were £38.50 per hour (minimum 3 hours) and an environmental tipping charge (disposal) of £70.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for the removal of silt and associated debris from the gulley pots at a cost of £185.50.

Graffiti

Members were informed that during the month of November, a tree was attacked with graffiti in the cemetery. This consisted of a name and war decals. LDC DSO was approached to remedy the situation which was successful at a cost of £25 plus VAT. It was removed using a hand held brush so as to minimise damage to the outside of the tree.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for the removal of the graffiti at a cost of £25 plus VAT.

9.2 Coulter Lane Cemetery

Maintenance

Members were informed that two organisations operate within the Coulter Lane Cemetery namely Lichfield District Council DSO who continue grass cutting after the wild flower season has finished and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who take responsibility to maintain a limited amount of war graves.

Boundary Wall

Members were informed that the contractor who was awarded the repointing of the boundary wall has now completed this task with the minimum amount of disruption. The DSM stated that members of the public had expressed their gratitude that this had been undertaken and the repair would enhance the area for some considerable time.

Councillor Birch made reference to Minute No. 79 – Town Council Meeting held on 16 November 2017 (Schedule of Payments made between 07 September – 03 November 2017) and in particular cost centre 4999/209 (Re-pointing Coulter Lane Burial Ground wall) and had asked if the work had been inspected and asked for clarity. At the Town Council Meeting Councillor Humphreys stated that he had been informed by the DSM that the wall was dangerous and as part of our heritage, the work needed to be undertaken. Councillor Drinkwater asked if an officer had observed the work and was the work undertaken according to the schedule of works. Councillor Pullen stated that he assumed that the processes used were correct (i.e. obtaining three quotations) and that the best value quotation had been accepted however the full facts of the case would be obtained and checked out.

Councillor Birch still felt that the schedule of works had not been completed satisfactory.

The DSM stated that the investigation was still work in progress and confirmed that a site meeting had been held with a representative from the said company together with himself and the Interim Town Clerk on Wednesday 10 January 2018. The DSM confirmed that he was awaiting a reply from the said company.

RESOLVED That the DSM provides Councillor Birch with a copy of the inspection report.

Memorial Wreath

Members were informed that a memorial wreath had been attached to the entrance gate on Monday 30 October 2017 and removed week commencing 01 January 2018.

Trees

Members were informed that the trees are monitored on a weekly basis for fallen timber and a more thorough in depth inspection is undertaken on a monthly basis. During these inspections the DSM had monitored a particular tree, a horse chestnut which had died. The DSM contacted LDC's Arboricultural Officer, Mr Hare, who upon examination recommended that the tree be felled and removed from the site. A replacement tree will be replaced within the area of the removed tree. The Arboricultural Officer recommended a sweet chestnut tree.

Horse Chestnut: Removal

Members were informed that as per standing orders three quotations were obtained for the felling and removal of the horse chestnut. Members were informed that the lowest tender had carried out the required work.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for the felling and removal of the horse chestnut at a cost of £250 plus VAT.

Sweet Chestnut: Replacement

Members were informed that as per Standing Orders three quotations are required, however, six quotations were obtained for the tree replacement.

The DSM informed Members that the supply and planting of the tree will cost £141 (tree £36 and planting £105). The DSM reminded Members that they were all emailed details of this and the Chairman had confirmed to proceed with placing the order.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for the replacement tree at a cost of £141.

10. 2018/19 FINANCIAL YEAR

10.1 Proposed 2018/19 Fees and Charges for Burntwood Cemetery

The SAO informed Members that at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 08 January 2018 Members had decided to recommend to Full Council an increase of 3%.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

10.2 2018/19 Draft Budget

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

11. BURNTWOOD CEMETERY: PROVISION OF BENCHES (Minute No. 4.1 - 15 June 2017)

The DSM made reference to Minute No. 4-1 (15 June 2017) and informed Members that three quotations had been obtained for the installation of three benches (this was to include the plinth and minor landscaping work). The remit was to match existing benches within the cemetery however the quotes challenged that for commercial reasons, the original design may not be available due to original suppliers availability to supply.

Councillor Mrs Rigby stated that she would like to see a picture of the benches and know what quality they are before installation. Councillor Drinkwater queried the vast difference in prices quoted.

RESOLVED That the provision of benches be deferred until such time as a proper specification and picture of the benches is available.

12. BURNTWOOD CEMETERY: SCATTERED ASHES MEMORIAL WALL (Minute No. 4.1 - 15 June 2017 refers)

The DSM made reference to Minute No. 4.1 (15 June 2017) and informed Members that he had held meetings with the winning contractor to discuss work patterns, associated items and a start date. It is the company's intention to start the memorial wall construction in January 2018 (subject to weather conditions).

The DSM reminded Members that at the Burial Grounds Committee meeting held on 15 June 2017, the contract was awarded for the construction of an angled wall and that Members had asked that the same company be approached for a cost of a five sided angled wall. The DSM reminded Members that the Chairman and Members had agreed to the additional cost.

Councillor Mrs Stokes asked if the contractor appointment was different to the contractor who had carried out the work at Coulter Lane. The DSM confirmed that they were.

RESOLVED That retrospective approval be given for a five sided angled wall design at a cost of £12,490 plus VAT.

(The Meeting closed at 6.25 pm)

Signed

Date