

**ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
AT ELLESMERE TOWN HALL**

**Members Present:**

Chair : Paul Goulbourne

Vice Chair : Graham Dyke

Councillors : John Baker, Kay Egerton, Geoff Elner, John Frost & Anne Wignall

The annual visit to the cemetery by Councillors took place prior to tonight's meeting. Both Jo Butterworth, Ellesmere Town Council Clerk, and Kath Hoskisson, Assistant Town Clerk, accompanied the Councillors on their visit. The weather was sunny and very warm and the cemetery generally looked in pristine condition which Councillors remarked upon. As Councillors toured the cemetery there were certain matters raised which were discussed later at the meeting (see 30/19 below).

**Public Participation Session**

No members of the public were present this evening.

**Apologies Received**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Pat Clubbe who was on holiday.

**Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests**

No disclosures were made.

**Public Participation Session**

Nothing further was discussed.

**27/19 Minutes**


RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 are confirmed, approved and signed.

**28/19 Matters Arising**

No specific matters were raised

**29/19 Cemetery Working Group cash assets split**

Jo Butterworth explained the situation to Councillors. Ellesmere Town Council and Ellesmere Rural Parish Council share the financial split 60% / 40% and if ETC were to give ERPC their 40% back then that would mean that ETC would be responsible for the full 100% which is patently not the agreement. Jo explained that the only time ERPC would ever receive their 40% as a cash payment would be if the Cemetery Working Group devolved completely for any reason and ETC took over complete control. She further advised that ETC and ERPC had, for years, been giving the old Ellesmere Parishes Joint Burial Committee a Precept every financial year and that never at the end of any financial year had the EPJBC given back any money to either council. In conjunction with the auditor what ETC has done to protect the whole 100% of the cash assets from being used by ETC for anything else is to show the balances on both of the CWG accounts (current and Woosnam & Excel) as earmarked reserves with the ERPC's 40% as a creditor in the ETC accounts in order to reflect the fact that it is actually ERPC's share. This is what will need to be done at the end of each financial year. Jo advised Councillors that, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the total cash assets of the current account and the Excel & Woosnam account (minus unpresented cheques) was £59,506. Thus, at the end of the 2018/2019 financial year the split applicable was ETC (60%) £35,703 and ERPC (40%) £23,802. Councillors expressed their appreciation to Jo for coming to the meeting and explaining the whole situation which they now fully understood.





### **30/19 Annual cemetery visit by Councillors**

It was noted that two or three older graves had some soil slippage underneath their horizontal grave stones. The Cemetery Co-ordinator will ask Chris Egerton to top these up with topsoil when he is removing the tarmac path in August.

Councillor Wignall had previously mentioned the possibility of having a "contemplative area" within the cemetery. During a recent local history tour it was felt by people attending that a suitable place for such an area might be to the right immediately after entering the cemetery through the top gate. Councillors this evening looked at this area and felt that it would indeed be a suitable area. The feeling was that an arbour could be situated here which would not take up more ground area than ten foot by ten foot. This arbour could be either made of wood or metal and could have a plaque with all the names of the deceased at the workhouse included and Ann Harris could be involved in any project. It was agreed to put this on the Agenda for our next meeting when it could be more fully discussed.

The question of memorials testing was again raised and the CC will liaise with Jo Butterworth regarding this.

During the recent local history tour which included the interior of the Chapel it was noted that there was a plan of the cemetery together with an early burial record book on the bier (see item 35/19 below).

The pristine state of the grass throughout the cemetery was remarked upon by Councillors and the CC will contact Gary Jones to express the appreciation of the CWG on the work his team had been doing at the cemetery. The CC will also ask Gary to top up the soil store at the rear of the Chapel, trim back some of the growth coming through the metal fence at the top of the cemetery and remove the ash trees that are growing either in or near to any graves.

It was also agreed by Councillors to ask Chris Egerton to trim back all the yew trees together with any other vegetation growing from them, to trim the conifer fence by the Cremorne Gardens gate and to trim back any growth affecting the rear of the Memorial Garden.

Councillors commented on the fir tree that is growing in the grave of Michael Vermeulen. The CC will write to the family asking them to keep an eye on it and to not let it grow any larger than it is at present.

### **31/19 Grounds maintenance**

The CC advised that Groundforce had been cutting the grass regularly and had been spraying the weeds both inside and outside the cemetery. Gary Jones had set up a programme of works to carry out all the necessary maintenance work throughout the year.

### **32/19 New grave space**

Chris Egerton had advised the CC that he intended to start the removal of the tarmac path on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and advised that he will require the use of the lay-by at the top of the cemetery throughout the week that the work will be taking place. He also advised that he may remove the conifer tree and plant near the old cornerstone adjacent to the road earlier. The CC will draw up suitable notices to be placed at the cemetery.

### **33/19 Cemetery Lodge guttering and rainwater downpipes**

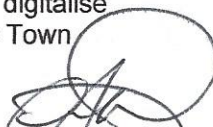
Carl Dulson confirmed that he would replace the existing guttering and rainwater downpipes with "cast iron lookalike" plastic at the beginning of September.

### **34/19 Financial Information received from ETC**

The CC had sent the latest financial information from Jo Butterworth to Councillors and provided them with hard copies for tonight's meeting.

### **35/19 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report**

The CC advised Councillors that there had been no interments since our last meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Councillors were told that during the local library history society tour of the cemetery last Saturday, led by Ann Harris and Chris Jobson, that Ann had reported that there was a water leak in the rear corner of the Chapel at the end of the last pew beside the wall between the two separate parts of the Chapel. This may have been caused by a loose slate or tile. The CC advised Councillors that he had asked Carl Dulson to check the situation and carry out any remedial work required as soon as possible. During the tour Ann Harris displayed a large old map of the cemetery and an early record book. Pam Willing from the Oswestry Family and Local History Group said that they would be happy to digitalise the map and early record book for free together with the map held in the display case at the Town



Hall. There was, apparently, also discussion about our burial registers which are now held at Shropshire Archives. Chris Jobson did not think that they were digitalised and people on the tour felt that they should be. In fact, all the registers (apart from the current one that the CC is using) were digitalised in 2015 at a net cost of £312.50. Copies of these digitalised records are held by ETC, Councillor Frost and the CC.

Subsequent to the tour visit both Pam Willing and Chris Jobson requested that copies of these records be made available for public use. Pam Willing advised that Shropshire Archives do not make this digitalised information available to researchers. Jo Butterworth and the CC will look into the matter further.

Income received by the CC for the year to date is :

Interments	£ 290.00
Headstones / MV	£ 170.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 460.00</u>

**Date of next scheduled meeting**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7.00 p.m. in Ellesmere Town Hall.

End of meeting.



3-10-19