

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF "ZOOM" MEETING HELD ON 24th September 2020

Members Present:

Chair : Paul Goulbourne

Councillors : John Baker, Pat Clubbe, Geoff Elner and Anne Wignall
(Councillor Frost had tried to join the meeting but was unable to do so)

Public Participation Session

No members of the public were present at this meeting.

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Councillor Graham Hutchinson.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

Public Participation Session

Not applicable.

05/20 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2020 are confirmed, approved and signed.

06/20 Matters Arising :

Memorials Testing

The CC advised Councillors that he had spoken to Steve Jones (Jones & Hughes) yesterday to get an update on his thoughts on the matter. Steve advised that with the Covid lockdown situation he was currently months behind with his workload and was only beginning to catch up belatedly bit by bit. He advised that he thought he would have a quieter period during next January or possibly February and hoped that he could start memorial testing then. He will keep the CC apprised of his situation.

07/20 Burials in new section of cemetery (old tarmac path area)

The CC advised Councillors that there was only one space left in the P Section and once this had been filled then we would be starting interments in the old tarmac path area which Chris Egerton had removed and re-turfed last year. The CC advised that he had spoken to the two main funeral directors (E J Edgerton & Son and A J Sumner and Son) who use the cemetery and the main gravedigger to ascertain their thoughts on how we should proceed with interments in this space. They were all unanimous with the strong opinion that new interments should start at the Mere end of this path with the feet end of the coffins being towards the Mere and proceed up the path towards the road. Any headstones subsequently placed on graves would likewise face the Mere. The CC had then e-mailed Councillors Goulbourne, Dyke, Baker and Frost to gauge their thoughts on the matter. They too agreed that we should proceed on the above basis. This was now put to Councillors at tonight's meeting and all were in unanimous agreement to proceed on this basis. This will now be put to a full ETC meeting for approval.

08/20 Funeral Directors' Covid 19 risk assessments for burial in Swan Hill Cemetery

The CC advised that Jo Butterworth had requested him to contact funeral directors to see sight of their Covid 19 risk assessments for interments at Swan Hill Cemetery. The CC advised that he had thus contacted all funeral directors who had used the cemetery since he began as CC. The majority had replied and all their responses were forwarded on to Jo for her information and use.

09/20 Financial Information received from ETC

The CC had previously e-mailed Councillors with relevant financial information relating to the CWG recently received from Jean Hynes (Assistant Town Clerk). This showed that the finances of the CWG are in a healthy state.

10/20 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report

The CC had e-mailed a copy of his report to Councillors prior to tonight's meeting. He advised the following :

Since the lockdown began in March he had just carried on with all relevant duties at the cemetery on a day to day basis.

All interments, bar one, had been carried out by funeral directors with due compliance to all the relevant Government guidelines. The one anomaly was at the last interment (Beryl Price) in August which was attended by 37 people, including Jo Butterworth, but they did maintain necessary social distancing measures.

Since our last meeting on 30th January 2020 there had been the following interments :

February	4 (3 coffin and a double cremated remains)
March	3 (2 coffin and one cremated remains)
April	3 (2 coffin and one cremated remains)
May	1 (coffin)
June	4 (3 coffin and one cremated remains)
July	4 (all coffins)
August	2 (both coffins)

For a number of weeks the gate at the bottom of the cemetery was kept closed due to the fact that the toilets in Cremorne Gardens were not in operation and we did not want a repeat of the problems we encountered some time previously when the toilets were closed and we had left the gate open.

The CC advised that whilst there had been numerous things which he had needed to deal with on a day to day basis regarding the cemetery some items of note were :

- it was agreed by Councillors to keep the cemetery fees for 2020/2021 the same as 2019/2020
- it was also agreed that the gravediggers could place spoil in the top corner of the cemetery for the period until they could remove it after Covid lockdown restrictions were eased. The spoil is currently being removed bit by bit on an ongoing basis
- the water tap in the cemetery was leaking and had to be replaced
- prior to one interment in the N Section, the gravedigger was accosted by a swarm of wasps which had a well camouflaged nest attached to a nearby headstone. Amazingly, the colour of this nest almost exactly matched the colour of the headstone. The nest was quickly dealt with by a pest control officer
- Groundforce have continued to look after the cemetery to a high standard and this has been commented on by various people at the cemetery. The CC had thanked Gary Jones and his staff for all their efforts

- one of the interments in June was for Roger Hampson who was a previous member of the old Ellesmere Parishes Joint Burial Committee for some years. He will be greatly missed
- at one interment, when it was raining quite heavily, it was noticed that the front downspout and pipe on the Chapel were overflowing. Carl Dulson was asked to assess the situation and he found that the downspout was seriously blocked. Carl quickly dealt with this blockage
- a bench, commemorating Councillor Anne Wignall's parents, was found collapsed in the cemetery. This was duly removed but no replacement has yet been sited at this spot. It will be up to Anne to decide if she wants to replace it with a new bench honouring her parents

Councillor Wignall raised the possibility of having more benches sited within the cemetery (which would be paid for and maintained by the CWG) for the benefit of visitors, especially the elderly. Councillors felt this was worth pursuing. Councillor Baker mentioned that perhaps they should be metal wrought iron benches for ease of future maintenance. Councillors concurred and felt that perhaps they should be painted black to match existing metalwork at the cemetery. Councillor Baker said he would ask Mike Jones, who has done a lot of the afore mentioned metalwork, to give a quote for a suitable bench. This item will be placed on the Agenda for our next meeting when the whole idea can be looked at in more detail. It was also mentioned that perhaps the previously proposed arbour at the top of the cemetery could be made similarly. Councillor Elner mentioned the possibility of having a swing bench(es).

Councillor Clubbe again raised the situation of the old workhouse site and said that she did not want the matter of this site to be forgotten. Councillors were sympathetic to what she said and wanted to pursue the matter further again. It was agreed to put this on the Agenda for the next meeting. Councillor Goulbourne agreed, in the meantime, to mention this to Jo Butterworth and get her input on the matter.

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

Interments	£4,055.00
Headstones / MV	£ 980.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>£5,035.00</u>

Date of next scheduled meeting (“ZOOM”)

Thursday 26th November 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

End of meeting.

