

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25th November 2021
AT ELLESMERE TOWN HALL

Members Present:

Chair : Paul Goulbourne

Vice Chair : Graham Dyke

Councillors : John Baker, Pat Clubbe, Kay Egerton, Geoff Elner, Tim Hunter, Graham Hutchinson and Joan Mowl

Public Participation Session

No members of the public were present this evening.

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Jo Butterworth who was due to attend tonight's meeting.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

Public Participation Session

Nothing further was discussed.

35/21 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2021 are confirmed, approved and signed.

36/21 Matters Arising

Proposed tarmacking at entrance to cemetery

The Cemetery Co-ordinator advised Councillors that, so far, he had only received two quotes to do the proposed new tarmac area near the cemetery gates. One was from CCL Surfacing and the other was from James Clarke (Clarke Contracting) who had previously met with Councillor Egerton at the cemetery. James had also quoted for doing the pathway to the rear of the Lodge up to the top of the cemetery. Councillor Egerton advised that James had resurfaced the car park at "Stan's" shop at St. Martins. The CC was asked to thank James for his quotes and to ask him if he could incorporate a gravelly dust or aggregate surface dressing in order to complement the look of the rest of the cemetery.

Proposed water butts at the Chapel

The CC advised Councillors that there were six downpipes on the Chapel, one at the front, one at the rear and two on each side. Councillors felt that we should obtain four 225 litre water butts with taps to be placed on each of the side downpipes. As this was not the best time of year to do this Councillors agreed to look at placing them in situ next Spring.

Possible future work at the cemetery (for budget purposes)

Councillors didn't agree any specific figures at this time. Items which are still being considered are the tarmacking proposal at the cemetery gates together with possibly tarmacking the path at the rear of the Lodge up to the top gate of the cemetery. If this long pathway was to be tarmacked then Councillors wanted to simultaneously run a water pipe under the new tarmac up to the arbour at the top of the cemetery. There was also the possibility of having a water source down at the bottom of the cemetery near to the Cremorne Gardens gate. Councillor Dyke

mentioned the possibility of having solar panels on the Chapel and this was felt to be feasible. It was agreed that these two items be looked at again within the CWG budget for 2023 / 2024. Councillor Baker mentioned the possibility of covering the mass grassed graves area at the bottom of the cemetery with wildflowers and / or trees with possibly a tree having a memorial to the people interred there. This was unanimously agreed to be a very worthwhile way of honouring the people who did not, as yet, have any form of memorial. This area could then be cut once a year. Councillors agreed to consider the financial aspects going forward in terms of budget figures for 2022 / 2023 and 2023 / 2024.

37/21 Possible land for future additional grave space

Councillors decided to again defer on this and put it on the Agenda for our next meeting.

38/21 Defra Consultation

Councillor Goulbourne explained the situation regarding the Defra Consultation regarding "Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016". NALC (the National Association of Local Councils) had forwarded a document detailing a summary with context and giving current policy positions. They had requested that relevant Consultation Questions in the document be answered and the information returned to them by tomorrow (5.00 p.m. on Friday 26th November). Councillor Goulbourne read out the questions, only two of which were directly relevant to the cemetery (Q 3a and Q 3b) :

Q 3a: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to make General Binding Rules available for small-scale cemetery developments in low environmental risk settings ?

Q 3b: To what extent do you agree that the draft exemption conditions for small-scale cemetery developments in low environmental risk settings in Annex B are appropriate ?

Councillors unanimously agreed to answer "strongly disagree" to each question.

Councillor Goulbourne in conjunction with the Town Clerk will tomorrow relay this information to NALC as requested.

39/21 Cemetery Lodge Rent Review

Ellesmere Rural Parish Council had requested a rent review on Cemetery Lodge. The last time this had been done was in 2019 when the Town Council, with a recommendation from the Cemetery Working Group, agreed to keep the rent the same for 2019 / 2020. Bowen Son & Watson had suggested a rent increase of £25 per month taking into account various factors. The ERPC Clerk, Melanie Joyce, had written to the Town Clerk to advise that ERPC agreed to this £25 rent increase per month, from £550 to £575, as from 1st April 2022. The Town Clerk had advised Sandra at Bowen Son & Watson and she will write to the tenants Gerald and Katrina.

40/21 Adoption of Ellesmere Town Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

As per the legal agreement between ETC and ERPC Councillors unanimously resolved that the Cemetery Working Group formally adopt ETC Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. These should be formally adopted each year.

41/21 Review of Cemetery Fees and Charges for 2022 / 2023 (for budget purposes)

The CC advised Councillors that the last increase in the cemetery fees and charges had taken place in April 2019, and that it had been agreed each year since to keep them the same. Normally the fees would be reviewed each year at our March meeting but the Town Clerk had requested that we review the fees for 2022 / 2023 at tonight's meeting for budget purposes. Councillors discussed the matter and unanimously agreed to recommend an increase of 5% (rounded to the nearest £0 or £5) for interment and headstone fees but to keep the hire of the Chapel fee and Burial Searches fees the same.

42/21 Funeral Directors Protocols

Following a recent incident at the cemetery involving a particular firm of funeral directors the Town Clerk, Jo Butterworth, called a meeting at the Town Hall with a representative of the firm in question together with Melanie Joyce (the ERPC Clerk), the CC and Councillor Goulbourne. This meeting was to try and clarify why the incident had occurred. Following this meeting Melanie Joyce had contacted the Town Clerk to say that ERPC had asked her to formally request that a written protocol be put in place for funeral directors in order to formalise the procedure they are expected to undertake including timescales when arranging interments at Swan Hill Cemetery. The CC had drafted up a new "Funeral Directors and Interments" set of protocols which he gave to Councillors for approval at tonight's meeting. Councillors approved this document and the CC will now forward it on to the Town Clerk for her approval after which the CC will send a copy to Melanie Joyce and all relevant funeral directors who use the cemetery..

43/21 Financial Information received from ETC

As normal the CC had previously e-mailed Councillors with all relevant financial information relating to the CWG he had received prior to tonight's meeting. This showed that the finances of the CWG continue to be in a healthy state.

Councillors discussed various possible future work at the cemetery. They felt that we should ask ETC to put £10,000 in their budget for 2022/23 to do the tarmacking close to the main entrance of the cemetery and another £10,000 in their budget for 2023/24 for further tarmacking on the path up the cemetery at the back of the Lodge. They also felt that another £5,000 should be budgeted for 2023 / 2024 to extend the water supply up to the arbour at the top of the cemetery. Councillors also agreed that we should place water butts (with taps) on four of the downpipes of the Chapel, two on each side.

44/21 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report

The CC advised Councillors that since our last meeting on 30th September there had been six interments. Four were coffin interments, with two new doubles in the Q Section and two new singles in the M Section. The other two were cremated remains interments, one a new double in the Memorial Garden and one into an existing grave in the triangle in front of the Chapel. The two hedges either side behind the cemetery gates have been trimmed back by Ben Williams thus allowing more sideways movement of the gates.

Severn Trent have recently done work on the drains in the road in front of the Lodge.

Martin Lees from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has recently surveyed all of the war graves in the cemetery and he found that only the headstones of the two Polish graves were in need of a slight clean. He will do this with a brush and clean water in the near future. He also commented that the cemetery is very well maintained.

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

Interments	£ 6,290.00
Headstones / MV	£ 3,710.00
<u>Total :</u>	<u>£10,000.00</u>

45/21 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Chair, Councillor Goulbourne, formally moved that the press and public now be excluded from the meeting in order to discuss a proposal under "confidential minutes". This was unanimously agreed by all Councillors present although no members of the Press or public were in attendance tonight.

Date of next scheduled meeting

Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7.00 p.m. in Ellesmere Town Hall.

End of meeting.

