

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28th July 2022
AT ELLESMERE TOWN HALL

Members Present:

Chair :

Vice Chair : Tim Hunter

Councillors : John Baker, Kay Egerton, Geoff Elner, Paul Goulbourne and
Anne Wignall

In the absence of Councillor Dyke Councillor Hunter chaired the meeting

Melanie Joyce the Ellesmere Rural Parishes Council Clerk joined Councillors on their cemetery visit and was also in attendance at this meeting

The annual visit to the cemetery by Councillors took place prior to tonight's meeting. Melanie Joyce was also in attendance at the cemetery. Prior to tonight Melanie had been on a cemetery visit with the Councillors of Ellesmere Parishes Rural Council and had produced an excellent report of this visit and a copy of this report had been given to all CWG members. Whilst the CC was already aware of many of the points raised it was agreed by the Cemetery Co-ordinator and all Councillors present to work their way through Melanie's report item by item as a guide for tonight's visit.

It was noted that one particular tree's foliage at the bottom of the cemetery was encroaching on access at a particular grave. It was agreed by Councillors to ask Chris Egerton if he would come to the cemetery and give us an idea of what work he felt required to be done regarding all the trees including the yew trees. Hopefully, he would then be able to carry out any necessary work possibly a little later in the year. Chris would also be asked to clear the vegetation at the rear of the Memorial Garden area as he had done previously.

The question of allowing a kerbstone on a particular grave in the lawned (M Section) was discussed in some depth with all Councillors present finally agreeing that they were against allowing a kerbstone on this grave or indeed in any part of this lawned area. They were also against allowing kerbstones in any other designated lawned areas of the cemetery apart from the three previously agreed (in error) in the Q Section. The CC will amend the Cemetery Regulations to reflect this and ask for approval at our next meeting.

Councillors decided that they wished the purple glass, covering the window at the rear of the Chapel, to be removed and disposed of. It was suggested that possibly Graham Dyke's colleague Mark could undertake to do this.

The donated wooden bench nearest the Memorial Garden is in need of refurbishment and it was agreed to ask Graham Dyke if Mark would be able to do the necessary remedial work on it. Councillors discussed the question of plaques on benches and on one bench in particular which was a replacement black metal bench identical to other fairly recently situated benches within the cemetery. It had previously been agreed by Councillors that no plaques should be allowed on any of these new benches and it was agreed to ask the owner to remove the plaque from the bench. It was felt that a suitable plaque could perhaps be situated underneath the bench. It was also felt that there is insufficient space in the cemetery to permit the installation of many new commemorative benches for the public and the cost of any new bench (which would be required to match the existing new benches) may make it prohibitive for many people. It had been agreed previously by Councillors that commemorative plaques (of a defined type and size) could be situated on the brickwork of the Memorial Garden. Whilst the CC had previously received three enquiries regarding this possibility so far none had come to fruition.

The CC advised that Sean Burkey had told him that the vegetation encroaching over and through the metal railings adjacent to the Shropshire Council land were on his "to do" list so hopefully this situation will be addressed in the near future.

The ramp wall to the Chapel Store is in need of repair as are the posts and rails on it. The main cause of the damage is likely to have been Rotary when they are accessing to and from the Store. It was unanimously agreed by Councillors to ask Mike Jones if he would be willing and able to carry out the necessary work to the ramp wall and install new black metal railings together with a metal post at the bottom end of the ramp. Councillor Baker agreed to speak to Mike and obtain a quote.

It was suggested that it might be an idea to have some plaques / information boards near the main and bottom entrances to the cemetery to explain some of the history of the unmarked graves area and other useful informative information. This will be considered going forward. With regard to possible provision for more new graves it was suggested by Councillor Baker that the conifer hedge (which has a boundary wall and metal fence within it), running along the unmarked graves area at the bottom of the cemetery, could possibly be removed and, if Shropshire Council were willing, part of the land beyond the fence could be used for additional grave space. Councillor Hunter felt that the existing roadway could be re-routed to accommodate extending the cemetery in this area. Councillor Elner agreed to approach Shropshire Council in the first instance to see if this might be feasible and acceptable to them. During the walk around Councillor Wignall and Councillor Hunter went to have a look at the two plant pots outside the entrance to the cemetery. Councillor Wignall was keen to have new plants in the pots to help improve the appearance at the entrance. Councillors were in unanimous agreement that this was a good idea and asked Councillor Wignall to look into the matter further.

Public Participation Session

No members of the public were present this evening.

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Graham Dyke, Graham Hutchinson and Joan Mowl.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

Public Participation Session

Nothing further was discussed.

24/22 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022 are confirmed, approved and signed.

25/22 Matters Arising

Tarmacking at entrance to cemetery

The tarmacking at the entrance to the cemetery had been completed by James Clarke Contracting at the beginning of June and the result was an appreciable upgrade to the cemetery. Various complimentary comments had already been received.

Wheelie bins

The CC advised Councillors that he had today been in contact with Tanita at Shropshire Council who apologised for only getting one new bin delivered so far. She said that she would arrange to get the missing three delivered within the next ten working days.

New grave space within the cemetery going forward

At the cemetery visit prior to the meeting it was agreed by Councillors that it was indeed not feasible to take up part, or indeed all, of the second tarmac path for additional grave space. Whilst there are other areas within the cemetery that can certainly be used for grave space going forward these areas could detract from the appearance of the cemetery and it would need further in depth discussion as to whether some or all of them should be utilised. Councillor Baker's idea mentioned above (during the cemetery visit) will be explored further.

Possible grave space external to cemetery

Councillor Dyke had e-mailed the CC prior to tonight's meeting to advise that he had been to see Mr Stokes at Haughton Farm regarding the possibility of him donating or selling some land. We already knew that the land near the Mere is owned by a number of cousins and this land would thus be both problematic from this regard and also from the point of view that it is quite low lying. Mr Stokes did go on to advise that, if any land may become available in the future, he would keep us in mind.

Councillor Dyke also advised that he had spoken to a couple of friends of his who both own land bordering the town but, unfortunately, neither were interested in giving up any ground. Councillor Dyke also advised that he had another farmer friend who has land near the town and that he will call to see him in the coming days.

Councillor Dyke had also advised the CC that he believed the field bordering the top end of the cemetery had recently been sold and thus it may be worth making contact with the new owner(s) once we know who they are to see what may be possible in terms of extending the cemetery in this area. Councillor Dyke said he would endeavour to find out to whom the land now belonged in order that an approach could be made.

26/22 Chapel ramp area

Councillors had looked at the situation in this area during their visit to the cemetery. They unanimously agreed to ask Mike Jones to quote for the necessary repairs to the wall and for the installation of new black metal posts and railings together with a suitable metal bollard at the lower end of the wall for future protection. Councillor Baker said he would speak to Mike regarding this.

27/22 Yew trees and bushes near entrance to cemetery

It was agreed by Councillors to contact Chris Egerton to ask him to come and assess what needed to be done in terms of pruning the yew trees and bushes and other necessary vegetative work that might be required to include cutting back the vegetation to the rear of the Memorial Garden as he had done previously.

28/22 Request to donate a bench to the cemetery

Ian Walford had written to the CC on behalf of his father-in-law Danny Knight. Danny wanted to donate a bench to the cemetery in memory of his wife, Denise Sadie Knight, who had died just prior to the new year and had been interred in January 2022 into the Q Section. They were looking at having an oak bench with a simple plaque. Councillors discussed this in some depth and agreed that a bench could be donated provided it was a metal bench similar to the recent additions. Due to general lack of space they felt that perhaps it could be sited somewhere on the grassed area at the bottom of the cemetery with a suitable plaque placed underneath it but not on the bench itself.

29/22 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.

30/22 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report

The CC advised Councillors that since our last meeting on 26th May there had been four interments. Two were re-openings for cremated remains in the old G Section and two were new double graves for coffins in the new Q Section. Thus, 13 spaces had now been taken out of an estimated 27 in this Section.

Income received by the CC for the 2022 / 2023 financial year to date was :

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Interments | £2,685.00 |
| Headstones / MV | £1,130.00 |

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| <u>Total :</u> | <u>£3,815.00</u> |
|----------------|------------------|

Date of next scheduled meeting

Thursday 29th September at 7.00 p.m. in Ellesmere Town Hall.

(please note that this meeting will be preceded by a visit by Councillors to a possible grave site at Berwyn View, Ellesmere)

End of meeting.

.