

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24th November 2022
AT ELLESMERE TOWN HALL

Members Present:

Chair : Graham Dyke

Vice Chair : this appointment is yet to be filled (will be on Agenda for the next meeting)

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

Councillor Pat Clubbe has had to retire from her position due to illness

Melanie Joyce the Ellesmere Rural Parish Council Clerk was in attendance at tonight's meeting

Public Participation Session

No members of the public were present this evening.

Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Jo Butterworth the Ellesmere Town Clerk.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Kay Egerton declared an interest as her son, Chris, had submitted a quote for vegetative work at the cemetery which was being considered at tonight's meeting.

Public Participation Session

Nothing further was discussed.

38/22 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2022 are confirmed, approved and signed.

39/22 Matters Arising

Chapel ramp area

The Cemetery Co-ordinator had now received three quotes for repairs in this area. These were from Mike Jones, Mark Roberts and Carl Dulson. Councillors decided that they wanted Mike Jones to carry out this work and the CC will ask Mike to go ahead with this work as soon as he is able to.

Councillor Egerton now left the room whilst the following item was discussed.

Yew trees, other trees, bushes and vegetation in cemetery

The CC advised that he had received three quotes to carry out this work at the cemetery. These were from Chris Egerton, Benbow Brothers and John Sheldon. All three quotes were remarkably similar in value but Councillors decided that they wished Chris Egerton to carry out this work. The CC will now contact Chris and ask him to carry this out as soon as feasible.

40/22 Grave M 33 (Alyson Christina Davies) Alyson's father George Davies had been invited to attend for this item but, in the event, he did not. Councillor Wignall said that she was not happy with the kerbstone situation on this grave and felt that a kerbstone should be allowed in this case. However, this previous majority decision cannot be reviewed for a period of six months. Councillor Wignall and some other Councillors felt that the Cemetery Regulations should be up for review periodically and it was agreed to carry out such a review at the due May 2023 meeting. The CC asked Councillors to send him details of questions and the names of people we would like to be involved in this review of the Cemetery Regulations. Councillor Baker said that he would carry out some research on the internet in the meantime with a view to possibly re-assessing our rules in light of what other cemeteries and church graveyards allowed.

41/22 Review of Cemetery fees and charges for 2023 / 2024 (budget)

Councillors unanimously agreed to keep the fees and charges for 2023 / 2024 the same as for the current year and the CC will advise Jo Butterworth accordingly.

42/22 Acquiring of new cemetery ground

Councillors once again discussed this situation in some detail. Councillor Dyke mentioned land for sale which had now been withdrawn behind houses on Elson Road. It was also mentioned that even if some land was available and purchased there was no guarantee that it would necessarily be suitable as a cemetery. Councillor Elner mentioned that Shropshire Council Estates department had said that a lay-by opposite the cricket club was the only piece of land in Ellesmere which might be suitable for burials and that Shropshire Council basically have no suitable land for a cemetery. Mention was again made regarding land at Berwyn View but Councillors felt that this would not be suitable for burials and that the access, in any event, would be very problematic. Councillor Baker said that the existing soil type could rule out certain areas of land as being suitable for burials in any event. Councillor Dyke referred again to the land in the field adjacent to the top of the cemetery, but it was thought that Claire Wild may no longer be the owner of this field. Councillor Elner said that he would try to have a word with Claire Wild to check the situation. Councillor Baker felt that perhaps Ian Ward could be involved and advise about a possible compulsory purchase situation again. Councillor Baker offered to speak to Ian and also ask him about the alleged situation regarding anthrax being present in the grassed area at the bottom of the cemetery. It was agreed to ask Ian Ward if he would attend our next meeting in January to give us the benefit of his experience.

43/22 Planning for next new grave space in the cemetery

The CC advised Councillors that Jo Butterworth had given him a list of firms to contact to see if they might be able to suggest useful ways of making the most of the cemetery in terms of new graves going forward. Two firms were unable to assist but the CC had had a good chat regarding the situation with Justin Smith of Cemetery Development Services who was happy to give his thoughts on the matter. The upshot basically was that we cannot re-use any graves with bodies already interred and that he couldn't suggest anything further apart from what we already know. Interestingly, Justin knew the cemetery as he had submitted reports about possible new land in the vicinity in 2005 and he said that he would forward copies of these on to me for information. The CC then forwarded these on to Councillors for their information.

The CC advised Councillors that, at a recent interment, he had spoken to the gravediggers regarding the situation at the cemetery and asked them if they would be prepared to meet with Councillors and funeral directors to give their advice on which area(s) of the cemetery should next be utilised for new grave space once the Q Section was full. They said that they would be happy to assist with this and so the CC will try and arrange a meeting in the coming weeks. Councillor Egerton felt that the people of Ellesmere needed a "heads up" regarding the overall grave space situation at the cemetery going forward.

Councillor Wignall offered to draft up a suitable press release to be agreed beforehand by both the Town and Rural Parish Councils.

44/22 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.

45/22 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report

The CC advised Councillors that, since our last meeting on 6th October there had only been three interments in the cemetery. Two were new doubles in the Q Section and one was a re-opening in the E Section. This means that 16 of the expected 27 graves in the Q Section have now been taken since April 2021 which equates to 59.25 % of the available space. If this rate continued then this section would be full in approximately one year.

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

Interments	£5,245.00
Headstones / MV	£2,565.00

<u>Total :</u>	<u>£7,810.00</u>
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Date of next scheduled meeting

Thursday 26th January 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in Ellesmere Town Hall.

End of meeting.

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