

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26th JANUARY 2023
AT ELLESMERE TOWN HALL

Members Present:

Chair : Graham Dyke

Councillors : John Baker, Kay Egerton, Paul Goulbourne, Graham Hutchinson
Joan Mowl and Anne Wignall

Public Participation Session

Ex-Councillor John (Jack) Frost was the sole member of the public in attendance.

01/23 Election of Vice Chair for remainder of 2022 / 2023

Councillor Wignall proposed that Councillor Goulbourne should be the Vice Chair following the previous resignation of Councillor Hunter. This was seconded by Councillor Egerton with all in favour. With no other nominations being received Councillor Hunter was installed as Vice Chair.

02/23 Apologies Received

Apologies had been received from Councillor Elner.

03/23 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

04/23

Public Participation Session

The Chair asked Jack if he wished to say anything. Jack then advised the meeting that he had been looking to see if he could find any recorded cases of anthrax in the locality but advised that he could not find any anywhere in Ellesmere. He advised that Ian Ward had done something similar previously and that the first records of anthrax were from 1847 and it appeared that it had come from the far East. Thus it was not an old disease and was transferred from the cloven hooves of animals to spores in the ground. Jack had also looked through all the minutes since 1950 and had not found any reference to anthrax. Thus it was possible that the grassed area at the bottom of the cemetery may not have anthrax even though rumours had persisted that it may. In any event this area is full of bodies and cannot be used for grave space going forward. Councillor Egerton again mentioned that, at some stage in the future, a plaque and memorial could be sited in this area as a memorial to all those buried therein, many of whom came from the old Ellesmere Workhouse.

05/23 Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2022 are confirmed, approved and signed.

Councillor Wignall advised that Councillor Elner had spoken to Claire Wild, the owner of the field adjacent to the top of the cemetery, and that there was no chance of having any of this land for future grave space.

The question of having kerbstones on graves was again raised. This resulted in quite a heated discussion between Councillors. It was finally agreed that, as had already previously been agreed, the Regulations would be reviewed at the due meeting in May.

06/23 Matters Arising

Chapel ramp area

The Cemetery Co-ordinator advised that he had written to Mike Jones to ask him to carry out the necessary work in this area as per his previous quote. The CC knew that Mike was very busy at present so could not say when he would start on the work.

Yew trees, other trees, bushes and vegetation in cemetery

The CC advised that Chris Egerton had carried out this work on 16th January and had done an excellent job.

07/23 CWG budget 2023 / 2024 (items advised to Jo Butterworth)

The CC had advised Jo Butterworth of two major capital expenditure items to set against the budget for the forthcoming year. These were the external decoration of the Lodge (estimated to be £4,000.00) and memorials testing of the whole cemetery (estimated at 14 days @ £360.00 per day, total £5,040.00).

08/23 Acquisition of external cemetery ground

There had been no progress on this matter. Councillor Baker advised that Ian Ward had been unable to attend tonight's meeting but had agreed to attend a future CWG meeting.

09/23 Next use of land in the cemetery for new grave space

The CC advised Councillors that he had spoken to the gravediggers who had thought there were still some areas which could usefully be used for new graves. They felt that the lawned path adjacent to the M Section (and upwards) could be utilised for two rows of double graves. However, the questions of access and general appearance would have to be considered. There is a small area between the arbour and the old cemetery wall which could be used. The path, immediately to the right after entering the main gates, could also be used. In theory there is quite a lot of space which could accommodate graves. However, if any or all of these were used the general ambience of the cemetery would be greatly affected.

Councillors felt that a public meeting should be held in order to invite people and inform them of the general situation at the cemetery and allow them to express their views. The simple fact is that the cemetery is gradually filling up in terms space for new graves for coffin interments. Cremated remains interments could be accommodated using much less of the land and may eventually be the only way forward.

10/23 CWG Financial Information

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.

11/23 Cemetery Co-ordinator's Report

The CC advised Councillors that, since our last meeting on 24th November 2022 there had only been three interments in the cemetery. One was a new triple grave in the Q Section, one a new double grave also in the Q Section and one a new double cremated remains plot in the Memorial Garden. This now means that 18 of the expected 27 graves in this area have now been taken up which is 67% since April 2021.

The CC advised that he had spoken to the gravediggers recently regarding new grave space in the cemetery going forward. They felt that the grassed path adjacent to the M Section could provide space for quite a few new graves, possibly as a double row. The small area near the arbour and the pathway immediately to the right after entering the main gates could also be used for grave space. However, as always, access and the aesthetic aspect of the cemetery will need to be taken into account going forward.

We had an interment recently for which no charge was applicable. This was for a 13 year old girl, Ella Faye McCreadie, who died suddenly. The son of Ken Drury (who served on the joint parishes burial committee) died suddenly at 61 and is now interred in the Q Section.

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

Interments	£6,325.00
Headstones / MV	£3,230.00

<u>Total :</u>	<u>£9,555.00</u>
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Finally, the CC confirmed that he was in the process of relinquishing his position and his expected leaving date would be 10th February 2023. He wished all Councillors well for the future.

Date of next scheduled meeting

Thursday 30th March at 7.00 p.m. in Ellesmere Town Hall.

End of meeting.

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