

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL CEMETERY WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26th November 2025
at Ellesmere Town Hall.

Members Present:

Chair: P. Goulbourne

V. Chair:

Councillors: N.Proffitt J.Gargiulo, S.Jackson, J.Howard, G.Hitchinson, A Richardson.

Officers: Andy Chatting, (CCO).

CWG 11/25/01 To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Egerton (for personal reasons)

Cllr Elner (sickness)

Cllr Wignall (family commitment)

Proposed for acceptance by Cllr Goulbourne and seconded by Cllr Hutchinson.

Accepted unanimously by the other members of the CWG.

CWG 11/25/02 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests. To receive declarations under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Members are reminded that they are required to **leave** the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

No disclosures were made.

CWG 11/25/03 Grant Dispensations. In pursuance of the Localism Act 2011, s31 (4) to report on any dispensations requested/granted.

None requested.

CWG 11/25/04 Minutes. To read and confirm the minutes of the Cemetery Working Group Meeting held on Thursday 25th September 2025.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th September 2025 be signed as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Cllr Hutchinson and seconded by Cllr. Richardson. Accepted unanimously by the other members of the CWG.

CWG 11/25/05 **Finance.**

(a) CWG Payments. To note payments made during September and October 2025.

(b) Income and Expenditure

(c) Estimated cost of new Memorial Garden

(d) Estimated costs of Memorial Safety Testing

These items were noted.

CWG/11/25/06 **Cemetery Report.** This report was noted with 2 recommendations:

- 1) That the people whose plots had not been restored to lawn and who had not responded to their original letter (of 25th June 2025) should be written to again; to say that action had to be taken by 1st May 2026. After that time, they would be restored by the Council.
- 2) That in relation to the Woosnam and Exell memorials the CCO was requested to assess all 4 plots and provide costings for their restoration for the next meeting (see CWG 11/25/12 below).

CWG 11/25/07 **To consider report into the siting and cost of a New Memorial Garden.**

The CCO reported that he had met with Dulson builders on 26th November 2025 [who had been the firm that constructed the original Memorial Garden and its extension]. They had assessed the area thought suitable for the siting of a new memorial garden and had taken measurements based on the idea of making the new garden accommodate 100 plots. It was explained to Dulsons that the CCO would need to use their 'baseline' estimate as a starting point to offer any construction work to any companies wishing to tender for it. Dulsons agreed to supply a plan/drawing and estimated costings on which to base future activity and allow for estimates to be included in future budgeting.

CWG /11/25/08 **To consider the initial Memorial Safety Testing assessment and the likely costs to council.**

As per the separate report into the initial Memorial Testing Assessment which the Cllrs had seen; a discussion took place about how the CWG preferred to see this managed. Given that the report had been an initial assessment of 6 sections with 19 memorials identified as presenting an immediate risk and others requiring intervention; the members of the CWG requested that as a temporary measure any headstones that failed the structural test to a point where they needed laying down would have to be laid down. The preference being that where possible they should be laid down on their own kerbs or within their own plot. The members of the CWG pointed out that until memorial safety testing had been completed there was no way of assessing the numbers of headstones that required action or the cost of repair. If no 'owners' or people with title could be identified (especially in the older sections) it was noted that either memorials would have to remain flat OR if the Council wanted them restored, then the financial burden of making that happen would sit with the Council.

The CWG members asked the CCO to chase his enquiry with ICCM as regards who should be permitted to undertake this work (i.e. a BRAMM registered mason OR a competent person who could 'sink' headstones without pinning and anchoring them to BRAMM standards).

The CWG were also keen to ensure that any signage affixed to headstones that were staked or laid down contained details of who to contact to find out why action had been necessary.

CWG 11/25/09 **To consider on-going enquiries into the chapel's origin and possible external funding.**

This report was noted with the CCO providing an oral update to the effect that RIBA had carried out their archive research and could find no reference to the cemetery chapel at Ellesmere or to the list of people provided to them who had been involved in its original construction. On that basis it was noted that the CCO was unlikely to be able to look for funding avenues based on the chapel's historical or architectural merit.

CWG 11/25/10 **To consider the repairs to the chapel.**

The CCO reported that on 20th November 2025 he had met again with the specialist plasterer who had provided a quote for repairing and restoring the chapel walls in both sides of the building. The quote amounted to £7,500 inclusive of VAT. Given that the water damage to the chapel had been exacerbated by past activity (incorrect use of render and incorrect use of non-breathable paint) the CWG members were keen to make sure that a specialist be used rather than tendering to a company who might not work to the required standards. For that reason, it was proposed by Cllr Goulbourne that this single tender be recommended to Council. This was seconded by Cllr Richardson and agreed unanimously by the other members present.

CWG 11/25/11 **Standing item on the agenda relating to the acquisition of new land.**

CWG 11/25/12 **The Woosnam and Exell account update.**

This item had been discussed in relation to the CCO report and the CCO was asked to assess the memorials and obtain a quote for their restoration to be funded by the Exell and Woosnam, account.

CWG 11/25/13 **Future Agenda Items.**

- 1) A date to be set for the clearing of Christmas wreaths soon after the next meeting of the CWG on 29th January 2026.
- 2) To help identify the owners of graves in the future the CCO needs to ensure that Memorial Masons have their business name displayed on all new headstones and any that have been removed or replaced.

CWG 09/25/14 Next **Meeting.** Thursday 29th January 2026, at 7:00 pm at Ellesmere Town Hall.

This was noted.

The meeting closed at 19:56 hours.

Chair.....

Date.....