

Minutes of a meeting of the Bures Joint Cemetery Authority held virtually via Zoom on Monday 7th September 2020 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr J Aries (Chairman), Mrs J Wright (Clerk)
Bures St. Mary Parish Council: Cllr J McCrory, Cllr S Sills
Bures Hamlet Parish Council: Cllr M Baker, Cllr C Ellis, Cllr K McAndrew

1/09/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr L Alston (Zoom technical issues).
Apologies accepted by those present.

2/09/20 REGISTER OF INTERESTS & DISPENSATION REQUESTS

To declare any 'Pecuniary' or 'Non Pecuniary' interests and dispensation requests.
No Register of Interests declared and no Dispensation requests put forward.

3/09/20 MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting of 8th June 2020 (previously circulated) were approved as a correct record. To be duly signed following the virtual meeting.

4/09/20 PUBLIC FORUM – 15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by the Chairman
No members of the public present.

5/09/20 INSPECTOR'S ASSET & RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT

Cllr Aries had circulated her report prior to the meeting. Overall the cemetery was in an extremely good condition. Rear field gate difficult to open. Handrail at St Edmunds Lane steps needed repainting. Stones to be cleared from path at front entrance. Lime tree suckers removed. Right hand path and paths in extension area needed weeding. Rotten wooden post in old section to be removed. Railing removed from the late Dupont grave – trip hazard. Sign on order for unstable cross in old section at top of main drive. Wasp nest in old section. Dead ivy at front entrance needed clearing. Clerk to follow up on all matters raised.

Next Inspector: Cllr. M Baker.

6/09/20 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Boundary of Cuckoo Hill development: The fencing along the section of cemetery bounding on to the rear gardens of the development had been installed by the site owner as agreed. He had advised that only one tree was removed but all others would remain to give security to the soil bank. The Chairman advised members that the fencing was of a good standard but would monitor for future slippage as the bank was extremely steep.

b) Utility pole: The pole at the top of the cemetery boundary leading onto St Edmunds Lane had been reported to UK PowerNetwork to clear the overgrowth around and over the pole. Ref No. 248601-Z. Works would require a road closure and therefore this could result in delay of completion of works.

c) Trees: 1) Leylandii – these had been inspected by the contractor with no works considered necessary. The brown areas in the hedging were the result of one dead Leylandii having to be removed in the past. 2) Conifer along top path – a small limb was damaged but not a problem – to be monitored. 3) Chestnut tree in ashes section – family of the late Maud and Stanley Ford had requested the branches to be cut back in an attempt to keep their parents memorial clean from bird droppings. Contractor following up. Cllr Aries to monitor and keep memorial tidy.

d) Wild flower banks: The Chairman put forward a suggestion to convert the grassed areas between the lime trees into wildflower banks. All members welcomed this suggestion. It was agreed to gain advice from St Mary Church who had recently created a very successful wildflower section in the churchyard.

e) Alternative use of glyphosate: Both parish councils had undertaken a review of action on Climate Change and in particular the use of glyphosate. The contractor had trialled New Way as an alternative in other parishes but members noted that this was dangerous to bees and so agreed for a trial of Avenger to be undertaken when an alternative supplier had been sourced by the contractor. Pathways currently being raked only with pulling out of weeds. Clerk continuing to follow up on this matter with all parties.

f) Contractor's works: All works as per works list completed. (see attached). Rear steps and St Edmunds Lane bank to be tidied and strimmed. Deadwood in trees to rear of Nos. 14 and 15 Cuckoo Hill to be removed. Branch on ground to rear of houses to be left for insects to forage.

7/09/20 CREATION OF STORAGE AREA/PARKING BAY/TURNING CIRCLE

The Cemetery Authority had qualified for the Government Small Business Grant. The Clerk and Chairman had both completed the online surveys following receipt of the grant with no accountability asked for on use of the grant. Members agreed to proceed with the suggestion to improve parking and vehicle access.

a) Storage area/parking bay: Cllr McAndrew had circulated drawings outlining removal of the shed and creation of a parking bay for 2 vehicles. A lock up cabinet would be needed to house the small materials currently stored in the shed. The frame containing the grave map to be re-fixed in a suitable covered location. Clerk to obtain 3 quotations for the work.

b) Creation of turning circle: Cllr McAndrew had circulated drawings outlining a proposed turning circle for use by the hearse and funeral cortege when in the extension area to reduce the need for the vehicles to reverse down the top drive. The current 'No Access' sign to remain in place to deter other vehicles from entering the extension area. Clerk to obtain 3 quotations for the work.

8/09/20 MANAGEMENT OF MEMORIALS

a) Unstable memorial signs: The Clerk had arranged for a supply of warning signs to be made via local designer Steven Binks. A temporary sign to be placed on the unstable memorial cross in the section at the top of the main drive. The Clerk had been asked to locate 2 allegedly removed memorials. There were 4 old memorials stacked in the hedge in the oldest section. Clerk to follow up with the contractor.

b) Memorial stability test: Owing to Covid-19 this had been put on hold. Clerk to contact Luxton Stonemasons again with a view to continuing with a 5 year rolling programme of memorial stability testing.

c) Memorial map recording: The Clerk and Chairman had completed the onsite memorial inventory and the Clerk was continuing to record the entries on spreadsheets. She had completed marking the memorials on the cemetery grave maps and spare copies had been made for use by Luxton Stonemasons when completing the onsite memorial stability test.

d) Ashes section: The Clerk had noted that the regulations referring to planting out of ashes plots was not being adhered to by some grave owners. The Chairman advised that she had checked and removed shrubs contrary to the regulations.

9/09/20 CORRESPONDENCE

Covid-19 Business surveys asking for impact on businesses – completed by both Chairman and Clerk.

Guidance on transfer of exclusive rights – held on file.

A request had been made to the Cemetery Authority to erect a memorial in the form of a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Gallipoli Marker on the grave of casualty K.P.Carr grave reference Division B. 14 by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The request also included a waiving of the memorial fee. Members noted the history of tending the grave resulting in this request. A vote was taken with a casting Chairman's vote. The request was approved. Clerk to duly complete acceptance of application form.

10/09/20 FINANCE

Business Access A/C balance: £19,671.35

Community A/C balance: £8,702.00 (when all cheques paid).

- a) Finance & Budget Monitoring Report – circulated, noted and attached.
- b) Bank Reconciliation dated 20th August 2020 circulated, noted and attached. Corresponding bank statements circulated, noted and attached and duly signed by the Chairman and a non-signatory member.
- c) It had been agreed to waive burial fees during the Covid-19 pandemic and fees would continue to be waived with a further review at the January 2021 meeting of the Cemetery Authority.
- d) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations updated as per NALC recommendations.
- e) Employment Briefing National Clerk's Salary Award implemented from 1st April 2020. The Clerk had submitted a request to BHPC and BSMPC for a salary review. The Cemetery Authority agreed that the Clerk's salary would be maintained in line with the agreed salary review by the two parish councils at their respective September meetings.
- f) Half year precept requests submitted to BHPC and BSMPC – noted.

11/09/20 BUDGET

The Clerk had circulated the proposed 3 year budget plan 2021 - 2024.

The 2020/21 £1,000 winter maintenance budget still to be spent. It was agreed to use some of the unspent budget to reduce the height of the boundary laurel hedging to a manageable height plus pending winter leaf fall costs still to be raised.

The Chairman noted to members that the 2021/22 training budget was proposed at £500 and invited members to consider taking up any training courses offered during the year. Precept requests to Bures Hamlet and Bures St Mary Parish Councils to remain as per previous year - £6,500 from each parish council. The proposed budget was agreed by all those members present.

12/09/20 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) Waiting on External Auditors approval of 2019/20 Accounting Statements – noted.
- b) Internal Audit Review meeting to be held 12th October
– Cllrs McCrory & McAndrew to attend with Clerk and Internal Auditor.

13/09/20 INTERMENTS/ASHES INTERMENTS/MEMORIAL APPLICATIONS

The Clerk reported that the following interments had taken place and memorial applications approved since the last meeting:

Interment of ashes of the late Maeve White – family and minister only in attendance.

14/09/20 BRIEF INFORMATION & EXCHANGE

It was noted that meetings will continue to be held virtually until further notice.

Matters for next agenda:

- a) Review when to resume charging for burials.
- b) To consider quotations for removal of shed and creation of turning circle.
- c) Outstanding winter maintenance works.
- d) Review of Contracts ending 31st March 2021.
- e) Wild flower banks.

15/09/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee meeting: Monday 11th January 2021 to be held either virtually or at the Committee Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed 2021: Site meeting – 6th March, 8th March, 7th June, 6th September

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed:

Authority Chair:

Date: