

Minutes of a meeting of the Bures Joint Cemetery Authority held virtually via Zoom on Monday 6th June 2022 at 7.45pm

PRESENT: Cllr J Aries (Chair), Mrs J Wright (Clerk)
Bures St. Mary Parish Council: Cllr J McCrory
Bures Hamlet Parish Council: Cllr M Baker, Cllr K McAndrew

1/06/22 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Aries duly elected as Chair.

2/06/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Baker duly elected as Vice-chair.

3/06/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Ellis (holiday) and Cllr Sills (holiday).
Apologies accepted by those members present.

4/06/22 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.

5/06/22 MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting of 7th March 2022 (previously circulated) were duly approved and signed as a correct record.

6/06/22 PUBLIC FORUM – 15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by the Chairman

No members of the public present.

7/06/22 INSPECTOR'S ASSET & RISK ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Cllr McAndrew had circulated his reports prior to the meeting.

a) Risk Assessment Checklist: Overall the cemetery was in an extremely good condition. Some weeds visible on paths. Mesh exposed on corner of shed turning area. One bench on righthand path needs a clean. Consider warning signage for steep boundary in oldest section. Clerk to follow up on matters raised.

b) Memorial Stability Checklist: Cllr McAndrew had checked the memorials and noted on 20 which either had warning signs on or were leaning. Three graves on left boundary needed clearing of ivy.

Next Inspector: Cllr McCrory.

8/06/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Commonwealth War Grave entrance signs: An application to the CWGC for signage indicating war graves in the cemetery has been submitted. One small sign ordered for both front and rear entrances. Waiting on signs to be installed.

b) Tree monitoring:

i) Tree inspection report on Sequoia and Cedar: Suffolk Tree Services (STS) have been monitoring the condition of the Cedar and the Sequoia trees at the top of the main drive over the past few years. Some remedial work has been necessary in an attempt to preserve these two iconic trees for as long as possible. However, STS recently issued a report declaring that the Cedar is now deemed to be dangerous and requires felling. Due to the interdependent relationship of the two trees for their individual stability, the Authority is advised that the Sequoia would also need to be removed.

Both trees have bat boxes mounted on their trunks and it was discovered during the inspection, that Tawny owls are living in the trees with their young.

David Pizzey, the Arboriculture Officer for Babergh D.C. has been contacted and made aware of the situation. The Parish Tree Warden is waiting for advice from Gary Battel, the Senior Tree and Woodland Advisor for SCC, and from Jon Stokes, the Director of Tree Science and Research at the Tree Council.

Three quotes received for the pending work were discussed by the members. It is agreed to accept Blake Tree Services to take on the work subject to an acceptable revised quotation indicating the cost of grinding the stumps, a bat survey and removal of the wood. The tree surgeon will apply for planning permission on behalf of the Authority and will liaise with reputable Ecologists regarding the management of the protected wildlife. A safety area around the trees has been cordoned off and warning notices are displayed on all three entrances to the grounds. A claim has been submitted to the insurance company who have agreed to pay £1000 towards the costs (with a £150 excess). The Authority has set aside £8,000 in its budget to cover tree related costs.

ii) Tree survey: The quotation from Suffolk Tree Services for a survey of all trees in the cemetery with the exception of the Cedar and the Sequoia has been accepted. Consultant scheduled to carry out the survey on 10th June.

iii) Leylandii: The owner of the adjacent woodyard is very keen for the hedging to be removed as he considers his buildings to be at risk of serious damage. Members agreed the quotation from Richard Fordham Tree Surgeons and removal of the hedging scheduled for the autumn. However, If the tree works budget becomes an overspend owing to the pending removal of the Cedar and Sequoia then the removal of the Leylandii may need to be deferred.

iv) The Woodland Trust has agreed to provide a supply of native hedging free of charge in the autumn. These will be used to fill the gaps around the boundary and to secure the boundary following the removal of the Leylandii.

c) Laminating maps: Local printers do not have the facility to laminate the large cemetery maps. The maps currently in the encasing on the shed to be updated and replaced every 2 years.

d) Scouts bird and bat box project: 6 bird boxes built by the Scout Troop as part of a badge project have been installed. Those trees with a bird or bat box to be marked for reference and entered on the tree survey map. It is noted that there are boxes on the condemned Cedar and Sequoia which will need retrieving if possible. Scouts to build 6 bat boxes later in the year. 3 bat boxes per tree are recommended by Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

e) Bulb planting: Majority of the bulbs planted earlier in the year have emerged and flowered. However a number have been dug up by either a muntjac or squirrels. Cllr Aries to replant.

f) Ivy removal: Some ivy removal has been done particularly from memorials but this is a seasonal project. Further ivy removal from trees to be done in the autumn.

g) Contractor works: Works as per works list completed (see attached). A one off weed spray completed on all paths, however weeds continue to be an issue. NewWay to be trialled in the village and at the cemetery. Contractor to follow up and costs to be split between the two parish councils and the Cemetery Authority. Contractor looking into purchasing a mower which collects the grass cuttings. Works still outstanding - lime saplings to be removed, turfing to be done in the autumn, weeding at front gate entrance, 2 large shrubs and a holly bush to be cleared from graves, infill of grave of Beaumont, brambles to be removed from bushes along right drive. Members to look at bush at top of main drive to establish if it should be removed. Clerk to check if contractor remains committed to repairing the Steventon ashes memorial and the reinstatement of the Doggett grave.

9/06/22 TURNING AREA

- a) 4 wooden posts and chain link installed to both end graves.
- b) Path widened by 6" on both sides.
- c) Temporary access for service vehicles only – although the path has been widened, the funeral cortege still has difficulties in manoeuvring its vehicles in the turning area. Therefore it is agreed that the cortege should not enter but remain at the entrance into the new section. However the contractor vehicles do require access. The Chair and the Clerk are exploring the possibility of installing a vehicle entrance in the rear fence to provide all-weather access to the grounds for the gravedigger. The rear boundary fence is in need of repair or replacement. Clerk to discuss provision of a field gate entrance and dilapidation of the boundary fence with the adjacent landowner.
- d) If a field gate entrance is agreed then the Warden bench will need to be moved to the right. Family have previously agreed.
- e) Splay to protect corner corner graves at parking bay still be installed.

10/06/22 MANAGEMENT OF MEMORIALS

- a) **Follow up with grave deed holders:** The Clerk has managed to obtain consent from a number of grave deed holders to meet the costs of repair of their loved ones unstable memorials. These have been referred to Luxton Memorials who undertook the memorial stability testing for the Cemetery Authority. Unstable memorials now marked with a warning sign or laid flat.
- b) **Grave surround of the late Doggett family:** The grave surround and the inscribed plaques have been temporarily removed to the cemetery boundary and the grave infilled by the contractor. It is agreed that the grave should be further levelled and if at a cost of £250 or less then the contractor be asked to replace the inscribed plaques and bed in the surrounds. If the contractor reluctant to do the work then the Clerk will pursue other options.
- c) **Ashes memorial of the late Steventon:** The ashes memorial remains unstable. Clerk to follow up.
- d) **LTN64:** Legal Topic Note Tombstones and Memorials circulated to members.

11/06/22 FINANCE

Business Access A/C balance: £19,677.01

Community A/C balance: £9,722.11 (when all cheques paid).

- a) Finance & Budget Monitoring Report – circulated, noted and attached.
- b) Bank Reconciliation dated 27th May 2022 circulated, noted and attached.
Corresponding bank statements circulated, noted and attached and duly signed by the Chairman and a non-signatory member.
- c) Clerk's salary and tax for year end 2021/22 completed for HMRC – noted.

- d) VAT claim for 2021/22 submitted to HMRC – noted.
- e) First half year precept requests presented to BHPC and BSMPC – noted
- f) Dropbox has been set up for the parish councils, committees and NHP Group. Admin access to be restricted. 4 licences applied for at a cost of £120 each – noted.

The Chair noted that the bulge in the wall at the top of the main drive is worsening and this may become a future cost commitment. To be taken into account at next budget setting meeting.

12/06/22 AUDIT MATTERS

- a) The findings of the Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control held on 24th October 2021 were considered and accepted.
- b) The Internal Auditor's Report 2021/22 was noted with matters raised duly followed up.
- c) The Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 was considered, approved by resolution and duly signed
- d) The Annual Accounting Statement 2021/22 was considered, approved by resolution, and duly signed
- e) The following were reviewed and duly adopted:
 - Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Cemetery Fees and Conditions
 - Risk Assessments
 - Publication Scheme
 - Complaints Procedure
 - Equality & Diversity Policy
 - Privacy Notice
 - Training & Development Policy
- f) The following were considered, amended as required and approved:
 - Carolyn Holbrook appointed as Internal Auditor for 2022/23. Fees agreed £80 per annum.
 - Internal Audit Review Checklist – agreed to meet in October – date to be arranged
 - Approved accounts to be made available for sale for £2
 - Asset Register
 - Insurance Renewal Premium
 - Funeral Bond letter
 - Notice of Interment form
 - Grave Deed letter
 - Memorial Application form – it was agreed to draft an amendment to be approved at the next meeting

13/06/22 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had completed the Office of Statistics annual business survey online.
Business Rates Nil demand 2022/23 received.

The Pensions Regulator re-enrolment opened on 9th May 2022 and the Clerk had submitted the required details online.

14/06/22 INTERMENTS/ASHES INTERMENTS/MEMORIAL APPLICATIONS

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

Memorial of the late Susan Daniels

Purchase of Grave space 5 Row R5 – J Wright

Memorial of the late Timothy Underwood

Interment of the late George Sargeant

Interment of the late Rowland Grindell

15/06/22 BRIEF INFORMATION & EXCHANGE

Signs have been placed at the 3 entrances into the cemetery warning visitors that the two trees at the top of the main drive have become dangerous and therefore the area has been fenced off. One more sign to be placed in front of the trees. Members to suggest to visitors not to park near that area.

16/06/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee meeting: Monday 12th September 2022 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm.

Future dates agreed 2023: 9th January, 13th March, 12th June, 11th September

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed:

Authority Chair:

Date: