

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
CEMETERY COMMITTEE
10 APRIL 2017**

Councillor C Rawlings (Chairman)

Present – Councillors Mrs C Caisley, P Cowey, Mrs C Greenwell and R Ramsay

1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

2. Minutes of last meeting held on 27 February 2017

A copy of the minutes had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters raised.

4. Report re Cemetery fees and charges 2017-18

A report relating to the proposed fees and charges for the Cemetery in respect of 2017-18 was circulated.

Members were reminded that a report was considered by the Cemetery Committee in December 2016 when the principles for determining the fees was agreed as follows:

1. Ensure that the relevant fee structure maximised current revenue.
2. Ensure that they compared reasonably with Newcastle cemetery fees
3. Ensure that they were reasonably in accordance with inflation rates
4. Ensure that they were in reasonable accord with a logical hierarchy,

Details of sustainable income necessary for the Cemetery together with usage figures were set out in the report.

A schedule of proposed fees for the Cemetery had been circulated to the Committee.

Some obsolete items had been deleted from the fees as they were not applicable to Prestwick. New items relating to the Columbaria had been added although they would not be available until the autumn, however, payments could be made from 1 May.

A detailed description of each of the fees was included in the report. A general principle to be applied however was the introduction of a 100% increase in fees for non residents. This was the principle that was adopted by Newcastle City Council.

Members considered this carefully and generally it felt this was acceptable as space at the Cemetery was at a premium.

A comment was included within the report regarding the possibility of being able to offer adjoining parishes a reduced rate subject to a contribution from the parish councils. Councillors discussed the idea but decided against the proposal which would complicate the fee structure. A suggestion to amend the qualification for resident status was also discussed but not agreed.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Council be recommended to approve the fees as attached in respect of the Cemetery for 2017-18 that would come into effect from 1 May 2017.
- (ii) The Committee reviews the income information and agreed that this was sustainable.
- (iii) The Committee approved the suggested variations to still born deaths.
- (iv) It was noted that the Committee did not agree to the suggested change to residence criteria.

5. Suggested formation of a Cemetery supporters group

A report had been circulated which suggested the formation of a Cemetery supporters group similar to that already in existence for the footpath users group

It was proposed that this group could help with items such as litter picking and minor gardening tasks under the direction of the Clerk.

It was suggested that this proposal should be decided by the Council to be elected in May and therefore it was agreed to defer this suggestion to the first meeting of the Cemetery Committee after the May elections.

RESOLVED – The proposal be deferred to the next meeting of the Cemetery Committee which would be held after the elections in May.

6. Publication of a booklet for issue to funeral directors/clients

A report had been circulated which suggested the publication of a booklet to be issued to funeral directors and clients to explain the rules and regulations in a more user friendly fashion.

This would include information such as the restrictions on decorating graves and the disposal of floral decorations after a certain period of time. Information would also be included to market the revamped woodland burial, an explanation of what a woodland burial involved and the introduction of the columbaria facility,

Councillor Ramsay offered to draft this document and submit it to the Clerk for approval by the new Cemetery Committee that would be formed after the May elections.

RESOLVED – The suggestion be approved and the draft would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cemetery Committee.

7. Update re landscaping project

Members were informed that work on the landscaping project was starting today and would take up to eight weeks to complete.

RESOLVED – The information be noted.

8. Correspondence

(i) Letter from a client

A copy of a letter that had been received from a resident of Ponteland whose husband was buried at the cemetery had been circulated.

The Clerk had asked the County Council for the background to the issue raised and this was circulated to Members. A photograph of the area in question had also been provided.

After some discussion the Committee felt that the issue had been dealt with by the County Council and the Clerk was asked to inform the resident concerned accordingly.

RESOLVED – The Clerk reply to the resident concerned as set out above.

9. Any other business

Councillor Mrs Caisley mentioned that she had been informed that there had been someone camping in the woodland area some weeks ago. This had been reported to the Police by the person who had witnessed it. The Clerk confirmed that she had not been made aware of this by the Police.

10. Date of next meeting

Dates for meetings for the next Council year had not yet been agreed.

As this was his last meeting of the Cemetery Committee the Chairman wished to express his thanks to members for all of their work and commitment in relation to the Cemetery over the last few years.