

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
CEMETERY COMMITTEE
26 MARCH 2019**

Present –

Councillor A Shanley (in the chair)

Councillors Mrs C Caisley, L Darwin and Mrs C Greenwell

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Edwards-Clay and A Varley

2. Minutes of last meeting held on 5 December 2017

A copy of the minutes had been circulated.

RESOLVED – The minutes be approved.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4. Update on Cemetery issues

In view of the time that had elapsed since the last meeting, the Clerk had produced an update report for Councillors regarding progress on various issues

In relation to the landscaping project, the Clerk reported that when the total scheme was agreed back in 2017-18, a programme of work covering the following 5 years had been approved. For several reasons, the work scheduled for 2018 had not been carried out. This included work to the tarmac paths in the formal part of the Cemetery and some works to the shelter.

The paths needed some attention and the Committee were asked to consider whether they wished to proceed with the work in 2019-20. The costs would be approximately £12,000 as an updated quote would be required from the contractor. The works to the shelter were estimated to cost around £6,000 and the Committee agreed to look at this item again later in the new financial year.

The Clerk had been asked to investigate the possibility of having metal plaque coping stones adjacent to the paths for ashes and pet remains. She had discussed this with NCC who were concerned that their grass cutting machinery would cause damage to the plaques. Councillors asked if it was possible to identify a small, out of the way area that could be used for pets remains. It was suggested that an area in the Park for cremated remains of pets could also be a possibility. The Clerk agreed to examine both requests and report back. She was unsure if there were any regulations regarding the remains of pets.

The Clerk provided an update on the income and reserves held for the Cemetery.

There had been some discussion at the last meeting about the length of the lease period for the columbaria. It had been suggested that 50 years was too long. The Clerk had had discussions with the installers who felt that 50 years was the correct period as some people may purchase a space when they were relatively young. The fees for the additional items that would be offered in respect of the columbaria still required examination. These would be issued as an addendum to the fees at a later date.

Members were reminded that there was still a need to produce a leaflet for the Cemetery and Councillor Shanley agreed to carry out this work for discussion at a later meeting.

Members were reminded of the works carried out in the woodland burial area in 2017. The area was landscaped to make it a more attractive space, trees and shrubs had been added as well as a memorial wall where plaques can be displayed with the name of the deceased.

The stone marker blocks had been installed in the first ten spaces in the new part of the woodland area. Two burials had taken place there and both families have a small plaque on the block giving the name and the date of birth and death of the deceased. They also had plaques on the memorial wall.

Some complaints had been received by users of the woodland area as they were unable to plant a tree at the head of the plot. The Clerk stated that this would be made clearer in the new fees schedule and she would advise funeral directors when she wrote out to them.

There had been some complaints recently regarding the hedges in the Cemetery. The Clerk had arranged for the hedges to be flailed last year and they looked much improved.

Parking continued to be issue in the Cemetery with illegal parking by taxis and visitors to the airport. When contractors were working in the Cemetery, they posted notices on cars asking them to refrain from parking. This was an ongoing issue around the perimeter of the Airport. It was suggested that a further sign be erected stating that those parked will be asked to move if a funeral is taking place.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Clerk be asked to examine the possibility of finding a small area of the Cemetery for burying of pets remains. The suggestion of an area in the Park will also be examined.
- (ii) **The Cemetery Committee agreed to proceed with work on the tarmac paths in 2019-20 and requested the Council to approve the expenditure of**

approximately £12,000 which would be funded from Cemetery reserves. This requires Town Council approval.

(iii) The Committee agreed to consider the work on the shelter at a later date in 2019-20.

(iv) The information provided relating to income and reserves be noted.

(v) The Committee agreed to the 50-year lease period for the columbaria.

(vi) The Committee agreed to request Councillor Shanley to redraft the Cemetery leaflet.

(vii) The comments in relation to parking in the grounds of the Cemetery be noted and it was agreed to produce a new sign as suggested above.

5. Fees for 2019-20

The Clerk had produced a schedule of increased fees for 2019-20 that were discussed in detail.

The Committee agreed to examine fees charged by other authorities during the year to make a comparison with the PTC charges.

RESOLVED – The Committee agreed the fees as presented and recommended these to the Council for formal approval (copy attached).

6. Correspondence

There had been no correspondence received.

7. Any other business

Councillor Mrs Greenwell had visited the Cemetery and reported on several issues. She suggested creating an area where the Garden of Remembrance was to be situated in 2019-20 if possible which would provide somewhere for users of the Cemetery to scatter ashes (with supervision) and sit quietly. The Clerk reported that this work was scheduled to be carried out in 2020-21 at an approximate cost of £10,700. She agreed to examine the possibility of providing a less expensive option for next year and report back to the Committee.

Councillor Mrs Greenwell showed photographs of an area of the woodland space where trees had been planted and she suggested that some seats around the trees would be a good place for those visiting the woodland area to use. These could be offered to donors on request.

She stated that the posts on the new gate had cracked and required attention.

She mentioned that some plots had still not been grassed over despite having headstones with the date of 2017 on them. The Clerk agreed to pass this information onto NCC for action. She showed a photograph of one gravestone that had toppled and one or two plots that had borders around them.

Councillor Mrs Greenwell also mentioned that some plots had pots etc placed on the graves when they could be placed on the concrete plinths and she asked that these be moved.

She showed photographs of the shelter that had several watering cans and cleaning cloths on the bench seating. She asked if these could be put in the bin storage area and a new sign on the gate be erected to say 'bins and watering cans.'

She also mentioned that the Cemetery regulations were displayed inside of the shelter at the West Road in Newcastle and she agreed to provide photographs if possible. It was suggested that this could be an option for Prestwick.

The Hawthorn hedge that bordered the bin storage gate needed to be cut back.

RESOLVED –

- (i) The Clerk examine the possibility of carrying out a less expensive option of the Remembrance Garden in 2019-20 and report back to the Committee.
- (ii) It was agreed to accept donor seats for the area shown in the woodland burial area as suggested.
- (iii) The Clerk would report the issue of the undressed graves with NCC.
- (iv) It was agreed to provide a new sign for the bin storage area as set out above.
- (v) It was agreed to have the Hawthorn hedge cut back as set out above.

8. Date of next meeting

To be advised once the calendar of meetings for 2019-20 was agreed.