

A MEETING OF THE WIGTON BURIAL JOINT COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT-

Councillor Mary Clark (Acting Chairman)
Councillor Mary Huntington
Councillor John Hamblin
Councillor Chris Scott
Councillor George Girvan
Councillor Tony Huntington
Councillor Anne Jackson
Councillor William Marrs

WBJC/37/2024 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mattinson

WBJC/38/2024 TO RECEIVE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15th NOVEMBER 2023

Members requested an amendment. Minutes to be agreed at the next meeting.

WBJC/39/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO GIVE NOTICE OF INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

NONE

WBJC/40/2024 EXCLUSIONS OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Pursuant to the section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of agenda item 13.

WBJC/41/2024 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Two members of the public were in attendance to bring to councillors' attention, their displeasure surrounding the recent issues with burials. They had initially spoke to a councillor about their concerns but had been told there would be no change to the plan to place headstones back-to-back. Later, they found out this had been changed but they had not been informed which caused some upset. The family pointed out that because of the changes, the cremated remains were now not where they would have liked. Initially, the family were not present to ask for the remains to be moved but after a conversation, members agreed to investigate the option for the family so they would be aware of the procedure if they wished to proceed.

ACTION – Clerk to explore the legal procedure of moving cremated remains and report back to JH.

WBJC/42/2024 HEADSTONE REPAIRS

Members were informed that Able Memorials have been instructed to refix headstones headstone in Spring. It was noted that there are approximately four headstones that are lying down that will also need to be repaired as they could be a trip hazard as they are, and it makes maintenance difficult.

It was asked if any other families have been affected by the change in how the headstones were placed in the new row or if they had now all been contacted and resolved? It was noted that there was one further family involved but a message had been sent via the undertaker to make initial contact.

WBJC/43/2024 TREE ROOT REMOVAL

Members discussed the recent request by a local resident who wished to secure a burial plot next to the wall. The problem with this area was that a large tree stump would need to be removed before this area could become a burial plot. The tree stump was large with its roots likely stretching underneath the wall. Two contractors reviewed the tree stump and but recommended leaving it as it would be costly to remove and would likely cause damage to the wall.

RESOLVED

Tree stump to remain as it is, and the wall will be next on the list to repoint.

WBJC/44/2024 SUMMER CONTRACT

The current grounds maintenance contractor had been contacted and the summer work was agreed between the months of April – September. There was a discussion around regular payment on a specific date of each month which was agreed if an invoice was also sent. The suggested date was the 30th of the month to the value of £1000.

WBJC/45/2024 FINANCE MATTER

The WBJC should receive regular payments for burial sales, VAT refunds and precept payments with these payments coming from the WTC accounts. It was highlighted that recently these payments have been irregular meaning bank balances may not be accurate.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The WBJC will receive their precept twice a year at the same time the WTC receives their precept from the Cumberland Council. This is generally April and October.
- VAT refunds will be returned into the WBJC account quarterly and not annually as previously agreed.
- Burial sales will be paid directly into the WBJC account and not the WTC capital account.

Councillor Girvan provided members with a quote for the new burial software. There were two charges:

- £1140 for the software to be set up.
- £984 for the annual maintenance.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to use Gower Consultants LTD for the electronic mapping of the cemetery and make payment.

The software was described as an electronic map of Wigton Cemetery which retains information regarding graves. This will allow for new graves to be added but also to do a search on existing graves to find relevant information.

WBJC/46/2024 CEMETERY FEES

Members discussed raising fees, it was suggested that if they were to rise then the quality should be improved, specifically around sunken graves.

It was agreed that this would be a future agenda item as more thought into the fees was required, including asking the bereavement officer for a list of fees for nearby cemeteries.

WBJC/47/2024 WREATH REMOVAL

A sign will be placed at the cemetery informing visitors that wreaths will be removed from Saturday 27th January.

WBJC/48/2024 IMPROVING THE CEMETERY ACCESS

The clerk shared notes from a recent meeting with Helen Esslemont, the Community Development Officer who provides support for those applying for funding through the Solway and Fells Community Panel. Improving the access to the cemetery was a project that the community panel was likely to support. Members were advised to apply for the funding in the first round of applications in 2024 as funding is limited. It was advised that the maximum amount to ask for would be £6000.

Members discussed the options for the rest of the project including how to go to tender and finding contractors that would be interested. One member advised using different contractors with different specialities as this would give a broader choice of materials and ideas.

It was agreed that a sub-committee would be required to consider next steps with the first meeting being the 16th February 2024 at 4pm.

WBJC/48/2024 GRAVES

Pursuant to the section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of agenda item 13.

Meeting closed 8:57pm

Date of next meeting: 6th March 2024