

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE  
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE  
ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 COMMENCING AT 8.46 PM**

**Present:** Councillors Mr A Channon (Chair), Mrs B Thomas (Vice-chair), Mrs G Gardner, Mr J Paxton and Mr L Davison-Williams (ex-officio)

**Attending:** Mrs C Callen (Clerk)

**Minutes Taken by:** Mrs C Callen

**19/611 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – There were none.

**19/612 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were none.

**19/613 MATTERS ARISING**

The tree works in the churchyard were completed on 19<sup>th</sup> February. The section of beech hedge in the Burial Ground has been cut back **ACTION – Groundsman to tidy up area.**

The contractor has now planted the standard roses in the Garden of Rest, however the number ordered was incorrect and they are awaiting the final two to complete the contract.

**19/614 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of the Burial Grounds meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.** The minutes were approved.

**19/615 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE BURIAL GROUND AND CHURCHYARD INSPECTIONS**

The Burial Ground and Churchyard inspections undertaken on 12<sup>th</sup> February were acknowledged. Everything was in order.

**19/616 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAR MEMORIAL INSPECTION**

The War Memorial inspection undertaken on 12<sup>th</sup> February was acknowledged. Everything was in order.

**19/617 TO CONSIDER / APPROVE REQUEST TO ERECT A HEADSTONE**

A new memorial request has been received from Cherished Memorials (based in Lincolnshire). They are not registered with NAMM but hold BRAMM certification (copies of all paperwork provided). The current regulations state that the stone mason should be NAMM registered. Following discussion, Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** the approval of the memorial request and for BRAMM certification to be added to the regulations in future. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

**19/618 TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE SPECIFICATION FOR WORKS TO SOAKAWAYS AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH AND AGREE ANY ACTION NECESSARY**

Details of the specification were provided prior to the meeting. Unfortunately, no plans of how they cut across the land where the Parish Council has maintenance responsibility were provided. An indemnity will be required from the third party contractor undertaking the work to ensure everything is made good afterwards. Members confirmed their support of the works being undertaken by the church but in view of the health & safety and maintenance responsibilities the Council has for the churchyard, they requested an on-site meeting with the architect to clarify the extent of the work being undertaken.

**ACTION – Assistant Clerk to arrange meeting.**

**19/619 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE RESPONSE TO BIDWELLS REGARDING PURCHASE OF GLEBE LAND**

In December, the Council approached St Albans Diocese Estate Office regarding the possibility of purchasing the glebe land lying immediately to the north of the current Burial Ground to expand the current facility in the future. A response has now been received from their land agent, Bidwells, requesting an offer is submitted for what the Council is willing to pay for the land. Following discussion and after reference to Farmers Weekly regarding average prices for farm pasture land in the local area, Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** an offer of £5,299 be made via Bidwells for the 0.86 acres of land to be used for burial land. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.** A meeting will need to be arranged with Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Department, pre-application, to assess the requirements and suitability of the land before any formal progression is made.

**19/620 UPDATE ON MEMORIAL STABILITY TESTING OF HEADSTONES IN ST NICHOLAS CHURCHYARD**

The survey was undertaken on 11<sup>th</sup> February by Cemetery Development Services. This found that there are 9 unstable headstones. The critical ones have been cordoned off with all others highlighted with red flags. A copy of the report is still awaited. Once received, an on-site review will be undertaken of what follow-up actions are required and this will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

**19/621 TO AGREE A STRATEGY FOR THE BURIAL GROUND AND IT'S EXTENSION**

Councillor Channon outlined the overall strategy to secure 100 years additional capacity for the Burial Ground. Based on a current average of 7 burials per annum (based on 2011-2019 figures), it is calculated that the current Burial Ground has c.29 years remaining.

Following discussion, the following potential land areas/options were agreed to be investigated:

- Church Glebe land - the Council is already progressing the possibility of acquiring this from the Church.
- Field to the west of the current Burial Ground – owned by the Council, planning consultation required
- Third party land on Sharpenhoe Road – Councillor Thomas to make an initial approach to the owners
- Central Bedfordshire Farm Land between Luton Road and A6 – dependant on Local Plan outcome
- Central Bedfordshire Farm Land west of the A6 – dependant on Local Plan outcome
- Ashes burials only Policy to be adopted

Further discussion to be undertaken as matters progress.

**19/622 TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE BURIAL GROUND FEES, EFFECTIVE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2020**

The Assistant Clerk provided details of current fees, proposed 2% or 5% uplift and comparison fees from neighbouring parishes. Following discussion, in view of the increase in contractors fees and the need to provide sustainable facilities, Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** a 5% increase in the 2020/21 fees, rounded to the nearest £1. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**ACTION – Assistant Clerk to calculate the cost per plot per annum for maintenance, to be discussed at the committee meeting in September.**

**19/623 TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE BURIAL GROUND REGULATIONS, EFFECTIVE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2020**

The Assistant Clerk has reviewed the current regulations and provided the draft document for discussion. Members acknowledged her hard work in preparing the document and agreed to defer this item to the next committee meeting so that the Assistant Clerk can be present to talk through the changes.

**19/624 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**  
None.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm