

CREWKERNE AND WEST CREWKERNE
JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on Tuesday 6 April 2021 at 6.45 p.m.

PRESENT:

Cllrs. M. Best (Chairman), J. Borland, C. Broom, F. Freeman, R. Pailthorpe, A. Stuart and D. Wakeman.

Also in attendance: P. Davidson (Clerk), P. Hewitt (CTC Finance Officer), Ms T. Warren (Funeral Director of Stoodley & Son), Cllr. C. Aslett (member of Crewkerne Town Council) (part-time only) and approximately 7 members of the public (via zoom and YouTube).

33 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

20/21

None

34 OPEN FORUM

20/21

Damage to a headstone

An owner of a grave plot spoke to the Committee about damage done to the headstone on the plot. He advised that the damage had been reported to the Mayor of the Town Council and that the police had been informed. He also stated that other headstones in the cemetery had also been damaged, as had a number of the war graves.

Cllr. Aslett of Crewkerne Town Council added that he had informed the local news reporter and also the local branch of the Royal British Legion. He accepted that it would be difficult to prove who had caused the damage but stressed that the damage was unacceptable. He requested that heavy machinery ceased to be used between graves with immediate effect, a survey was carried out to assess the damage to headstones and that repairs were carried out. He made the point that the intention was not to apportion blame but to effect the necessary repairs and to stop the damage re-occurring.

Ms Warren explained that she would be visiting the cemetery shortly and would report her observations to the Burial Committee.

Cemetery Open Day

Ms Warren asked whether the Burial Committee had considered the feasibility of holding an Open Day at the cemetery in September. The Clerk suggested that he and Ms Warren discuss the practicalities offline.

35 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES

20/21

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Burial Committee held on 1 December 2020 be **APPROVED**.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

20/21

None.

37 **DAMAGE TO A HEADSTONE**

20/21 To consider what action should be taken regarding the reported damage to a headstone

Cllr. Best extended his sincere apologies to Mr. Aslett and his family for the damage that had occurred to the headstone on their plot.

Cllr. Best stated that a meeting should be arranged as soon as possible with the contractor who undertook the maintenance of the cemetery grounds. He proposed that attendees for this meeting should be the Committee Chair, the Vice Chair and the Clerk.

Cllr. Stuart reported that she had visited the cemetery recently and had looked at the war graves. She noted that there was damage to some of the war grave headstones but this damage appeared to be quite old. She was therefore of the view that it was not appropriate to blame the current contractor without further investigation.

Cllr. Freeman reported that he had visited the cemetery earlier in the day and had looked at the war graves. He was in agreement with Cllr. Stuart, in that he could find no sign of recent damage to the headstones.

Ms. Warren reminded Councillors that the war grave headstones were owned by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

It was **AGREED** that:

- **The Chair, Vice Chair and the Clerk would hold a site meeting with the cemetery maintenance contractor within two weeks.**
- **Once the investigations had been concluded, a meeting of the Burial Committee would be convened, specifically to report back and consider this issue.**

Cllr. Pailthorpe suggested a moratorium on the use of heavy machinery between gravestones until the investigations had been concluded.

38 **CLERK'S REPORT**

20/21

The Clerk advised Councillors that he intended to retire in the autumn and that the Town Council were in the process of recruiting a replacement.

39 **FINANCIAL MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

20/21

a) To approve the Accounts for Payment

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Borland had verified the accounts for the period 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021 in accordance with the Committee's Financial Regulations.

It was **AGREED** to approve the following payment:

Net	VAT	Total	Payee	Purpose
£10,084.28	£961.48	£11,045.76	Crewkerne Town Council	Reimbursement for period: 1 December 2021-31 March 2021

- b) Bank Reconciliation: to report that the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 has been completed

The report was noted. It was noted that cash in hand at the bank as of 31 March 2021 was £84,407.28.

- c) End-of-year financial summary: to consider the payments/receipts variance report as at 31 March 2021, together with the summary of Allocated and General Reserves

The end-of-year variance report and the summary of Allocated and General Reserves were noted.

- d) Asset Register: to note that there has been no change to the Asset Register for the year 2020/2021

Noted.

40 LODGE

- 20/21 To receive a report from Cllr. Best on the results of the survey of the lodge and the follow-on actions

Cllr. Best reported that, for the garden area surrounding the lodge, quotations were being sought from an arborist for the cutting back of the trees which were encroaching on the lodge and for the grinding out of the tree stumps in the front garden. In addition, the front garden area needed to be levelled and a low fence erected on the wall overlooking the main road.

A survey had now been carried out on the lodge, which had identified a significant number of areas which required remedial work. Cllr. Best proposed a strategy of prioritising the exterior remedial works, including major items such as the repairs to the roof and the guttering. Once these works were complete and the building made secure, then the next phase would be to focus on the remedial work to the interior of the building.

Cllr. Best reminded Councillors that the water supply feed to the cemetery grounds came from the lodge. Although it would be possible to split the water supply, recent experience from the George Reynolds Centre highlighted that this would be a difficult and extremely expensive option. Instead, he proposed that the water supply remain common between lodge and cemetery grounds. Should the lodge be rented out in the future, then the Burial Committee would continue to pay the water charges, but factor in an appropriate amount into the rent to allow for this.

Because of the scale of the project to refurbish the lodge, Councillors agreed that it would be useful for site meetings to be arranged, to allow all Councillors to view the exterior and interior of the lodge.

It was also agreed that it would be useful to ascertain whether any grant funding was available to support the restoration of both the lodge and the disused chapel.

41 TO APPROVE APPLICATIONS, TRANSFERS AND MEMORIALS RECEIVED

20/21

The following Applications, Transfers and Memorials were **APPROVED**.

PLOT PURCHASE

Katie Nehamee	EXQ37
Rosemary Pennells	CSKNE227
Steven Lacey & Tracey Warren	EXQ40

TRANSFERS

Donna Thrumble	EXP21
Carol Brown	EXG2
Mr & Mrs Wootton	S3 2229
Adrian Price	CSKNE131

MEMORIALS

Carol Pittard	Gof R
E.Shepherd,J Gray,D Tupman	E 464
Sandra Squibbs	CSKNE112
Nicola & Malcom Hodder	CSKNE151
Geraldine & Roger Clotworthy	EXQ26
Alison Cruickshank	CSKNE215
Kevin Lacey & Tina Davenport	EXQ16
Elizabeth Field	EXP24
Richard Lawrence	H2 1077
Michael Charles & Christine West	EXR1
Anne Taylor	EXQ36
Christopher Taylor	EXM13

42 ANNUAL MEETING

20/21 To consider arrangements for the annual cemetery walkabout, taking account of prevailing covid restrictions, and to consider whether the walkabout should include a tour of the lodge and the disused chapel

Cllr. Stuart suggested that the annual walkabout by Councillors take place on the scheduled date of 1 June. Then, depending on the covid situation, the business meeting could be held either immediately afterwards in the chapel, or it could be held a week later on zoom. Councillors supported this approach.

43 CREWKERNE IN BLOOM REQUEST

20/21 To consider a request from Crewkerne in Bloom that they be allowed to tend a number of flower beds in the cemetery grounds

After discussion, it was **AGREED to approve the request from Crewkerne in Bloom (CiB) to maintain some of the cemetery flower beds, subject to the following:**

- **The Chairman/Vice Chair plus the Clerk to approve the location of the beds to be maintained by CiB.**
- **Ground rules to be drawn up, on permitted planting, depositing garden waste etc.**

Cllr. Borland suggested that it would be appropriate for CiB to mark up the beds that they intended to maintain, so that it was clear to visitors that the group were supporting the maintenance of the cemetery.

44 **MATTERS OF REPORT**

20/21

- **Disused chapel:** Cllr. Best reported that he had held a site meeting with a local stonemason regarding the disused chapel. The chapel walls were in a poor state, but the stonemason had pointed out that the paintwork was historic and well worth preserving. A kitchen sink unit had been installed to support the chapel's use as a workshop, so this area of the chapel would need to be restored to a more original state. The stonemason's partner was responsible for restoration project designs for many churches. The stonemason had therefore agreed to consult with his partner, to put forward design proposals.

Cllr. Stuart asked whether, in restoring the chapel, it would be possible to install a toilet. In response, Cllr. Pailthorpe advised that this idea had previously been investigated but costs had been prohibitive.

- **Christmas decorations:** Cllr. Borland pointed out that there were still some Christmas decoration on grave plots. The Clerk would ask the CTC grounds staff to remove any remaining Christmas decorations.
- **Historic skull:** the Clerk reported that the CTC grounds staff had discovered a fragment of an infant human skull on an unused part of the cemetery. This had been given to the police for investigation, and they had confirmed that the skull was old enough to be of historic interest only. The CTC Finance Officer added that the skull had now been re-buried in the old part of the cemetery, with the local vicar performing the ceremony. Councillors thanked Ms Warren for kindly supplying a suitable casket to allow the remains to be re-buried with due respect.
- **Artificial grass:** Cllr. Stuart reported that, at her recent visit to the cemetery, she had noticed artificial grass on a small number of grave plots, and questioned whether this was appropriate. It was agreed that this would be assessed by Councillors as part of the Annual Meeting cemetery walkabout.

45 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

20/21

As noted in 37 20/21 above, a meeting would be called specifically to address the issue of the damage to grave headstones. The date of this meeting would be determined once the investigation into the damage had concluded.

The date for the next scheduled meeting was currently set for 1 June 2021, to be reviewed nearer to the time of the meeting, as noted in 42 20/21 above.

The meeting closed at 7.46 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....

BB06Apr2021