

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS AND PROPERTIES
COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2017**

PRESENT: Cllr. Clifford (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Cook, Goodchild (in part) and Swann.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fairweather & Holmes

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

Issues from Inspections of Burial Grounds:

12/17: Golford Cemetery:

Cllr. Clifford reported that the Cemetery was in good condition, the recent work to the paths had been completed to a high standard.

Surrender of Plot:

Members were advised that we had been approached by a couple to surrender a plot they had purchased in 2005. The Clerk relayed the circumstances of the request. Cllr. Cook proposed that the sum of £200 be refunded, subject to the receipt of the original deed, this was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

Golford Chapel Music Evening:

The Director of Music from Frittenden Church had been invited to play the organ in the Chapel, she had suggested putting on some musical events. Cllr. Clifford asked the Committee to consider this for the future, to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from our resources.

13/17: St. Dunstan's Churchyard:

Cllr. Cook reported that the graves that had been noted as overgrown at the site visit in July had all been dealt with by the grounds contractors and that the second stage of the tree surgery has commenced. Cllr. Swann voiced a concern that had been raised by the grounds contractors regarding the gullies. They were concerned that if dug out and cleared completely that a person could fall off the edge of the path and injure themselves and that they would be held responsible. Cllr. Clifford proposed that the contractors be asked to strim the grass as short as possible and to review if this was sufficient for the gullies to be effective, this was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

Handrail:

A request had been received from a parishioner, a regular attendee at St Dunstan's to have a safety handrail erected along the path from the south door. She had offered to make a financial contribution. Members agreed that the paths could sometimes be slippery and requested that quotes be obtained for the provision of a handrail. The Clerks would seek advice from the Church Warden as to whether any permission would need to be sought from the Diocese prior to this being undertaken.

14/17: Sissinghurst Cemetery:

Cllr. Clifford reported that the tree surgery in the Cemetery had been started and he was extremely pleased with progress and how professionally the contractor was undertaking the work.

15/17: Cranbrook & Sissinghurst War Memorials:

Members were advised that it was hoped that both memorials would be cleaned prior to the Remembrance Day services. The Clerk reported that the howitzer gun had been rust treated and painted. A letter of thanks had been sent to the Detachment Commander at Cranbrook ACF for undertaking this. A request for the hedge at the back of the Cranbrook Memorial to be trimmed had been forwarded to the grounds contractors responsible for the area.

Issues from Inspection of Properties:

16/17: Angley Cottage:

As the Member responsible for Angley Cottage, Cllr. Goodchild agreed to contact the tenants to arrange a mutually convenient time to complete the annual inspection of the property.

17/17: Vestry Hall:

The work of decorating the front and rear entrances to the hall was scheduled to start in November and was expected to last approximately four weeks. The replacement of the side doors was still awaiting Listed Building Consent.

Smoke Detectors:

A visual check of the smoke alarms was undertaken and general fire safety advice had been received from KFRS. The suggestion of improved fire notices had already been implemented and Members agreed to obtain quotes for mains connected smoke and heat detectors. The Clerk advised that the fire extinguishers are checked annually in December.

Vestry Hall Music Night:

Cllr. Clifford asked the Committee to consider hosting music events in the hall along with possible events in the Chapel. The organ could be moved to the hall on a temporary basis for a music event, Cllr. Clifford was confident in securing sponsorship to cover the cost if Members thought it a good idea.

18/17: Vestry Hall Cottage:

Cllr. Clifford reported that the redecoration the tenants had undertaken had been completed along with a tidy of the garden. Cllr. Holmes would be contacting them to arrange a time to complete the annual inspection. The tenants had advised us that their smoke alarms had been replaced free of charge by KFRS.

19/17: Information Centre:

No issues were raised.

20/17: Noticeboards and Shelters:

Members discussed the vandalism to the shelter in Swifts View and the more recent damage to the shelter opposite Whitewell Lane. It was agreed not to undertake any repairs at present as both are still effective to shelter people from the elements, although it was agreed that the use of metal panels, which would be more vandal proof could be considered in the future.

21/17: Benches & Cycle Racks:

No issues were raised.

22/17: Red Telephone Kiosks:

Cllr. Clifford would ask Cllr. Hall to bring forward ideas for utilising these assets to the next meeting.

23/17: Five Year Plan & Budget:

Members examined the Five Year Plan and made some minor amendments to schedules where necessary, a copy of the updated plan is filed with these Minutes.

A review of fees in relation to Vestry Hall/Council Chamber and Addison Room was carried out. It was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed not to increase the current fees.

A review of the burial fees was also undertaken, the Clerk had provided examples of other Parishes fees as a comparison. It was proposed by Cllr. Cook, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to increase the cost of the exclusive right of burial from £245 to £250 and the cost of interments of ashes and for burials from £105 to £125. All other burial fees would remain the same.

Cllr. Swann had prepared the budget in draft form for discussion by Members and the budget sheets were circulated to members. Members fully discussed the budget figures put forward and amendments were made where necessary.

The Chairman then thanked Cllr. Swann for all his hard work in preparing the budget. Cllr. Clifford proposed that the Burials and Properties Budget 2018/2019 as filed with these Minutes be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

24/17: Items for Information:

No items were raised.