

MINUTES OF A SITE MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd JULY 2019

PRESENT: Cllr. Clifford (in the Chair), Cllrs. Fermor and Gilbert. Parish Warden – Ivor Hatcher and Vicar of St. Dunstan's Church – Rev. Ann Pollington

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Bunyan and Fairweather

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.

1/19: St Dunstan's Churchyard:

a) Wild Flower Garden Proposal:

The suggestion of having a wild flower area in the Churchyard was discussed. It was agreed that a designated area would be marked to inform people of the intention of allowing the area to be managed in a different way to the rest of the Churchyard. It was agreed that Rev. Pollington, Cllr. Fermor and the Parish Warden would collectively put together a proposal for approval at the next meeting, along with suggestions on a specific contractor for management of the area.

b) Paths:

The Chairman advised those present of the paths that were the responsibility of Kent County Council and those that were the responsibility of the Parish Council. Gaps between the flagstones had appeared on some sections of the paths we were responsible for. This had been exacerbated by the recent efforts to improve the appearance of the churchyard by removing the weeds between the stones as opposed to weed killing which leaves the roots and surrounding soil in situ. It was agreed that more effective weed killing in the future would improve the situation.

c) Seating:

Rev. Pollington asked the Committee to consider suggesting a circular bench beneath a tree next time a bench is donated for the Churchyard as this would provide essential shelter from direct sunlight which is something none of the other benches provide. Members agreed this was an excellent idea. The Chairman suggested that a story seeking donations towards the bench might be a story for Parish Cake.

2/19: Sissinghurst Cemetery:

a) Northside Hedge:

The Clerk advised she was awaiting a response from Kent High Weald Project following a request for advice on management and conservation of wildlife within the hedgerow.

b) Southside Tree Planting:

The area where the trees had been recently removed had become overgrown and unsightly. It was agreed that shrubs such as buddleia would be more attractive, manageable and promote pollination and butterflies. It was agreed that Cllrs. Clifford and Fairweather would meet the ground contractors and the Parish Warden on site to discuss what work needed to be undertaken to ensure an overall improvement to the appearance of the Cemetery.

3/19: Golford Cemetery:**a) Container Security:**

The Chairman advised that an attempted break in of the container had been reported to the police. Nothing was taken and no items of value are stored at the location.

b) Cremation Plaque Review:

The Parish Warden suggested that the areas mapped out for cremation plots could be enhanced by planting roses between the rows. He had received several offers from parishioners to donate plants for this reason. Rev. Pollington raised concern at the glass receptacles around the plots and suggested our rules and regulations be updated to ensure they are no longer permitted for health and safety reasons, which was agreed.

The Cemetery was generally in very good order. It agreed that as a long-term plan, the bund could be taken out of the current mowing contract and planted with wild flower seeds to further enhance the area.

4/19: Nomination of Vice Chairman

Cllr. Clifford proposed Cllr. Bunyan as Vice Chairman of the Committee, this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

5/19: Allocation of Sites for Responsibility:

Allocated areas of responsibility were agreed as follows: -

Cllr. Clifford	Golford Cemetery & Cranbrook War Memorial.
Cllr. Gilbert	Vestry Hall, Information Centre & Vestry Hall Cottage
Cllr. Fairweather	Sissinghurst Cemetery & War Memorial
Cllr. Fermor	St. Dunstan's Churchyard
Cllr. Bunyan	Angley Cottage & Noticeboards/ Shelters/Benches/ Cycle Racks/ Phone Boxes

Cllr. Clifford would also take on the responsibility of undertaking an annual visit to the Bowls Club and Sissinghurst Tennis Club.

6/19: Caretaker Checklist Update:

Cllr. Clifford advised Members that the new checklist for the caretakers seemed to be working well.

7/19: Information Centre – Future use:

Cllr. Clifford advised this would need some thought in preparation of when TWBC withdraw all their services. It may be that the space can be redesigned for sole use by the Parish Council. Allocation for any costs associated to a redesign would need to be considered when budgets are discussed in the autumn. The project would be referred to a Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

8/19: Vestry Hall Roof Repairs:

The Clerk advised that although a previous quote had been approved by Members, she had secured an additional quote for consideration which represented significant savings.

It was agreed to delegate the decision of this new quote to Cllrs. Clifford and Gilbert. They would look at the specifications of both quotes when they undertake a site inspection.

9/19: Fire Risk Assessment Update:

The Clerk had yet to source a contractor able to complete the upgrade to the Vestry Hall doors that had been recommended in the report, she would continue chasing for quotes.

The Clerk advised Members that following an inspection from Kent Fire & Rescue Services we had been informed that the premises demonstrate suitable and sufficient measures to satisfy the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 legislation at the current time.

10/19: Angley Cottage Repairs:

The Clerk advised that work to secure quotes for some minor repairs was ongoing.

11/19: Inspection of benches and maintenance schedule:

The Parish Warden had prepared an extensive condition report of the benches, red telephone boxes and bus shelters in the Parish, which would be forwarded to Cllr. Bunyan for her information. It was agreed that the Parish Warden would commence a rolling programme of repairs, with the intention of completing twelve per year. The Committee would be kept informed on progress. The Chairman commended the Parish Warden's illustrated report.

12/19: Burial Grounds Report:

The Parish Warden had written a report on protocols observed in the Parish cemeteries, highlighting some concerns that he has. The report had been shared with Rev. Pollington who had produced for the Parish Council, positive guidelines for undertakers to follow which the Chairman would share with the Committee. It was agreed that in light of the report and guidelines provided that some amendments to the current rules and regulations may be necessary. A revised version would be drafted for approval by the Committee at the next meeting.

13/19: Items for Information:

The Clerk advised that some damage had occurred to an internal window stone surround in the Vestry Hall. Quotes had been sought by an experience stone mason.

Cllr. Clifford advised the Committee of the suggestion put forward by Cllr. Fletcher at a recent Environmental Management meeting of providing a tree nursery at a location in the Parish.