

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 21st JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: Cllr. Clifford (in the Chair), Bunyan and Gilbert.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fairweather and Fermor.

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.

28/19: Budget:

Cllr. Clifford confirmed the budget agreed at the last meeting was approved at Full Council.

29/19: Grass Cutting Contract:

Cllr. Clifford advised that an invitation to tender for the Grounds Maintenance Contract which included the Cemeteries and St. Dunstan's Churchyard is being advertised.

30/19: Parish Warden Contract:

Cllr. Clifford advised the current contract expires on 30th April 2020. Members agreed the specification relating to duties carried out under this Committee, should remain unchanged. Any further decisions regarding the contract would be referred to Policy and Resources.

31/19: Golford Cemetery:

a) Damage to grass areas:

Cllr. Clifford reported that because some visitors to the Cemetery have driven over the grass to the far west side of the Cemetery causing deep ruts, we have been forced to lock the gates, only opening them for funerals. Some expenditure may be required to repair the damage which will be further assessed when the ground has dried out sufficiently.

b) Offer of trees by resident:

This item would be deferred until the next meeting to allow Cllr. Fermor our Tree Warden, to comment.

c) Turning circle, tarmac repair:

Cllr Clifford and the Parish Warden were meeting a representative from Mayell Groundworks this week, to discuss improvements to the tarmac area outside the Chapel.

32/19: St. Dunstan's Churchyard:

Cllr. Clifford reported that the area dedicated to wild flowers had been planted by the Parish Warden, Cllr. Fermor and Rev. Pollington. The area has been marked and the grounds contractors have been advised on how to adjust the maintenance schedule to take into account the recent planting.

The Clerk agreed to remind the contractors that the gullies in the Churchyard need to be kept trimmed, as specified in their contract.

33/19: Sissinghurst Cemetery:

Members discussed the offer from The Woodland Trust to supply 45 sapling trees at the relatively low cost of £101.25. It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to accept the offer. It was delegated to Cllr. Fermor to decide from the list of trees available, which would be most suited to the Cemetery.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to accept the quote from Kent Grasslands of £750 to clear the brambles and to grind out any stumps remaining from recently felled trees on the south side of the Cemetery. The Clerk would confirm with the contractors this would ensure the area was ready for replanting.

34/19: Cranbrook & Sissinghurst War Memorials:

Cllr. Clifford stated he would arrange a meeting with Ben Hatcher on site, to discuss the cost of undertaking a heavy pruning of the hedge behind Cranbrook War Memorial. The Committee delegated authorisation to the Chairman to agree this expenditure.

35/19: Angley Cottage:

The Clerk confirmed that the electrical inspection had been carried out, some remedial work undertaken and the certificate received and filed.

A quote had been approved for repairs to the porch, roof and back door at the last meeting, the Clerk would chase getting these completed as soon as possible.

36/19: Vestry Hall:

a) Hearing loop:

The electrician had been unable to purchase the part needed to repair the existing equipment, so a completely new unit was the only option. The cost would be £165 + VAT. It was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to go ahead with the purchase. It was delegated to the Chairman to authorise any additional installation costs.

b) Tower Room:

Cllr. Gilbert reported that the Tower Room had been mostly cleared. The only items remaining were a cupboard belonging to the caretakers which they intended to relocate to the cottage, a large filing cupboard and surplus wooden flooring belonging to the Parish Council, which could be stored elsewhere.

c) The Clerk confirmed we have asked for several quotes to repair the ceiling paper in the hall. These were expected to arrive shortly.

d) Masonry repair to internal window frame:

The contractor hoped to undertake the necessary repair next week.

37/19: Vestry Hall Cottage:

Cllr. Gilbert had arranged for the annual inspection of the cottage to be undertaken on Monday 3rd February. There was a small amount of roofing work outstanding on the outside WC roof, Cllr. Bunyan agreed to chase the approved contractor.

38/19: Information Centre:

a) Change to building name:

Quotes for replacing the current sign 'The Weald Information Centre' above the entrance doors, with 'The Old Fire Station' had been requested from Iden Signs. Members felt that the fact that it is also the Parish Office should be signposted and suggested the electric doors were marked or etched in some way to identify it as the Parish Office. The Clerk agreed to seek advice and quotes for this to be undertaken as well.

b) Redesign of office space:

Cllr. Gilbert had been discussing with the Clerks the amount of space ideally required. As the intention was to increase staffing levels, it was agreed that investigating letting out any remaining space, which would also mean upgrading the current facilities, would not be an option. Cllr. Clifford proposed that we contact companies that offer a free design service to come in and give us suggestions for redesigning the space for exclusive use by the Parish Council, taking into account any new legislation governing working conditions. It was agreed to delegate Cllr. Gilbert to meet with designers to discuss the specification. The Clerk would keep the Conservation Architect at TWBC informed to ensure that no breaches of Listed Building Regulations occur.

The Clerk was asked to check if TWBC has a contract with Take One, the company that supplies the tourist leaflets and unit in the lobby area and whether it will be removed when the licence with TWBC expires. She was also asked to request more paper for the photo copier before the licence expires.

c) A quote of £125 + VAT had been received for the annual servicing of the electric doors. It was proposed by Cllr. Gilbert, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to accept the quote.

39/19: Noticeboards, Shelters, Benches & Cycle Racks:

Cllr. Bunyan had no issues to report.

Cllr. Clifford had left several messages for the person who wanted to put a bench in Golford Cemetery but had not received a response, so could only assume they had found an alternative location and no longer required permission.

40/19: Red Telephone Kiosks:

The Clerk had approached Linda Page to see if Cranbrook in Bloom could make any suggestions to enhance the kiosks, she agreed to seek ideas from the Committee.

41/19: Items for Information:

Cllr. Clifford had identified someone from Frittenden who would be prepared to act as a Town Crier for us, on an occasional basis. He would be popping into the office to check if the costume we have will fit. His first event will be at the ceremony on the 14th February, at which Phil Mummery will be appointed as Honorary Mayor of Cranbrook. It was hoped he would also take part in the Town Crier 'Cry for Peace' event on Friday 8th May to commemorate VE Day.