Minutes of a Meeting of the

Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Group

held at Thornton Cemetery

on Monday, 23rd July, 2018 at 9:30 am

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor R. D. Gray)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor T. J. Davies)

Councillors: M. P. Rickard (Chairman) Miss K. Gray

A. H. Miles Mrs. L. E. Turner

Mr. P. Johnson, Cemetery Supervisor, was also in attendance.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor T. J. Davies, declared a personal and prejudicial interest and did not take part in the voting on any of the Agenda items discussed at this morning’s meeting.

63. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W. D. Elliott BA QTS, C. A. Sharp, and Mrs. Y. G. Southwell.

64. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:

The Clerk advised that it was normal practice for the Chairman of this Group to be either the Mayor or the Chairman of the Public Works and Planning Committee.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor M. P. Rickard,

the Chairman of the Public Works and Planning

Committee, be appointed Chairman of the

Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition

Group for the ensuing year.

65. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:

The Chairman, Councillor M. P. Rickard, thanked Members for their support.

He said that he would be speaking to the Cemetery Supervisor regarding a schedule of works to be carried out over the winter period. Grass cutting has been a hard task this year because of the warm weather.

The Chairman advised that work on the Forget-Me-Not Baby Garden has started. The shrubs have not been planted yet because of the hot weather.

Work is continuing on the Cremated Remains section.

The Chairman said that the small wall outside the ladies’ toilets, which was quite badly damaged, has been removed, which has improved the area immensely.

The Chairman said that an anonymous individual has erected a wheelie bin enclosure around two of the bins. The staff would like to replicate this inhouse during the winter months. A Member asked whether this would be too time consuming for the staff and the Chairman replied that any volunteer aid would be welcome.

The Chairman then advised that the new bins have not yet been purchased as checks must be carried out to ensure that they will be sited in the most advantageous location.

The Chairman highlighted the following points that the Group needs to address and which will be discussed at the next meeting:

(i) The refurbishment of the roads and paths.

(ii) The acquisition of land. Mr. N. Tamilia will be asked to visit the Cemetery in order to obtain an accurate assessment of the remaining grave space. The Chairman advised Members to contact the Clerk if they are aware of an available plot of land that may be suitable for interments.

(iii) The bus shelter by the Cemetery Gates.

(iv) A review of equipment held at the Cemetery.

(v) The Group is aware that some mourners are not complying with the Council’s Rules and Regulations regarding the placing of mementos and additional pots on graves. The Group will scrutinise the Cemetery Rules and Regulations Booklet which is issued with the Deed on the purchase of a grave. This discussion will encompass a CCTV policy.

(vi) The Cemetery Wall.

66. CLERK’S REPORT:

(a) Welsh Water

The Clerk said that an Inspector had identified a water leak at the Cemetery in November 2017. The Inspector had informed the Cemetery Supervisor who, in turn, had contacted the Clerk. The Clerk had spoken to Welsh Water to ascertain if the leak was their responsibility or the Council’s and had been informed that the leak was the Council’s responsibility. A plumber had been contacted immediately and had carried out the remedial work without delay.

The Clerk had received a water bill for £2,391.87 which she had queried and had been informed that this was because of the water leak and, because of the swift action in dealing with the leak, the Water Board would give a 50% allowance as a gesture of goodwill. The bill was therefore reduced to £1,195.93.

The Cemetery Staff were checking the water meter on a regular basis to ensure that this situation did not re-occur.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT this information

be received.

(b) Memorandum of Understanding – Child Burial/Cremation Fees:

The Clerk explained that the Welsh Government has agreed by virtue of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Welsh Ministers, the Welsh Local Government Association (the WLGA) and One Voice Wales to adopt a fair and consistent approach across Wales to the fees charged by local government for the burial and cremation of children.

The purpose of the MOU is to confirm the commitment of Burial Authorities in Wales to not charge any fees in relation to the standard burial or cremation of a child, defined for these purposes as a person under the age of 18. This commitment applies to standard fees that burial authorities charge relating to:

* The cremation of a person under the age of 18 years (including stillborn and foetal remains).
* The interment of a person under the age of 18 years (including stillborn and foetal remains).
* The Exclusive Right of Burial where required for a person under the age of 18 years (including stillborn and foetal remains).
* Any other fee directly relating to the burial, cremation or the cremated remains of a person under the age of 18 years, for example, the permit fee for the permission to erect a memorial or a standard cremated remains container.

The commitment does not relate to wider funeral costs such as the cost of a memorial, funeral director fees, flowers or coffins.

The Clerk said that this Council does not charge any interment fees for children under the age of 16 but does charge for the Exclusive Right of Burial and the fee for the erection of a memorial.

In recognition of the financial implications of waiving the fees the Welsh Government will, whilst this MOU remains in force, annually make available the sum of £600,000 for allocation among County Councils in Wales who have signed up to the commitment. County Councils will then distribute appropriate sums to other burial authorities. The MOU will be

subject to review in advance of the financial year 2020/2021.

The Pembrokeshire County Council has adopted the MOU and if the Milford Haven Town Council adopts the MOU, the Clerk would invoice the Pembrokeshire County Council for the value of the waived burial cremation fees for the relevant quarter.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT the Milford Haven Town

Council adopts the Memorandum of Understanding.

67. INSPECTION OF AREAS OF THE CEMETERY:

Members then inspected areas of the Cemetery.

The Mayor, Councillor R. D. Gray, joined the meeting at this point.

(a) Forget-Me-Not Baby Garden

Members were very pleased with the progress made with the Forget-Me- Not Baby Garden which was felt to be a fitting tribute to much-loved babies.

The Mayor advised that Baby Loss Awareness Week was taking place between 9th – 15th October, with a global Wave of Light at 7.00 pm on 15th October when people are asked to light a candle and leave it burning for at least 1 hour to remember all babies who have died too soon.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT the Town Council

holds a service at the Forget-Me-Not Baby

Garden on that date.

(b) Wheelie Bin Enclosure

Members then looked at the wheelie bin enclosure and expressed their gratitude at the work carried out by the anonymous donor.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT:

(i) social media be utilised to try and find out the

donor’s name in order that he/she can be thanked

for the work;

(ii) if the Cemetery Staff are unable to replicate this

due to pressure of work, other community groups

are to be asked to assist.

(c) Cremated Remains Section

The Chairman said that the Cemetery Supervisor has another area in mind for further interments when this Section is completely utilised.

It was RECOMMENDED THAT this be discussed

when the Group looks into the feasibility of how

many grave spaces are remaining in the Cemetery.

(d) Public Conveniences

Members noted the area had been tidied and the ambience of the area improved.

It was agreed that it was not feasible to use the facilities as a storage area and it was RECOMMENDED THAT the public conveniences be redecorated and refurbished, where necessary, until further notice.

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