

MILFORD HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Working Group
held at Cemetery Chapel, Thornton Cemetery
on Monday 23rd September 2024 at 11:00am

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor W. D. Elliott BA QTS)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor E. A. Davies DipSM FJOIFF)

Councillors: C. A. Sharp (Chairman)
K. F. Gray (Vice Chair)

N. Beavis-Morrissey
C. Stevens

Mrs B. J. Fitzgerald, Town Clerk
Mr P. Johnson, Cemetery Supervisor

145. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR:

Councillor C. A. Sharp was nominated as Chair; the proposal was seconded.
Councillor Sharp accepted the nomination.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Councillor C. A. Sharp be appointed
as Chair of the Cemetery Working Group for this municipal
year.

146. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR:

The Chair of the Cemetery Working Group nominated Councillor K. F. Gray as Vice
Chair; the nomination was seconded and Councillor Gray accepted the
appointment.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Councillor K. F. Gray is appointed as
Vice Chair of the Cemetery Working Group for this municipal
year.

147. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Councillors D. Abbott (family commitment) and Y. G.
Southwell (family commitment).

148. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were expressed.

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149. MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CEMETERY MAINTENANCE AND LAND ACQUISITION GROUP HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2024:

It was **RESOLVED THAT:** the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Maintenance and Land Acquisition Group held on 11th March 2024 be received as a true record.

150. MATTERS ARISING:

No matters were raised.

151. SUPERVISORS REPORT:

The Cemetery Supervisor Mr P. Johnson explained that from March to August 2024 50 funerals had taken place. Most of the funerals were for cremated remains. There were currently 7 graves to be turfed with grass cutting continuing.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:** the Supervisors Report be received.

152. APPROVED LIST OF STONEMASONS:

For insurance purposes and to cover the cemetery an approved list of Stonemasons will be prepared.

There is currently a template for rules and regulations and this will be amended for current use. A list of approved stonemasons will be added.

This information is to be added to the burial forms. The regulated stonemasons list will assist in assuring that gravestones are fit for purpose being the correct sizes and regulations that the cemetery requires and being fitted by competent, insured companies.

The information will be completed and circulated to Cemetery Working Group members for the next meeting on 21st October at 11:00am.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- (i) a form will be presented for current use with a list of approved stonemasons added;
- (ii) the information will be on the Agenda for the next Cemetery Working Group meeting on 21st October at 11:00am.

153. MAINTENANCE CONTRACT:

An annual maintenance contract will be implemented and offered to bereaved families from the new financial year in April 2025. There is an annual fee attached to this contract.

The contract will offer a set amount of cuts at the grave site with an added offer of flowers to be laid twice yearly if this assists families who are unable to visit the

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cemetery. The maintenance contract will be a condition and offer a support mechanism to appoint a new member of staff.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:** an annual maintenance contract will be implemented in April 2025 on condition that an extra member of staff be appointed.

154. CEMETERY STAFF:

The budget for an additional member of cemetery ground staff will be included in the precept. The scale for the member of staff is to be determined with the matter being further decided in the October meeting.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- (i) the budget for an additional member of cemetery ground staff be included in the precept for 2025/2026;
- (ii) details of staff scale/payment will be decided at the next Cemetery Working Group meeting in October 2024.

155. CEMETERY LAND SURVEYS AND PLANNING APPLICATION:

It was agreed that the money to begin the planning process will be taken from reserves. The approximate cost is £5,000.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:** the approximate cost of £5,000 to begin the planning process will be taken from reserves.

156. CHAPEL WINDOW SPONSORSHIP:

It was agreed that larger organisations are contacted for grants for the chapel windows. It was also agreed that a GoFundMe or JustGiving page be set up for the funds for the window replacement or repairs in the chapel to be carried out. Donations are welcomed from individuals also.

Quotes are to be sought for the four side windows for coloured glass. The main large chapel window should remain as a stained-glass window. A decorative vinyl window cover could be considered for the four side windows once they are replaced.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- (i) large organisations with links to Milford Haven are contacted in regard to grants to renew/repair the chapel windows;
- (ii) a GoFundMe/JustGiving page to be set up for funds and individual donations would also be welcomed;
- (iii) quotes are to be sought for the four side windows to be replaced with plain coloured glass.

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157. NATURAL BURIAL MEADOW:

The Chair of the Cemetery Working Group explained a natural burial ground and that the new land had a section where a natural burial meadow would be suitable. This type of burial is becoming more popular.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- (i) a section of new land be kept as a natural burial meadow;
- (ii) further information be detailed at a later date.

158. QUOTATIONS:

Quotations have been received for renewing the broken tarmac around the path at the chapel and also the reinstatement of the tarmac outside the boundary wall and gates. The total for all the work including plant, labour, excavation and removal of debris is £12,900. The Clerk is to contact the contractor to ask whether a reduction in cost would be possible if all the work is carried out at the same time.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- (i) work on both areas is to be carried out with the funds coming out of reserves;
- (ii) the contractor to be contacted to enquire if a reduction in cost is possible if all work is carried out at the same time.

159. PROMOTING THE 'LETTERS TO HEAVEN' POST BOX:

A discussion took place on the subject of the post box.

It was suggested that local schools are contacted as they give emotional learning support to bereaved children. Sandy Bear Children's Bereavement Charity is also to be contacted. The organisations may find it useful to prompt the children to write letters and post them to loved ones.

Value Independence could also be contacted as they work with vulnerable adults. It was agreed that a photo of a child's hand posting a letter to be used in promoting the post box.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT:** local schools, Sandy Bear Children's Bereavement Charity and Value Independence be contacted to promote the 'Letters to Heaven' post box and whether the children or young adults who need emotional support may find posting letters to loved ones of assistance in their grief.
