

Haxby and Wigginton Joint Cemetery Committee

The Memorial Hall, The Village, Haxby YO32 3HT

Minutes of a meeting of the Haxby and Wigginton Joint Cemetery Committee held on Thursday 29th June 2023 at 10 a.m. in the offices of Haxby Town Council

In attendance: Cllrs Ruth Pearson, John Gates Richard Denton, Peter Lakey, Tony Richardson (Chairman), and Haxby Locum Clerk (Vanessa Voysey).

C1.23 Apologies for absence

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to receive and agree the following apology:

Cllr Chris Hogg – prior commitment

Cllr Tony Fisher was absent

C2.23 Election of Chairman

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved to elect Cllr Tony Richardson as Chairman for the municipal year of 2023-2024

C3.23 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the meeting.

C4.23 Election of Vice Chairman

The election of a Vice-Chairman for the municipal year of 2023-2024 was deferred

C5.23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time

C6.23 Public Question Time and Participation

There were no members of the public present and no questions raised at this time

C7.23 Minutes

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved to confirm the minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 8th March 2023 as a true record

C8.23 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to exclude the press and public from the discussion of item 9 (C9.23) under item 6 by virtue of S.1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

C9.23 Appointment of a new Cemetery Clerk

Members were given an update on recruitment for the Cemetery Clerk position. It was agreed that the Committee should see the final version of the terms and conditions before the ad is sent out.

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to return to open session.

C10.23 Finance

a) Internal Audit

Members noted the Internal Audit Report received by Haxby Town Council in particular the page regarding the responsibility of a Burial Authority. The recommendations were noted.

There was some discussion on whether it is a legal responsibility to be present at burials. The Chairman noted the importance of following proper instructions and procedures, and making sure that paperwork is in place. Cllr Ruth Pearson that there was an upcoming schedule of five internments in one day, and that it needs to be ensured that burials go to the right plot.

It was agreed that clarification is sought from the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) or similar professional body.

b) End of Year Accounts

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved to approve the End of Year Accounts

The Locum Clerk (Vanessa Voysey) was thanked for her work in preparing the accounts for audit.

c) Future Banking Arrangements

Members considered its future banking arrangements.

It was noted that there had been correspondence with Barclays Bank about mandate issues, and that this had not been resolved after some time. It was not clear who is currently on the mandate, and it was noted that this was difficult to establish when the bank would not discuss the matter with a non-signatory.

The Chairman said that he would pursue this issue with a connection he has who may be able to help.

It was agreed to close Barclays Bank account and investigate other options, with consideration given to these options at a future meeting.

C11.23 Cemetery Inspection

Members received a report on issues arising from an inspection of the cemetery on Thursday 22nd June 2023

The following issues were discussed:

- Topple Testing

It was noted that reference to ensuring topple testing takes place every one to three years was included in the Internal Audit.

The Chairman suggested that advice on recommendations for training opportunities should be sought from an appropriate professional body. Possibly this would be the ICCM as this was mentioned in the Internal Audit.

Cllr Ruth Pearson said that Neil Hodgson had offered to conduct a topple test as a gesture of goodwill.

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to accept the kind offer of Neil Hodgson to conduct a topple test, and to seek advice from a professional body regarding training.

- Risk Assessment

It was noted that the conducting of Risk Assessment was mentioned in the Internal Audit, since this time a Risk Assessment dated November 2022 had been retrieved from office documentation.

It was agreed that the Risk Assessment should be reviewed in November 2023 or at its nearest meeting.

- Road Surface

It was noted that the road surface, particularly on the entry at Moor Lane, is uneven and a trip hazard.

It was agreed that the Chairman would sources three quotes for works to the road surface.

- Training

There was discussion on the need for all Committee members to be aware of how the cemetery functions, and to take appropriate training.

The Chairman noted that he had undertaken an online training course with YCLA about three years ago. It was suggested that options be looked into for obtaining suitable training for all councillors.

It was agreed that Cllr Ruth Pearson would contact Fulford Cemetery for advice on where to obtain training.

- Grounds maintenance

It was agreed that the maintenance contractor be contacted to see what work could be done off the list prepared for the meeting: dead trees at the entrance, sycamore trees growing through the hedges, weeds in the grass. It was noted that some tree works may need a specialist.

- Noticeboard and Car Parking Signs

There was discussion on the noticeboard leaning on one side, and the poor condition of the car parking sign, and if replacement or re-siting would be appropriate options.

It was agreed that suggestions for either replacing or re-siting the noticeboard and car parking signs be brought back to the next meeting after Committee members had visited the cemetery.

- Shed painting

It was agreed that Paul Smith be requested to complete the work on painting the shed.

- Benches

It was noted that some benches have signs on them, whilst not unauthorised, the signs are starting to look untidy.

It was agreed to move signs currently placed on benches.

- Plot signs and graves plan

It was agreed to look at new plot signs for the next meeting. The Chairman requested that a laminated A3 diagram of the cemetery be prepared in advance so that it can be established what is needed and it be positioned correctly. It was noted that there was a need to update cremated remains grave on the plan.

It was agreed that Cllrs Richard Denton and Tony Richardson (Chairman) updated the grave on the plan

- Soil heap

Consideration was given to the need to tidy up the soil heap and the car parking area.

It was agreed to relocate the soil heap into the undeveloped area of the cemetery, and that the Chairman would obtain quotes for a similar sized concrete slab.

- Volunteer tidy up

Cllr Ruth Pearson suggested that social media could be used to request volunteers to help tidy up the cemetery. The Chairman suggested that particular attention could be paid to untended graves.

- Cemetery of the Year

Cllr Ruth Pearson said that she thought the Committee should be aiming towards the Gold Award. It was agreed to try to work towards this aim.

C12.23 Review of Cemetery Charges

Members agreed that there should be a review of cemetery charges 2023/2024, nothing that prices had not been adjusted since 2021. Some price comparisons had been made but need to be revisited. It was agreed to get three other local cemetery prices for comparison and to bring this information back to the next meeting.

There was some discussion on the purchase of additional ground, with the Chairman commenting on the necessity of justifying the amounts held in reserve. It was agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

C13.23 Internments since the last meeting

Members noted that there had been 19 ashes and 23 burials since 24th October, averaging out at 4 a month.

C14.23 Wooden Crosses for Remembrance Sunday

The Chairman said that he would speak with the former Councillor who had worked on a project to purchase wooden crosses for Remembrance Sunday. He would report back to the Committee.

C15.23 Incidents in the Cemetery

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to exclude the press and public from the discussion of item 9 (C9.23) under item 6 by virtue of S.1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

Members were informed about incidents in the cemetery.

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved, to return to open session.

C16.23 Review of the Objection Letter sent to CYC regarding the ST9 development

It was noted that an objection letter had been sent to the City of York Council regarding the ST9 development. There were no additional comments to be made at this time.

C17.23 Matters for inclusion on the next agenda

The following items were discussed in the meeting and agreed to be brought back for inclusion on the next meeting agenda:

- To receive clarification on the legal obligations of attending internments
- To consider options for an alternative bank account
- To report on any advice received on training for topple testing and cemetery management
- To report on the cemetery visit and options for the noticeboard
- To consider new plot signs
- To receive and consider any quotes for the repair to the road surface
- To receive and consider any quotes for a replacement concrete slab for the soil stack
- To receive and consider comparative cemetery charges and to review the charges for the financial year 2023-2024
- To receive an update from the Chairman about the purchase of wooden crosses for Remembrance Day

C18.23 Update of committee members email addresses

It was noted that the Parish Clerk for Wiggington had supplied council emails for all its members, and that Haxby Town Councillors also had council emails.

C19.23 Date of next Cemetery Committee Meeting

The next meeting will be a site visit on Monday 17th July at 10am, followed by a Committee Meeting on Wednesday 19th July at 10am.