

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 Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 10.30 a.m. in the offices of Haxby Town Council.

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

C20.23 Apologies for absence

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

Cllr Chris Hogg – alternative commitment

C21.23 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

C22.23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this time

C23.23 Public Question Time and Participation

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

C24.23 Minutes

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved to confirm the minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on Thursday 29th June 2023 as a true record

C25.23 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed, seconded, and resolved to elect Richard Denton as the Vice-Chairman of the Haxby and Wigginton Joint Cemetery Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

C26.23. Exclusion of Public and Press

It was proposed, seconded and resolved to excluded the press and public from the discussion of the following item by virtue of S.1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

C27.23 Appointment of a new Cemetery Clerk

Members received an update regarding the new Cemetery Clerk position. It was noted that the Staffing Committee had agreed to combine the vacant Administrative Post with the Cemetery Clerk post into one full-time position.

The meeting returned to open session

C28.23 Legal Obligations on Attending Interments

An update was given regarding the legal obligations of attending interments; advice had been sought from the ICCM by Cllrs Tony Richardson and Ruth Pearson. Whilst it is not a legal requirement to have attendance at every interment, it is best practice.

Cllr Ruth Pearson assured the Committee that every burial since she took over in October had been attended - she had only missed three, and Cllr Mike Harrison had been in attendance as her replacement on those occasions.

Cllr Pearson outlined the procedure for paperwork. It was agreed to review having a written procedure in place if this was felt necessary in the future.

C29.23 Financial Matters

i) Bank Account

Members of the Committee considered that it would be appropriate to get control of the existing bank account before considering an alternative.

Cllr Tony Richardson had received advice from an expert and this was that the correct route to take would be to suspend the account and to formally minute who on the Committee should be signatories. The minutes would then be attached to a formal complaint to Barclays Bank with the view to instigating the re-opening of the account with the correct signatories. It was estimated that this would take 4 to 6 weeks. There was discussion on the implication for this in stopping account activity, and that suppliers and customers would require notification. The Locum Clerk noted that suppliers are currently paid via the main Haxby Town Council account and that only Direct Debits are being paid through the Cemetery Account.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that the Chairman, Tony Richardson, and the Vice-Chairman, Richard Denton, are to be the signatories on the Haxby and Wigginton Cemetery Barclays Community Account 20-99-56 90505331, with Cllr John Gates as a third signatory.

This was agreed by members of the Haxby and Wigginton Cemetery Committee present at the meeting – Cllrs Tony Fisher, Ruth Pearson, Peter Lakey, John Gates, Tony Richardson and Peter Denton.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that the Chairman be given authority to suspend the account.

The Chairman, Cllr Tony Richardson, apologised to Haxby Town Council for the delay but that the Committee was endeavouring to sort out the situation.

ii) Barclays Bank

A verbal report was given on current activity. The Locum Clerk said that payments were being made via the main Haxby Town Council account and that the Town Council's accounts had a separate line for recording monies due from this and the previous financial year.

Cheques can still be paid into the account, and BACS payments are being made for services. There is a direct debit set up for waste removal services.

iii) Accounts

The Committee raised concerns about financial reporting and presentation of accounts. The Locum Clerk said that obtaining copies of bank statements was necessary to complete bank reconciliations and that the current situation makes this challenging.

It was agreed that for the next meeting the Committee would receive a figure for what is due to Haxby Town Council, approximate income and expenditure for the current financial year to date. The Locum Clerk said she would aim to complete half year accounts.

C30.23 Topple Testing

Neil Hodgson from J.W.Myers had performed a topple test and compiled a report, this include 87 fails where headstones need to be laid flat or removed for health and safety reasons. It would require a stonemason to lay the headstones flat. The committee was told that this action was mandatory.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved to lay the topple test failed headstones flat and to instruct Mr Hodgson accordingly.

The committee was told that notices would be put on each headstone to inform headstone owners in advance of the laying down. It was suggested that contacting the stonemasons who installed the headstones could be an appropriate way forward to get an idea of the costs involved in re-setting headstones to the present regulations. It was agreed to send out letters to families affected by the topple test and that a review of the responses be given to the committee at the next meeting.

C31.23 ICCM

The Chairman, Cllr Tony Richardson, advised the Committee that it is now a member of the the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management). Membership is normally April to April, but a pro-rata price has been charged. As a member, the Committee can obtain advice, training is also available.

Training on topple testing can be arranged through the ICCM. With hosting facilities and a group of ten, this could take place in Haxby. It was agreed that the Town Council office and the cemetery would be suitable for the combined theory and practical test in a cemetery. Opening it up to other authorities in the York area could ensure that there are enough numbers to facilitate the training.

All other tests could be taken online.

Cllr Tony Fisher left the meeting

C32.23 Cemetery Visit

Members reported on the cemetery visit that took place on Monday 17th July 2023. The following matters were raised:

- i) Soil stack slabs

There had been a discussion on moving the pad to the corner. Quotes are being sought for this work to take place.

ii) Wild areas

Wild grass areas goes up to burial areas, there was a general agreement that whilst wild edging is fine, the middle section should be cut on a more regular basis. There was a consensus that the boarding edge to the road from plots 27,29,38,39 and 40, should be cut in line with other areas of grass cutting.

It was requested that information is brought to the next meeting about how many cuts are left for this year and the details of the current maintenance contract. A quote for additional work may be required.

iii) Road surfacing

The road surfacing is brittle and is breaking off in angles. The Committee gave consideration to the possibility of getting a full replacement in tarmac, or repairing the worst parts. There was an option to consider of getting a tarmac surface and recycling the concrete as hardcore to produce a nicer finish and a permanent solution. The Chairman, Cllr Tony Richardson, had spoken at length on site with a contractor and had requested a quote.

It was agreed to get two more quotations for the tarmacking works.

iv) Benches

Some of the benches are in hedges and should be by the path, it was suggested that they should all be moved forwards. Some do not have bases. There is a need for a policy on benches, this should include that they are all abutted to the path.

It was agreed to speak to Mick Lambert about moving the benches.

v) Trees and hedges

Trees and hedgerows need trimming. Conifer trees are making the area look dark and enclosed.

It was agreed to obtain three quotes for the removal of the conifer trees and for the tidying up of the hedges.

vi) Noticeboard

There was discussion on whether the noticeboard should have new plates with current details of both Parish Councils, or if it should be replaced. It was also noted that the car park sign is out of date.

It was agreed that the next meeting should discuss the replacement of the noticeboard, and that three quotes should be obtained by the Clerk.

vii) Bench repairs

Two quotes have been obtained or the repair of the benches located by the fence around the statue. This includes replacing the slats and varnishing. A third quote is being sought.

viii) Dustbins

Some of the bins are on 2ft square paving should be concreted in. Replacing them with more substantial bins is worth consideration.

ix) Oak Tree

The Chairman said he would be putting a letter to the Committee regarding the planting of an oak tree in the triangle area. The triangle areas need tidying up.

x) Notice signs

A permanent sign should be placed at each entrance to state that, “any items left on gravesides in contravention of the cemetery rule may be removed without further notice.”

C33.23 New Plot Signs

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

C34.23 Repair of the road surface

This item was covered in the report on the Cemetery visit

C35.23 Concrete slab for the soil stack

This item was covered in the report on the Cemetery visit

C36.23 Cemetery Fees

It was agreed to defer review of comparative charges and charges for the financial year 2023/2024 until the next meeting.

C37.23 Crosses for Remembrance Day

Members received an update from the Chairman about the purchase of wooden crosses for Remembrance Day, and agreed to continue with existing arrangements. .

C38.23 Matters for inclusion on the next agenda

In addition to ongoing and deferred items as mentioned above, Cllr Ruth Pearson raised an issue regarding accommodating the religious requirements of a local family. There was a discussion on available locations for burial and the option of consecrating available ground through a particular denomination or faith..

There was a discussion on the request for surrounds as this could be a health and safety issue. It was agreed to consult the ICCM for further advice.

C39.23 Date of next Cemetery Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Cemetery Committee will be held at 10.30am on Wednesday 22nd November in the Town Council offices.

The meeting closed at 12.56pm