

GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

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15 March 2013

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the **JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE** meeting to be held in Godalming Council Chamber on THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2013 at 5.30 pm.

Louise P Goodfellow
Clerk to the Committee

Committee Members: Councillor Wilson – Chairman
Councillor A Bott – Vice Chairman
Councillor Thomson
Councillor Lister
Councillor Wheatley
Councillor Noyce
Councillor Long (Busbridge Parish Council)
Mrs Westwood (Busbridge Parish Council)

AGENDA

1. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2012.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

To receive from Members any declarations of interests in relation to any items included on the Agenda for this meeting required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

4. **ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING & SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

Clerk to report on the accounts paid since the last meeting.

A schedule of the accounts paid will be tabled for the information of Members. The vouchers relating to these payments will also be tabled at the meeting for inspection. All payments made are in line with the agreed budget or other resolution of this Committee or Full Council.

Members to agree that the Chairman should sign the schedule of accounts paid.

Members of the Public have the right to attend all meetings of the Town Council and its Committees and are welcome.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW, AUDIT WORKPLAN AND LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT

The interim Internal Audit, was conducted on 27 November 2012, by Mark Mulberry (copy attached for the information of Members). In addition to this, the Internal Audit Workplan for the year 2013/14 was submitted by the Internal Auditor for approval for the financial year 2013/14 (copy attached for the information of Members).

Members to note the Interim Audit report and Audit Workplan. Members further to note that on behalf of both Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Joint Burial Committee the Chairman of Godalming Town Council Policy & Management Committee signed the Letter of Engagement for the ensuing year.

6. AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT INCLUDING REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEMS OF AUDIT

Members to receive the written report and recommendations from the Chairman of the Audit Sub-Committee following the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 7 March 2013 (copy attached for the information of Members).

Members further to receive the recommendations from the Audit Sub-Committee relating to the review of the effectiveness of the systems of audit.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 all bodies are required to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the internal audit annually by 31 March each year.

The five areas that must be covered are:

- Scope of Internal Audit
Has the scope of the internal audit been discussed with the Internal Auditor to ensure that all the relevant risks are covered?
- Independence
Is the Internal Auditor sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased?
- Competence
Does the Internal Auditor have sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the audit?
- Relationships
Are the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk and RFO clearly defined?
- Audit Planning & Reporting
Is the body aware of a timetable of when the internal and external audits will take place and when the reports from these will be expected?

The Audit Sub-Committee recommended the following responses to the questions posed and agreed that these should be recommended to the Joint Burial Committee:

- the scope of the internal audit had been discussed with the Internal Auditor in order to ensure that all the relevant risks were covered and all Members had received a copy of the agreed Internal Audit Plan at agenda item 5 above;
- the Internal Auditor is sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased evidenced by the fact that Mulberry & Co is an external accountancy firm trading independently. Mulberry & Co had a particular specialism in Town and Parish Councils. Members

noted that it is good practice to change the Internal Auditor every 6-10 years and that Mulberry & Co is about to start its fifth year as the Council's Internal Auditor;

- the Internal Auditor has sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the audit as demonstrated by the fact that Mark Mulberry (the Internal Auditor) is a Chartered Certified Accountant and Registered Auditor;
- the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk, RFO are clearly defined in the job descriptions for the Clerk and the RFO and the terms of reference of the Audit Sub-Committee.
- the Sub-Committee was made aware of the timetable of when the internal and external audits would take place and when the reports from these would be expected. The next Internal Audit is to be conducted in May 2013 and reported to the next Audit Sub-Committee at a meeting to be held on 13 June 2013; the Sub-Committee's observations will then accompany the Internal Audit Report to the Joint Burial Committee on 27 June 2013. The Joint Burial Committee will also consider its annual return at its meeting on the 27 June 2013. The annual return is to be sent to the External Auditor in July 2013 and the expectation is that it should be received back by 30 September 2013. The annual return will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Joint Burial Committee following receipt of the Annual Return from the External Auditor.

Internal Audit Process

Similarly, the Audit Sub-Committee recommended the following responses to the questions posed:

Is the work of the Internal Audit reviewed regularly?

- the work of the Internal Auditor is reviewed regularly; initially by officers, then in detail by the Audit Sub-Committee. Findings and recommendations of the Audit Sub-Committee are reported to the Joint Burial Committee.

Are the reports on the work of the Internal Auditor presented to the committee?

- the reports on the work of the Internal Auditor were presented to the Joint Burial Committee; the most recent having been reported on 28 June 2012 (Minute No 7-12 refers) and at agenda item 5 above.

Are the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Sub Committee on behalf of the Joint Burial Committee reported to the committee?

- the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Sub-Committee on behalf of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee were reported to the Joint Burial Committee on 28 June 2012 (Minute No. 6-12 refers).

Are the annual reports from the Internal Auditor presented to the committee?

- that the Annual reports from the Internal Auditor are presented to the Policy & Management Committee and noted that the last Annual Report was received on 28 June 2012.

External Audit Process

The Audit Sub-Committee's recommendation did not specifically address these questions as they relate to the Joint Burial Committee; so officer recommendations are given.

Are the annual reports from the External Auditor presented to the committee?

- The Annual Reports from the External Auditor relating to the Joint Burial Committee are presented to the Joint Burial Committee; the report being received at the Joint Burial Committee on the 22 November 2012 (Minute No. 26-12 refers).

Does the committee ensure that recommendations from the External Auditor are implemented?

- If there were recommendations from the External Auditor then Members would ensure they were implemented.

Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co was appointed as the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2010/2011 and following a successful outcome has been reappointed for the current year.

BDO Stoy Hayward has been and continues to be the External Auditor for Godalming Town Council and Godalming Joint Burial Committee. As BDO is externally appointed to undertake the external audit for both Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Joint Burial Committee there is currently no facility to change provider if the Council so desired.

Characteristics of the Review

Can it be Seen as a Catalyst for Change?

Evidence Work Programme and Reviews undertaken to assess Risk and the areas that are developed from these reviews

Does it Add Value?

The follow up actions that are taken from the work programme to make improvements to enhance our services.

Is it Forward Looking?

Identifies risks and incorporates them into the Work Programme which is reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Audit sub committee to ensure it is forward looking and meeting events.

Is it Challenging?

It has created its own Work Programme identifying areas and risks over and above the norm that are considered to need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance and to allow Members to take ownership of the risks and how they are managed to meet best practice.

Are the right resources available for Internal audit to complete its work?

Good communication lines.

7. BURIAL STATISTICS

Statistics for the previous quarter and for the twelve months ending 31 December 2012 are attached for the information of Members. In addition, for Members' information, nine full body interments have taken place during the last quarter up to 8 March. This is currently the same number of full body interments as in 2010/11 and is significantly improved from the 2007/8 figures of 14. Officers believe that the increase in numbers is mainly driven by

the improved reputation of the Joint Burial Committee's cemeteries, combined with an affordable fees structure. However, it is also worth noting that the number of interments of cremated remains has significantly decreased. This may be due to financial considerations during the present economic climate with more families opting to scatter cremated remains at the crematorium or other locations.

8. EASHING CEMETERY CHAPEL – RENOVATION

Members to note that the majority of the works for the restoration of the Chapel and the installation of the accessible WC are now complete.

The cost to date for the main contract is £51,538.95 of which £2,579.20 is held as retention money, we are still awaiting the final invoice as the surveyors are requiring more detailed breakdown of costs. Additionally, £720 was spent prior to the start of work in clearing accumulated waste from within the buildings and the removal of asbestos contaminated spoil discovered during the installation of the septic tank cost £1,211.16.

Unfortunately, the heavy snowfall and driving rain over the Christmas period caused seepage into the chapel through damaged roof soakers abutting the roof parapet. The soakers have been repaired and the plaster slowly dried to prevent cracking. The feature wall will need to have some limited repainting before the re-dedication service and we are currently negotiating on liability for this extra work. On advice of the surveyor and in consultation with the Chairman, the external painting of the soffit boards, painting of the covered way roof and the repair of the archway timbers, along with gutter replacement was removed from the primary contract and managed as part of the routine repair and maintenance programme which realised a saving in the region of £2,500 - £3,300.

There will still be some external decorations to the rear of the chapel which will be undertaken at a later date, this could not be done at the present time as scaffolding needs to be erected to access areas of the roof, this will be investigated separately and brought to this Committee for approval.

Members should also note that the extreme cold weather experienced during the renovation works meant that, to prevent delays in the works and the associated costs, it was necessary to use more indirect heat electrical dryers than expected. The dryers were required to allow the lime plaster to set, this has resulted in much higher electrical consumption than would normally be experienced or budgeted for at the chapel, it is anticipated that the cost of electricity used during the restoration works will be approximately £1,400. (A copy of the Income and Expenditure as at 28 February 2013 and revised Detailed Movement of Funds agreed at the meeting held on 22 November 2012 relating to the Joint Burial Committee are attached for the information of Members.)

9. EASHING CEMETERY CHAPEL – RE-DEDICATION

Members to note that Eashing Chapel will be re-dedicated by the Bishop of Guildford the Rt Rev Christopher Hill on 15 April 2013 with a small reception to be held after the re-dedication. Places are limited to 50 people including Members and Officiates, invitations have been sent to the clergy of Godalming, Farncombe and Busbridge, Churches Together in Godalming & District, local funeral directors and via the March edition of Round & About members of the public have been invited to request an invitation.

10. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Members to note the grounds maintenance works programme.

January – March. Over the last quarter the grounds maintenance at Eashing has concentrated on the area around the chapel buildings, both front and back, to enhance the appearance of the chapel and repair unavoidable damage to the grounds during the

building works (vehicle ruts, pipework trenches etc). Additionally, the hedgerows have been flayed, and the bracken cut back as part of the ongoing bracken eradication programme. A failed wild cherry has been removed and nettle clearance has been undertaken on the earth bank behind St Marks Church & Community Centre, which when cleared of nettles will be planted with wild flowers. Three conifers on the border of the Garden of Remembrance and St Marks Church & Community Centre have been removed as they were failing and posed a risk of falling onto the building, all works are contained within current budgets.

April – Jun

Eashing: Thinning of the self-seeded oaks within the Natural Burials area. Continuation of the Natural Burial area-planting scheme, planting new beds created to the rear of the chapel. Reduce the meadow area on the consecrated section of the cemetery to new grassed lawn.

Nightingale: Removal of pampas grass and new planting within the beds, tree survey, trimming of yews.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 27 June 2013 at 5.00pm at Eashing Cemetery and thereafter in the Council Chamber.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought forward by permission of the Chairman. Requests to be submitted prior to commencement of the meeting.

THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED IE. COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE MATTERS.

13. REPORT – FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION

Members to receive a commercial-in-confidence report regarding future cemetery provision.

14. LETTER TO NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY

Members to consider the attached letter (copy attached for the information of Members) to be sent to the neighbouring authority.

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.31 (4) Localism Act 2011 and the Codes of Conduct adopted by Godalming Town Council & Busbridge Parish Council).

As required by the Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Codes of Conduct, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a disclosable pecuniary interest]² [a non-pecuniary interest]³ in the following matter:-

COMMITTEE:

DATE:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest.

Agenda No.	Subject	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Non-Pecuniary Interest	Reason

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ "Member" includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee

² A disclosable pecuniary interest is defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) regulations 2012/1464 and relate to employment, office, trade, profession or vocation, sponsorship, contracts, beneficial interests in land, licences to occupy land, corporate tenancies and securities

³ A non-pecuniary interest is defined by Section 5 (4) of the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.