

GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

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23 September 2011

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the **JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE** meeting to be held at Eashing Cemetery on THURSDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2011 at 5.00 pm and thereafter in the Godalming Council Chamber.

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)
Councillor Westwood (Busbridge Parish Council)

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2011.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

To receive from Members, in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting, disclosure of any interests which are required to be disclosed by the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 No.1159.

Members are requested to disclose, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, both the existence and nature of any "Personal" or "Prejudicial" interests that they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this agenda.

Personal Interests

- (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (5) below, where a Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council and attends a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, the Member must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where the Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa) of the Code of Conduct, the Member needs only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when s/he addresses the meeting on that business.

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

- (3) Where the Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii) of the Code of Conduct, the Member need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where the Member is aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.
- (5) Where a Member has a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in the Town Council's register of members' interests, the Member must indicate to the meeting that s/he has a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting

Prejudicial Interests

Where a Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council that Member also has a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. Where a Member has a prejudicial interest that Member must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held.

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.

5. MONITORING REPORT

Members to receive the monitoring report for the Joint Burial Committee up to 31 August 2011. This provides the actual income and expenditure at that date. Please note that the format has now changed (copy attached for the information of Members).

As a basic monitoring calculation, the profile for each budget should increase by one twelfth each month and the corresponding income and expenditure relating to each budget should reflect this. Most budgets at the current time should, therefore, reflect 5/12ths of the annual budget. However, some budgets have different profiles and are paid at different times, these can be quarterly, or annually and therefore the income and expenditure will reflect this.

Comments are only made where the budget is not performing as expected or it is anticipated that Members would find it helpful to have further information.

We now have the new software accounting package in operation and the report is printed directly from this. As this is a new system it will need some honing. A more detailed report providing the breakdown extracting information for the two cemeteries is now also available but does still need adjusting as it currently reflects the old budget format and will of course be upgraded as the system is used to provide improved management information (copy attached for the information of Members).

Income

As already seen through the year the income is on track. Income from the purchase of burial rights is low but usually increases through the Autumn/Winter. There is a minus

figure against Natural Burials, which is due to the Committee agreeing to refund two purchases made last year due to the purchasers relocating. We have received £1,500 against purchases for Nightingale Cemetery, however, it must be acknowledged that the interest from last year may not continue, so we may possibly need to revise the income figure when the estimates are prepared later in the year. In line with the Audit Sub Committee the suppliers have been reviewed and currently Thames Water has reassessed the basis of our contract with them. This has meant that we have received a refund of £1,263 and a revised basis for charging, which should lead to savings. Waverley Borough Council has also recalculated the Business Rate as they had not given us the full transitional rate so we have received a refund of £560.50. The Business Rate refund will be reflected in the September balances, both refunds will be made to the revised estimates as appropriate.

Expenditure

Most expenditure is behaving as expected at this point in the year.

The ground maintenance contract needs renewing and the tenders are in the process of being received. It is hoped that this year there will be a saving but the outcome will be much clearer once an agreement has been made regarding who will have won the new contract. A verbal report is due from the Cemeteries Manager regarding this matter later on the agenda.

Currently, the income exceeds expenditure by £43,679. This is due to the fact that we have only received the first half of the JBC precept and only 5 months rent has been received.

6. BURIAL STATISTICS

Statistics for the previous quarter and for the twelve months ending 30 September 2011 are attached for the information of Members (subject to final confirmation).

7. FEES AND CHARGES

Members are asked to consider the attached report from the Cemeteries Manager regarding the structure and level of charges for the year beginning 1 January 2012.

8. PLOT REGISTER RE-WRITE

Members agreed in June 2011 to employ a temporary member of staff to undertake the transcription and data entry of the Cemetery Plot Registers (Minute No. 14-11 refers). Members agreed a maximum of 8 weeks at a total cost of £1,400. The completed transcribed plot register for the consecrated area of Eashing cemetery will be tabled for Members inspection.

The Eashing consecrated plot register is the larger of the two registers covering 8768 entries. However, to ensure accuracy, the work to produce the new register required extensive and unforeseen cross-referencing of source documents and was considerably more time consuming and difficult than had originally been envisaged. Unfortunately, the imperative to produce an accurate record for future use has meant that the unconsecrated plot record, which consists of approximately 3000 records, has not yet been started. Therefore, in order to complete the original task, Members are requested to approve an additional 4 weeks of temporary staff time up to a maximum of £700.

9. VISUAL IMPRESSION OF NIGHTINGALE CEMETERY

Members will be aware of the great strides made during the recent past to improve the visual appearance of both Nightingale and Eashing Cemeteries. Within Nightingale Cemetery much work has been completed in regards to the restoration of the cemetery grounds. Indeed in 2011 Godalming in Bloom awarded Nightingale Cemetery the prize for Best Managed Public Open Space.

In order to maintain this position and indeed progress forward, a rolling programme of masonry work will be conducted and contained within the general grounds maintenance budget. However, following discussions with the curator of Watts Gallery, there are two areas of works that impact on the visual appearance of the cemetery, which require artisan craftsman in order to prevent previous restoration errors being repeated. Members will see at the attached photographs (colour photo's will be tabled at the meeting for Members to inspect) that the areas requiring restoration are of local historic importance.

Members would wish to be aware that the majority of the damage shown on the right hand photograph was caused by the designed drain holes being filled by mortar during previous restorations. This resulted in water being trapped inside the structure, which expanded when frozen and split joints and other parts of the structure. Whereas the incorrect metal pins being used damaged the structure shown on the left hand photograph. This was due to the expansion of the metal, caused by oxidisation, cracking the supporting structure.

Attached for Members' information are the quotes for the repair of each of the structures in question. Members will note that for the 'Muntzer' structure (the right hand photo) the quoted cost of restoration is above that for which Financial Regulation 12.1 requires a second quote to be obtained. Members are asked to consider this on a single quote basis because of the specialist nature of the restoration required and that the company conducts similar restoration work for Watts Gallery and come recommended by the curator. The Cemeteries Manager does not believe he has the knowledge base to better the advice provided by the curator. The cost of this repair work can be contained within the grounds maintenance budget.

10. CYPRUS TREES – EASHING CEMETERY

Members will be aware that in June they agreed to a watering programme for the cyprus trees at Eashing cemetery. Additionally, Members also agreed that if the trees still failed then decisions regarding re-planting should be brought to this committee in October (Minute No. 18-11 refers).

Unfortunately the trees continued to deteriorate and as such, they have been removed. In light of other planting work that has to be planned for Eashing Cemetery, Members are asked to defer any consideration of what, if anything, should be planted to replace these trees until a full assessment of all planting requirements at the cemetery has been conducted, it is hoped that this assessment would be completed in order to be presented to this committee in 2012.

11. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS UPDATE

Members to note that as instructed by Minute No. 16-11 invitation to tender for the Joint Burial Committee and Town Council grounds' maintenance contracts was advertised in Horticulture Week trade magazine. Twenty expressions of interest were received and the Pre-Qualification and Tender documents were issued on 8 August. The close for bidders to submit a tender bid is 12 Noon on 28 September 2011. Therefore, the Facilities Manager will provide Members with a verbal update regarding the number of bids received.

12. WATER RATE REBATE

Members to note that, during a review of services, the Cemeteries Manager discovered that the Joint Burial Committee was being charged for wastewater. Wastewater charges are levied against 90% of the supplied water, however, since 2001 neither Cemetery has been connected to mains drainage, the accuracy of previous bills was challenged. Subsequent investigation resulted in the wastewater element being removed from JBC bills and the JBC being issued total refunds of £1,263.51. The removal of wastewater charges should also mean future water bills being approximately £100pa lower based on current rates.

13. NIGHTINGALE CEMETERY STEPS

Members will be aware that this committee previously approved repair work to the retaining embankment adjacent to the steps leading from Shadyhanger to Nightingale Cemetery, to a maximum cost of £6,000, in order to allow the timely repair of the retaining embankment if the Policy and Management Committee had agreed to repair the steps (Minute 17-11). Members are asked to note that at its meeting of 15 September 2011 the Policy & Management Committee of Godalming Town Council declined to fund the repairs required to make the steps safe for continued use. Therefore pursuant to this committee's previous decision (Minute 17-11) works have been put in hand to close these steps by 01 October.

The required remedial work on the embankment would involve the construction of a timber planked retaining structure to the embankment, the timber planks being secured between vertical steel joists bedded in concrete pockets. Members are asked to approve the repairs to the banking based on the quotes received for the combined steps and embankment works. The recommended contractor has indicated that the repair to the banking would be in the order of 35% of the total quoted. Members are being asked to make their decision based on a 35% cost of the quotes supplied by the surveyor. If Members wish to consider quotes based purely on the work required on the embankment retaining structure, then they would need to authorise the Cemeteries Manager to issue further instructions to the surveyor to obtain new quotes, this will involve additional professional fees.

The quotes are presented in an anonymous format.

Three quotes were obtained and the 35% cost of each is indicated below:

Contractor A	£4,270 (including VAT)
Contractor B	£4,620
Contractor C	£5,530

Contractor A is a sole trader and not VAT registered. Although not yet validated, we have been advised that they have undertaken work for Waverley Borough Council.

Contractor B is an established civil engineering company that have been working in Surrey since 1966.

Contractor C is an established civil engineering company that has previously undertaken work for the Town Council.

Any appointment of a contract would be subject to the contractor providing a satisfactory method statement and health & safety statement. Furthermore in view of the nature and unknown conditions of the existing ground it is considered prudent that a contingency be set aside for unforeseen extra work that may be required.

Recommendation

Should Members wish to proceed with the repair work to the cemetery embankment, then, having taken advice from the surveyor, the Facilities & Cemeteries Manager recommends,

based on reputation, price and level of supervision required, Contractor B. It is believed that the £6,000 cost (including contingency) can be met from within the Grounds Maintenance Budget.

14. RE-PURCHASE OF TWO NATURAL BURIAL PLOTS

Members to agree the re-repurchasing of a Nightingale Cemetery burial plot brought in 2010. Although the purchase price in 2010 was £900, this purchase was made on an instalment payment plan and to date £600 has been paid. The current owners' circumstances have changed and they are moving away from the area. Precedence has been set for this situation in as much that burial plots have been re-purchased at the same price at which they were originally bought less a charge for administration. It is RECOMMENDED that if Members are minded to approve the re-purchasing of this burial plot an administration fee of £50 is levied and the plot is re-purchased for £550.

15. DAMP AT NIGHTINGALE CEMETERY LODGE

Members to note that the tenant of Nightingale Lodge reported the appearance of damp within the kitchen and tower area of The Lodge. Subsequent investigation confirmed the presence of rising damp within these areas. Remedial work to correct this problem needs to be conducted in two phases, the first, which has been arranged for 24 October 2011 is the insertion of a chemical damp proof course into the affected walls. The cost of this work is £293 and is to be conducted by Alpine Preservations Ltd of Farncombe and is guaranteed for 20 years from completion. However, the second phase of the damp treatment requires the removal of the internal wall plaster 1.2 metres from the floor level on the affected walls, which would also require the removal of kitchen base units, worktops sink etc as well as radiators and other associated pipe work, and re-plastering the walls using a 'tanking system'. The quote received for this second work is £1,258. Such levels of disruption involved in the second phase of works need to be carefully managed around our tenant.

It is suggested that following the chemical injection, the degree to which the internal plasterwork dries is monitored in order to determine how imperative this level of work is or whether it could be deferred and scheduled between the end of this current tenancy and the start of the next. This would also allow for a period of re-decoration and kitchen unit replacement. Additional quotes for this second phase will be sought when required.

16. INSULTATED CURTAINS AT NIGHTINGALE LODGE

Members to note that arrangements are in hand, using the company who provided curtains for the Wilfrid Noyce Community Centre, to supply thermal lined curtains and blinds for Nightingale Cemetery Lodge. This is an outstanding action highlighted during the last winter when the inadequacy of the single glazed lead widows to retain heat (or indeed to keep out draughts) was fully exposed. The company (Waverly Blinds and Shutters) have previously been market tested for price and quality by the Town Clerk.

17. FUTURE WORKS

Members to consider a report from the Cemetery Manager (copy attached for the information of Members) concerning future works required at Nightingale and Eashing Cemeteries.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 27 October 2011 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a personal interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.81 Local Government Act 2000 and the Codes of Conduct adopted by Godalming Town Council & Busbridge Parish Council).

As required by the Local Government Act 2000, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a personal interest]² [a prejudicial interest]³ in⁴ the following matter:-

COMMITTEE: _____

DATE: _____

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest. If you have a prejudicial interest in an item, please indicate whether you wish to speak (refer to Godalming Town Council's Code of Conduct paragraph 12(2)).

Agenda No.	Subject	Personal	Prejudicial	Reason	Speak?	
					Yes	No

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ "Member" includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee – section 83, Local Government Act 2000.

² A personal interest includes:

Any matter registered in the register of interests

Any decision which affects the well-being or financial position of a member or a friend or relative to a greater extent than others.

³ A prejudicial interest is a personal interest so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest.

⁴ State item under consideration.