

GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

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Municipal Buildings
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12 June 2015

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the **JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE** meeting to be held in Godalming Council Chamber on THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2015 at 5.30 pm. The meeting will be preceded by an inspection of **Eashing Cemetery** at 5.00 pm.

Louise P Goodfellow
Clerk to the Committee

Committee Members: Councillor Gordon-Smith
Councillor Wheatley
Councillor A Bott
Councillor Noyce
Councillor Williams
Councillor Gray
Councillor Long (Busbridge Parish Council)
Councillor Westwood (Busbridge Parish Council)

AGENDA

1. **TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN**

To receive nominations for the Chairman of the Committee and to elect said Chairman.

2. **TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To receive nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Committee and to elect said Vice-Chairman.

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

5. **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.

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

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

Members of the Public have the right to attend all meetings of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee and are welcome.

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.

7. FINAL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015

Members to receive the final accounts for the Financial Year ending 31 March 2015.

8. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members to consider the report of Mulberry & Co attached for the information of Members.

9. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members to consider the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 June 2015 (attached for the information of Members).

10. ANNUAL RETURNS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Members to consider the Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2015 (copy of the Annual Return attached for the information of Members).

Members to note the Accounting Statements given at Section 1 and the Internal Auditor's report at Section 4 on each return.

Members' attention is particularly drawn to the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of each Annual Return and Members are required to consider the answers to the questions posed at that Section - at this point Members may wish to refer to the answers recommended by the Audit Committee in its report at Agenda Item 9 above.

11. BANK MANDATE

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.1 it is necessary for this Committee to agree its Bank Mandate and the following resolution is recommended:

The Godalming Joint Burial Committee resolves that HSBC plc should continue as the Committee's bankers and shall be authorised to honour all cheques drawn on the Committee's accounts or instructions for direct debits or standing orders provided the order for payment or instruction is signed by any two of four members of the Committee being :

- The Chairman,
- The Vice-Chairman, and
- Two others to be named at the meeting
- The Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee

The Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer should be instructed to complete a bank mandate to effect the resolution above.

12. CEMETERY MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

Godalming Joint Burial Committee has responsibility for the overall safety within its cemeteries under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, the cemeteries are maintained in a safe condition.

The issue of memorial safety became a prominent issue in 2000 when a fatal accident in a cemetery in York highlighted the problem of unstable memorials. This prompted burial authorities to conduct safety checks of their cemeteries, with Godalming Joint Burial Committee being no exception. A full memorial safety check was conducted at both Eashing and Nightingale cemeteries in 2005 which ensured that, as far as reasonably practicable, the memorials in both cemeteries were either in a stable condition or made safe. Of those memorials that had to be made safe, the majority were done so by laying them down.

Since 2013, the majority of the memorials that were laid down in Nightingale Cemetery have been re-instated by the JBC. However, except for a few visually and historically important memorials those in Eashing Cemetery have remained lain down.

It is now ten years since the last full scale inspection of memorials in the JBC cemeteries. Whilst the review of the Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy began in February of 2015, the tragic death of an eight year old boy in May of this year at a Glasgow cemetery is a timely reminder of the potential dangers within a cemetery. Officers recommend that Members consider the updated Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy 2015 (attached for the information of Members) for managing memorial safety. Officers believe this policy provides the JBC with a robust and accountable programme of memorial inspections, Officers recommend the adoption of the Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy 2015.

If Members are minded to adopt the Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy 2015, then it is further recommended that Members authorise the Clerk to instigate that policy and instruct the Cemeteries Manager to arrange for a 100% inspection of the memorials, with further inspections as required by the policy. It is recommended that due to the works already carried out at Nightingale Cemetery, Eashing Cemetery is prioritised first for memorial safety inspections.

Members would wish to be aware that the previous memorial safety inspection was outsourced at a cost of £18,000. However, since that time the Cemeteries Manager, having obtained a qualification in the inspection of cemetery memorials, fulfils the requirement to be able to conduct the supervisory functions of the policy. That said, Members will be aware that the Committee does not employ any staff that can undertake the physical rectification work where memorials are found to be unsafe and that whilst the Cemeteries Manager is able to conduct the supervisory functions, he does not have the time resource available to carry out the number of inspection checks required to complete Eashing Cemetery in its entirety. Therefore, it is recommended that a local contractor be engaged to conduct the required checks. Eashing Cemetery has 24 sectors, each sector would require approx. 2 days for the checks and appropriate repairs/action to be undertaken, allowing 2 days for suitable training and induction to be provided and up to 5 days for additional rectification work, then the physical inspection of Eashing Cemetery would take approximately 55 working days. It is recommended that Members allocate up to £9,000 in labour and material costs for the memorial safety inspection of Eashing Cemetery. This would leave a balance of £5,000 for the inspection of Nightingale Cemetery. Nightingale has 4 sectors, however, as the majority of rectification work has already been completed at Nightingale Cemetery, it is believed that the memorial inspection of Nightingale cemetery could be completed within 5 days at a cost of £750.

Once the inspection of both cemeteries is complete, it is recommended that approximately 12 days labour and material costs are budgeted for in future years, which at current rates would be approximately £2,000 pa.

The balance of the current ear-marked reserve should be retained for the potential cost of repairs to either large (above 2.5 metre) visually significant or historically important memorials.

13. EASHING CEMETERY TREE SURVEY

As previously set out in this agenda, Godalming Joint Burial Committee has a responsibility for the overall safety within its cemeteries under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, the cemeteries are maintained in a safe condition.

As a public open space, this responsibility extends to the maintenance and well-being of the tree stock within the cemetery. Whilst it is impossible, without the removal of all the trees, to totally reduce the risk of injury caused by falling trees or failure of tree limbs, it is possible to mitigate the risk by good arboriculture management of the tree stock.

Following a number of tree failures at Eashing Cemetery over the last winter period, the Cemeteries Manager, in conjunction with the grounds maintenance contractors, has undertaken a full inventory and survey of the existing tree stock. The results are contained in a report titled "Eashing Cemetery Ground Based Tree Inspection" (attached for the information of Members).

Members will note that 126 trees and substantial shrubs have been surveyed, with the report referencing them to a site map location, providing the species, age and condition of the tree along with a recommendation of works required for each and the priority that should be given to the work. The last column provides a cost for the prescribed work.

The indicated cost of the prescribed works is £3,720. A reserve of £5,000 is held for tree maintenance, however, it is believed that this work could be contained within the current year's budget for grounds maintenance. Officers recommend that Members approve the works in full, with the costs being met from revenue with any shortfall being met from the earmarked reserve.

Additionally, it is recommended that on completion of this work at Eashing Cemetery, a full arboricultural survey of Nightingale Cemetery is conducted and that in order to continue to manage the risk an arboricultural survey of both cemeteries is conducted every three years, unless conditions dictate that the frequency of the survey should be reduced.

14. BURIAL STATISTICS

Statistics for the previous quarter and for the twelve months ending 31 March 2015 are attached for the information of Members.

15. NIGHTINGALE CHAPEL ROOF REPAIRS – TENDERS

Members to receive a tender report (attached for the information of Members) relating to the requirement to re-roof Nightingale Chapel Buildings.

When this process was initiated it was envisaged that the total cost of works would be less than £60,000 and for administrative efficiency (given Officers' workloads) the Committee's surveyors were instructed to undertake the tendering process. Although, as the report shows, costs did in fact exceed £60,000 Members are asked to endorse this approach as being in accordance with good practice and therefore acceptable.

Members will note that the scope of the tender report also covers the forming of french drains around the old mortuary buildings. Members had agreed to allocate £10,000 to this requirement (Minute 154-14 refers), on advice received from the surveyors, this work was included in this tender process. In the same way, further work relating to re-roofing Nightingale Cemetery Lodge garage was added to the scope of the tender process to achieve maximum cost benefit for the Joint Burial Committee.

At the time of writing this report it is not yet known whether the JBC will have to submit a mitigation plan to Natural England to be able to conduct the works. The first of the bat surveys was conducted in mid-May, a second bat survey is scheduled for 11 June. It is hoped that an oral report, regarding whether a mitigation statement is required or not, will be able to be given at the meeting.

Irrespective of whether bat mitigation is required or not, the JBC will have to obtain Listed Building Consent for the works. As such, in order to be able to progress the works as quickly as possible, the Clerk has already exercised her delegated authority in consultation with the then Chairman of this Committee to instruct the JBC's surveyors to apply for the required consent.

If Listed Building Consent is received and, assuming that there is no requirement to mitigate the works for bats, Officers recommend that Members appoint Contractor D to conduct the specified work at a cost of £67,240 (including contingency). If it is not possible to conduct the works over the 2015 summer shut down period, Officers recommend that Members agree the appointment of Contractor D to conduct the works during the 2016 summer shut down period, accepting up to a 5% inflationary increase in costs before requiring a new tender process to be undertaken.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 10 September 2015 at (5.00pm at Nightingale Cemetery and thereafter) 5.30pm in the Council Chamber.

17. 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 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 |
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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.