

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE MEETING OF
GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE
HELD ON 18 JUNE 2015**

0	Councillor Wheatley – Chairman
0	Councillor Gordon-Smith – Vice Chairman
*	Councillor A Bott
0	Councillor Noyce
#	Councillor Williams
*	Councillor Gray
*	Councillor Long (Busbridge Parish Council)
*	Councillor Westwood (Busbridge Parish Council)

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

1. **ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN**

Upon the nomination of Councillor Bott, seconded by Councillor Gray, Councillor Wheatley was elected Chairman of the Committee.

2. **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN**

Upon the nomination of Councillor Bott, seconded by Councillor Long, Councillor Gordon-Smith was elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Since neither Councillor Wheatley nor Councillor Gordon-Smith was present at the meeting Councillor Bott remained in the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

3. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 26 March 2015, having been previously circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

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

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

6. **ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Finance Officer reported payments totalling £50,681.55 since 26 March 2015.

Cash balances held at 18 June 2015

Current Account	£57,284.92
Business Deposit Account	£137,070.18

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

Members agreed that the Chairman should sign the schedule of accounts paid.

7. FINAL ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015

Members received and approved the final accounts for the Financial Year ending 31 March 2015 (accounts attached to the record minutes).

8. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members considered the report of Mulberry & Co and noted the action point that related specifically to the Joint Burial Committee.

Members accepted that the invoice for the rent of Nightingale Chapel had not been raised because of the Clerk's extended sick leave in 2014. Members also noted that this came to light in the normal course of events at the year end and was simply rectified with the rent being received in the financial year 2015/16 (the rent year spanning two financial years). Members accepted assurances that systems had been changed such that the omission would not recur.

9. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members noted the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 June 2015 and used it to inform its review of the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return – see the minute immediately below.

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

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

Members noted and approved the Accounting Statements given at Section 1 and the Internal Auditor's report at Section 4.

Members gave particular attention to the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return and answered the questions posed at that Section as follows:

	Question	Answer	Evidence
1	We approved the accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices	YES	Assurances from the Internal Auditor and the Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

	Question	Answer	Evidence
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	YES	Detailed evidence from the work programme of the Audit Committee as recorded in the minutes and reported to the JBC on 26 March 2015 (Minute 42-14 refers). Detailed review of the effectiveness of internal control undertaken on 26 March 2015 (Minute 43-14 refers). Also assurances in the Internal Audit Reports
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practice, which could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances.	YES	We employ competent staff and maintain an adequate budget for external professional advice augmented as required for specific additional advice
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	YES	Relevant notices displayed outside the Town Council offices as per the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the body and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	YES	Risk Assessments all available for inspection in the Council's offices and on-going programme of risk analysis as part of the Audit Committee's work programme. All previously reported to JBC Committee (Minute 42-14)
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems and carried out a review of its effectiveness.	YES	Review of the effectiveness of internal audit undertaken as part of the review of internal control on 26 th March 2015 (Minute 43-14 refers). Also assurances in the Internal Audit Reports minute Audit Committee 386-13.

	Question	Answer	Evidence
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	YES	JBC Minute 9-14, 41-14
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	YES	Annual provision made in reserves for liability in respect of long term maintenance of assets. See earmarked reserves.

11. BANK MANDATE

The Committee resolved 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
- Councillor A Bott
- Councillor Gray

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

12. CEMETERY MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

Members noted 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.

Members considered and adopted the Cemetery Memorial Safety Policy 2015. The Clerk was instructed to implement the policy and instruct the Cemeteries Manager to arrange for a 100% inspection of the memorials, with further inspections as required by the policy. It was agreed the first priority was memorial safety inspections at Eashing Cemetery.

It was further agreed that a local contractor be engaged to conduct the required checks and that the physical inspection of Eashing Cemetery would take approximately 55 working days. Members agreed to allocate up to £9,000 in labour and material costs for the memorial safety inspection of Eashing Cemetery from the ear marked reserve. This would leave a balance of £5,000 for the inspection of Nightingale Cemetery (it is believed that the memorial inspection of Nightingale cemetery could be completed within 5 days at a cost of £750).

It was agreed that once the inspection of both cemeteries is complete approximately 12 days labour and material costs are budgeted for in future years; at current rates this would be approximately £2,000 pa and it was agreed to address this requirement in the 2016/17 budget.

It was also agreed that any balance on 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

Members considered a report titled "Eashing Cemetery Ground Based Tree Inspection" and agreed that the Committee's ground maintenance contractor be instructed to complete all the works outlined in the report at an indicative cost of £3,720. The costs to be met from the revenue account with any shortfall being met from the ear marked reserve of £5,000

Members further agreed 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 should be conducted every three years (the next being 2018/19), unless exceptional weather conditions dictate that the frequency of the survey should be reduced.

14. BURIAL STATISTICS

Members noted statistics for the quarter and for the twelve months ending 31 March 2015. (Burial statistics attached to the record minutes.)

15. NIGHTINGALE CHAPEL ROOF REPAIRS – TENDERS

Members received a tender report relating to the requirement to re-roof Nightingale Chapel Buildings. Members endorsed the fact that for administrative efficiency (given Officers' workloads) the Committee's surveyors were instructed to undertake the tendering process as being in accordance with good practice and therefore acceptable even though costs did in fact exceed £60,000.

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,

Members agreed to Contractor D (D Purdys) to conduct the specified work at a cost of £67,240 (including contingency). Given that the bat survey on 11 June recorded bats at the Chapel the JBC will have to submit a mitigation plan to Natural England to be able to conduct the works. This introduces an element of delay and should it not prove possible to conduct the works over the 2015 summer shut down period, Members agreed 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 in the Council Chamber. After discussion it was indicated that the meeting of the Committee expected to be scheduled for June 2016 should be held in Eashing Chapel after the Cemetery Inspection.

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.