

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE MEETING OF
GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE
HELD ON 23 JUNE 2011**

* Councillor Wilson – Chairman
* Councillor A Bott – Vice Chairman
* Councillor Thomson
* Councillor Lister
0 Councillor Wheatley
* Councillor Noyce

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

1. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

Councillor Wilson was elected as Chairman for the ensuing year and proceeded to chair the meeting.

2. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bott was elected as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 April 2011, having been previously circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved.

5. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

Members declared no Personal or Prejudicial Interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which are required to be disclosed by the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 No.1159.

6. ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING

The Finance Officer reported payments totalling £23,289.55 since the last meeting.

Cash balances held at 31 May 2011

Current Account	£15,955.40
Business Premium Account	£107,908.35

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 FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 MARCH 2011

Members RECEIVED and ADOPTED Annual Accounts for Godalming Joint Burial Committee for the year ended 31 March 2011.

Members noted that overall income exceeded expenditure by £19,358. The Annual Accounts are attached to the record minutes.

8. AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

This item was deferred to the end of the agenda in order that the Chairman of the Audit Sub-Committee might be present to present his report. At 6.45pm (approximately) the Chairman welcomed Councillor Stephen Bott to the meeting. Councillor S Bott presented his Chairman's Report of the Audit Sub-Committee, which met on 16 June 2011. His report included two recommendations to the Joint Burial Committee. The first was a recommendation to accept the internal audit report and the second was a set of recommended answers to the questions posed at Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement for the Godalming Joint Burial Committee.

Members RECEIVED the report.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT

This item was deferred to the end of the agenda in order that the Chairman of the Audit Sub-Committee might be present; however, the item was eventually considered before he arrived and therefore was dealt with in advance of the Audit Sub-Committee report (see Minute 08-11 above).

Members noted that the internal audit was conducted on 25 May 2011 and that the outcome from the internal audit was reported to the Audit Sub Committee on 16 June 2011.

Members RECEIVED the report (a copy of the Internal Auditor's Report is attached to the record minutes) and noted that there are no recommendations contained therein requiring action by the Godalming Joint Burial Committee.

10. ANNUAL RETURN (INCLUDING ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT) FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2011

This item was deferred to the end of the agenda in order that the Chairman of the Audit Sub-Committee might be present.

Members CONSIDERED and APPROVED the Annual Return Section 1 - Statement of Accounts for Godalming Joint Burial Committee noting that value of the Committee's assets has been restated. Members AUTHORISED the Chairman to sign Section 1 - Statement of Accounts for Godalming Joint Burial Committee.

Members considered Section 2 - Annual Governance Statement and at this point considered the answers recommended by the Audit Sub-Committee to the questions contained in the Annual Governance Statement. Members accepted the advice of the Audit Sub-Committee as set out by the Sub-Committee Chairman and agreed the answers as set out below:

	Question	Answer
1	We have approved the accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices	YES
2	We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	YES
3	We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice, which could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances.	YES
4	We have provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	YES
5	We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	YES
6	We have 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
7	We have taken appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	YES
8	We have 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

Members AUTHORISED the Chairman to complete and sign the Annual Governance Statement.

Members also noted that Section 4 – the Annual Internal Audit Report to Godalming Joint Burial Committee contains a summary of the Internal Audit Report already considered (Minute 09-11 above refers).

11. WEBSITE DESIGN

Members RECEIVED a presentation from Plug & Play Design on the progress of the Godalming Cemeteries website and APPROVED the palette in order for the next stage of the design process to proceed.

12. RE-PURCHASE OF TWO NATURAL BURIAL PLOTS

Members AGREED to re-purchasing of two natural burial plots brought in 2008 at a cost of £650 each. The plots to be re-purchased at the same price at which they were originally bought less a £50 charge for administration.

13. TREE WORK – EASHING CEMETERY BOUNDARY

Members APPROVED tree removal work along the coniferous tree line marking the Ockford Ridge/Franklyn Road boundaries of Eashing Cemetery. The work to be undertaken in August 2011.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 12.1(h)(c) the Cemeteries Manager presented three competitive quotes for the work.

- Quote A = £5,470 to include full clearance of all arisings, trees to be removed by lorry mounted crane. Timber will go to a Bio Mass provider for use within Surrey. Re-instatement work not included
- Quote B = £12,573 to include clearance of all arisings
- Quote C = £14,000 plus waste disposal at cost but not including on-site generated chippings

Members noted that all contractors are fully insured with correctly qualified personnel and extensive experience of local authority work. Members AGREED to accept the lowest quote – Quote A at £5,470 and to award the work to Glendales Countryside.

Upon the recommendation of the Cemeteries Manager Members agreed to allow a 40% contingency of £2188 for any reinstatement/repair works needed to the cemetery grass since the size of the vehicle to be used might cause damage.

Members noted that on 8 June a tree within Eashing Cemetery split causing it to fall across a pathway, the Clerk ordered the removal both of the fallen section and the remainder.

14. TEMPORARY SUMMER STAFF FOR RE-WRITING PLOT REGISTERS

Members noted the importance of the Cemetery Plot Registers as the working records of the cemeteries and that the material condition of the registers has deteriorated such that action is needed to ensure that the records remain accurate and available for use.

Members agreed that the current data held in the manuscript records should be entered into computerised pages, which would then be printed and placed into appropriate folders to be used as the working copy. Subsequent manuscript alterations being made to the working copy on a daily basis with the computerised record being updated at the end of each quarter when other burial records are also updated.

Members AGREED that a temporary member of staff should be engaged from an agency to undertake transcription and data entry of the Plot Registers. The appointment to be for four weeks for with a contingency to increase to eight weeks at a maximum total cost of £1,400.

15. STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

Members deferred any decision on Strategic Planning Workshop.

16. MAINTENANCE CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

Members AGREED ground maintenance contract specifications for the Nightingale and Eashing Cemeteries and AUTHORISED the Cemeteries Manager to seek tender bids in accordance with Financial Regulation 12.1.

17. NIGHTINGALE CEMETERY STEPS

Members NOTED the Committee's previous consideration of the steps at Nightingale Cemetery (Minute 79-10 refers). As directed by this Committee, the issue of Nightingale Cemetery steps and their provision of public amenity was put to the Policy & Management Committee of Godalming Town Council on 26 May 2011.

The Policy & Management Committee had discussed the possibility of meeting some of the costs of keeping the steps open but indicated that they would like further information on the potential costs before making a decision. The Policy & Management Committee also decided that they would like more clarity about alternative footpaths in the locality. Accordingly the Policy & Management Committee asked that, if the Joint Burial Committee decides it would like the Town Council's financial assistance in keeping the steps open, the Joint Burial Committee should take quotes for work necessary to repair the steps and report back to the Policy & Management Committee with that information and further data (including maps) of the location of other footpaths (Godalming Town Council Minute 40-11 refers).

Members AGREED that the Committee would like the Town Council's financial assistance in keeping the steps open and noted that the surveyor has been requested to breakdown the quotes for the work into the two distinct area of works. Members further AGREED that when those quotes were received, the quote relating to the repair of the steps be put to the Policy & Management Committee of Godalming Town Council along with the additional information requested.

Members NOTED that Godalming Town Council had received a petition of 26 signatures against the closure of Nightingale Cemetery steps, this petition states:

"We understand that consideration is being given to closing the steps providing access to the cemetery on its northern side and express the hope that a way can be found to keep the route open. This is used by local people both for quiet walks and as access to the cemetery itself, and we call for an imaginative approach to retain it for the use of the public."

Members AGREED that, as the closure of the Nightingale Cemetery steps would have no adverse effect on the operation of the cemetery, if the Policy & Management Committee does not wish to fund the repair of the steps then the steps should be permanently closed.

Members NOTED that they retain the responsibility to maintain the banking between the Cemetery and 29 Shadyhanger. If the steps are to remain open (i.e. repairs funded by Godalming Town Council) then work on the bank must be conducted at the same time as repairs to the steps. If the steps are to be closed then works to the bank may be scheduled within the normal programme of works for the cemetery. Members APPROVED repair work to the retaining bank to a maximum cost of £6,000 to facilitate the timely execution of works if the Policy & Management Committee agrees to repair the steps. Should quotes for repairs to the bank exceed £6,000 then an extraordinary meeting of this committee will be necessary.

Members further NOTED that unless repairs to the steps are completed by 1 October 2011 then the steps will be closed upon that date - either temporarily if repair works are pending or permanently if the Policy & Management Committee declines to repair the steps.

18. CLERK'S USE OF DELEGATED POWERS – NEW CYPRESS TREES AT EASHING CEMETERY

Members NOTED that on grounds of urgency and in consultation with Councillor Wilson (as the former Chairman of this Committee), the Clerk used her delegated powers to authorise a programme of fortnightly watering, by a specialist contractor, of the new cypress trees at Eashing Cemetery. It is hoped that this will revive the trees. The cost of this watering will be approximately £30 a fortnight (some £210 in total). This sum to be met from the budget set aside for the replanting of failed shrubs.

Members AGREED that if the trees have not recovered by the end of September/beginning October then they are removed and the ground prepared for late autumn re-planting. The choice of replacements and the funding being brought to this committee in October for approval.

19. HONEY BEES

Members NOTED that enquiries have been made of the Cemeteries Manager regarding the feasibility of local beekeepers placing hives within Eashing Cemetery. Members AGREED, in principle, to support such a request and AUTHORISED the Cemeteries Manager to negotiate the detail of any arrangements, ensuring that there are no financial liabilities on the Joint Burial Committee or its constituent authorities and bringing the matter back before the Committee for a final decision.

20. BURIAL STATISTICS

The Committee NOTED the burial statistics for the previous quarter and for the previous twelve months ended the 30 June 2011, which had previously been circulated (copy attached to record minutes).

21. GODALMING IN BLOOM

Members NOTED that the Cemeteries Manager has entered Nightingale Cemetery into the 'Managed Community Garden' section of Godalming in Bloom 2011 and Eashing Cemetery Natural Burial Garden in the 'Wildlife & Wildflower' section. Judging was to take place on 24 June 2011.

22. WAVERLEY DESIGN AWARDS

Members APPROVED the entry of the new Eashing Cemetery entrance including the refurbished Lodge House, the new houses, the wall and new railings into the Waverley Design Award competition.

23. CHANGE OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members AGREED that the meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday, 13 October 2011 should be cancelled and that two additional meetings of the Committee should be scheduled for Thursday, 29 September 2011 at 5.00pm and Thursday, 27 October 2011 at 5.00pm.

Therefore the next meeting of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee is now scheduled to take place on Thursday, 29 September 2011 at 5.00pm at **Eashing** Cemetery and thereafter in the Council Chamber.

24. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements