

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE GODALMING JOINT BURIAL  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2022**

- \* Councillor Martin
- \* Councillor Neill
- 0 Councillor PS Rivers – Substituted by Cllr Hullah
- 0 Councillor Steel – Chair
- 0 Councillor Stubbs – Substituted by Cllr Cosser
- 0 Councillor Bond (Busbridge Parish Council)
- 0 Councillor Westwood (Busbridge Parish Council)

\* Present    # Absent & No Apology Received    0 Apology    L Late    ^ Council Duties

56.    ELECTION OF CHAIR

Due to the absence of the Committee Chair, coupled with the current vacancy of the Vice Chair, the Clerk sought nominations from Members for the election of a Chair for this meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Cosser, seconded by Cllr Neill and their being no other nominations, Cllr Martin was elected to Chair the meeting.

57.    MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 November 2021, having been previously circulated, were signed by the Chair as a true record.

58.    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

59.    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.

60.    PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions from members of the public were submitted in accordance with GTC Standing Order 5

61.    QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with GTC Standing Order 6.

62.    VICE CHAIR VACANCY

On the proposal of Cllr Cosser and seconded by Cllr Neill, Cllr Martin accepted the nomination for election as Vice Chair of the Joint Burial Committee.

Members unanimously agreed to elect Cllr Martin as the Committee's Vice Chair.

63.    ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING

Godalming Joint Burial Committee	
Accounts paid since the 5 November 2021	£44,435.90
Receipts received since the 5 November 2021	£77,334.05

Balance held in Current Account Balance at 24 February 2022	£11,933.83
Balance held in the Business Deposit Account Balance at 24 February 2022	£111,486.17
Balance held in the CCLA Deposit Account Balance at 24 February 2022	£150,000.00

A schedule of the accounts paid was tabled for the information of Members and a copy is attached to record minutes. 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.

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

64. SIGNING OF BANK RECONCILIATIONS

The Committee considered the tabled monthly bank reconciliations since the last meeting of the Committee and authorised the Chair to sign them.

65. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 31 MARCH 2021

Members noted the Annual Return for the Financial Year Ended 31 March 2021.

Additionally, Members noted that the External Auditor had completed its review and has signed off Section 3 – External Report 2020/21 Certificate. No exceptions were found.

Members thanked the RFO for her excellent work in managing the accounts of the Joint Burial Committee.

66. BUDGET MONITORING

Members considered the budget monitoring report to 31 January 2022 and noted a current variance of £10,943 underspend against Revised Estimates along with the reasons for significant variances.

Members authorised the RFO to transfer any year end surplus for the financial year ending 2021/22 to the EMR Future Cemetery Provision.

67. BURIAL STATISTICS

The Committee noted the burial statistics for the previous quarter and for the previous twelve months ended the 14 February 2022, which had previously been circulated (copy attached to record minutes).

Members also noted that the availability of new graves in Nightingale Cemetery is in single figures and that having completed the first phases of the project to seek a faculty for recycling of grave spaces, i.e. the digital mapping and the data entry of all historic interment records for Nightingale Cemetery, the next phase of the process will be for Officers to seek specialist support to assist with the faculty application. Initial costs for such support to be contained within the funding agreed by the Committee at Min No 42-18. Members noted that if this proves not to be the case, a further report will be brought to this Committee to seek funding to enable this long standing project to progress.

## 68. CEMETERY WORKS

Members were informed that following an agreement between JBC and WBC, the practical phase of the Community Benefit Programme started on 20 November when the first 12 trees of the planned 60-tree orchard were planted. Subsequent to that event, an open morning was held at Eashing Cemetery on 5 February to which approx. 30 residents visited the Cemetery and were provided with a guided tour by the Council's grounds staff. This event was well received.

Godalming Town Council ground staff and JBC contractors continue to maintain the cemeteries to a very high standard that not only continues to provide peace and tranquillity in their main function as operational burial grounds, but also improved biodiversity. Between November 2021 and February 2022, improvements have been made at Eashing Cemetery to enable easier and safer access to the green waste site. Additionally, the relaying of the hedgerow on the northwest boundary has been completed and the wildflower area has been increased with sowing having been undertaken along the north and south western boundaries along with an area to the north east of the cemetery.

During 2022, ground staff plan to focus on Nightingale Cemetery to undertake work that will allow for future efficiencies of maintenance operations, the initial phase of these works has been to reduce the size and depth of the north eastern boundary hedge. Further work will see a number of the ornamental yews removed to be replaced in the future with a more diverse offering.

Both cemeteries have once again been entered into their respective categories for South and South East in Bloom and staff are seeking, where appropriate, practicable and within budget, to not only maintain, but hopefully improve upon previous years.

## 69. EASHING CEMETERY – OCKFORD RIDGE COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAMME

As previously reported, Members noted that whilst always bearing in mind the primary role of Eashing Cemetery as the main burial ground for Godalming, Busbridge and surrounding areas, Godalming Town Council staff are engaged with the Ockford Ridge Community Benefit Programme that is aimed at providing a greater sense of ownership to the local community of Eashing Cemetery.

Members were supportive of the aims of the Community Benefit Programme to further enhance the biodiversity of Eashing Cemetery by adding to the environmental improvement work already undertaken or planned for the future by the Godalming Joint Burial Committee (GJBC).

Members look forward to the success of the Community Benefit Programme and that in conjunction with the existing and future work of the GJBC and the engagement of the local community, greater biodiversity net gain can be achieved within cemetery grounds and that the inspiration and knowledge that the community engagement programme will provide will give confidence and experience to residents to seek other opportunities to support biodiversity gains within their own gardens and immediate surroundings.

Members were pleased to note that the plans for the Community Orchards are well established and that they will continue to be reviewed and adapted where appropriate improvements are identified and achievable. Members noted and supported the ideal of bring forward the planting of the Walnut avenue from year 5 to year 2.

Members reviewed the design of the proposed Community Garden to be established within the area of land that has now been cleared around the former Garden of Remembrance, noting that the criteria has been to establish a community garden that, with appropriate support, the local community is capable of creating and maintaining into the future.

Members were pleased to note that the garden design, which is planned to be implemented over the next few seasons, had been produced following a number of consultation events held at St Marks Community Centre and Eashing Cemetery along with feedback from GTC grounds staff.

In support of the Community Benefit Programme and specifically the proposed Community Garden, **Members resolved to approve the Community Garden design for the area adjacent to the former Garden of Remembrance, with the implementation of the design to be funded from the Cemetery Maintenance budget.**

Members also noted that within the scope of the plans are two elements, which although within the locality of the Community Garden, are independent of it. The first is the provision of a toilet facility. Members were informed that although the cemetery does have a WC facility, it is not connected to the main sewage system (relying upon a septic tank) and was designed to provide capacity for use by the grounds staff and that whilst this facility is made available on request during funerals, this is not an ideal arrangement as it is located within the workshop area of the cemetery. Having noted that a WC facility, connected to the main sewage system, did once exist in the area proposed for the Community Garden that is believed to have been removed in the mid 90's. As such, whilst at a very early stage, Members noted the intention to explore options to re-instate a WC facility within that area of the cemetery.

Members also considered whether it would be feasible to provide a bus shelter facing onto Franklyn Road. Eashing Cemetery is served by public transport and is promoted as such. Whilst the number of visitors to the cemetery using public transport is unknown, what is known is that when waiting for the return bus after visiting the cemetery, there is no shelter to provide protection from the elements. Members noted that whilst the footpath outside the cemetery is not wide enough to install a bus shelter, by placing it just within the cemetery grounds, so that its enclosed rear and sides are in the cemetery and its open front is facing the road, a suitable shelter could be provided that would not only serve visitors to the cemetery but would also provide benefit to the local community. Whilst Members were in general agreement with providing a location to install a suitable bus shelter, they noted that the Joint Burial Committee does not have the power to fund facilities not directly for the provision of burials, or upkeep and maintenance of cemetery land and property, as such funding for such a shelter would have to be sought from other sources, it was suggested that funding might be available via the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Fund.

**Members resolved to approve the use of land at Eashing Cemetery for the provision of a bus shelter to the front of the cemetery facing onto Franklyn Road subject to funding for the shelter and associated works being provided by others.**

70. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members identified the following items from this meeting for further publicity – The Committee's support for the Community Benefit Programme, Community Orchards and Community Garden.

71. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee is scheduled to take place in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 9 June 2022 at 5.45pm (following an inspection at 5.00pm at Eashing Cemetery).

72. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM 17 (MINUTE ITEM 73) BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E COMMERCIAL-IN-CONFIDENCE

73. LAND ADJACENT TO EASHING CEMETERY

Members received a confidential report from the Clerk on the future need for cemetery land and authorised him to make initial enquiries regarding availability of potential burial land adjoining Eashing Cemetery.