

MEETING OF SHEFFORD AND CAMPTON JOINT BURIAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held via Zoom on Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 10.30am.

Present: Cllr Booton and Cllr Longson for Campton and Cllrs, Pollard, Fowler, Fensome, Mackin for Shefford. Clerk for Shefford Francesca Fitch, Clerk for Campton and Chicksands, Tammy Medley.

01/22 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the 29th November 2021 meeting were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting, and the Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

No matters arising.

02/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Clerks have been approached by one of the joint owners of grave number EA09 regarding applying for a memorial permit. They would like to have a memorial measuring 30inches on a 4inch base, these measurements exceed those stipulated in the current Rules and Regulations, so the Clerks have declined the request. The resident attended via Zoom to seek approval from the Committee as there is another memorial in close proximity, with the same measurements. However, this memorial was installed prior to the Rules and Regulations being updated and agreed in September 2020. The rules and regulations consider the visual aspects for residents in close proximity to the Cemetery. It is also noted that a memorial permit application from Quince Memorials has just been rejected for another grave space due to non-conformity of the height and width of the memorial. Cllrs will look at the monument plan and its position in the cemetery and discuss, the resident will be updated prior to the next meeting, once a decision is agreed.

03/22 TOPPLE TESTING OF MEMORIALS

Following the safety inspection (topple test), where twenty-seven memorials in the new part of the cemetery were found to need repairing/refixing, repairs/refixing of eight unsafe memorials has been completed by a local NAMM registered Memorial Mason, and a further two memorials have been attended to by other local Memorial Masons (under warranty). A further seventeen still need repairing/refixing once the grave ownership details have been identified. An initial eight memorials were laid flat as they posed an immediate health and safety risk. Of the eight memorials refixed/repared from instruction by the Clerks, the costs for two of these repairs are being recovered from the respective grave owners. No complaints have been received from residents/families regarding this work. Keith Green will be assisting the Clerks in carrying out the manual inspection of the old part of the Cemetery, and the Campton Burial Ground in the spring.

04/22 STAFFING

The Clerks have carried out one day joint working since the last committee meeting and are due to make a joint visit to Bedfordshire Archives on 15 March 2022. Most of the JBB work has been focused on grounds maintenance work and day to day administration, which has been undertaken by FF & CQ. It is anticipated that joint working over the next three months will be focused on the preparation of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, together with the identification of the grave ownership of the remaining seventeen graves with unsafe memorials. TM and CQ will work together on the topple testing.

05/22 RIALTAS CEMETERY SYSTEM

The Cemetery System has been integrated into the Rialtas Omega software, which gives the option of a sales ledger, including the creation of sales invoices if required; currently we use Word to produce individual sales invoices. Shefford Town Council will be carrying out an IT Disaster Recovery Test on 8 March 2022, which will include the Rialtas Omega software. Following an enquiry to the ICCM on the transfer of grave ownership, the Clerks were advised to ensure a policy was in place to limit the number of joint owners of a grave space for ease of administration and management of the grave space and memorial. Approval was sought from the Committee to limit the ownership to three joint owners, all Cllrs agreed.

06/22 FINANCE

The expenditure for the period 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022 is shown as attached. The actual expenditure against budgeted precept for the same period, with explanations of the variances is shown as attached. The income for the period (not including the Precept) is £12,377.

The bank balance as at 27.02.2022 is £20k in credit.

The internal audit fees have not yet been received.

Bank charges are as estimated,

Grass cutting fees are expected to be higher than budgeted.

The electricity charges are minimal and the cost to pay the invoice is higher than paying the charges themselves, it was suggested that £10 be paid to Eon and this would mean the JBB are in constant credit and will therefore not incur bank charges. All agreed.

07/22 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- An order has been raised to GD Maintenance and Cleaning for the painting of the entrance gates, including the width railing/bollards immediately outside the gates. The work will be carried out when the temperature rises, and we have a dry spell of weather.
- Central Bedfordshire Council Officers have identified the end of the cul-de-sac in Campton Road as a potential area for use as an illegal encampment (apparently bollards and soil bunds have been removed elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire to make way for an illegal encampment). Although any breach to the bollards/soil bund outside the Campton and Shefford Cemetery would be dealt with by Central Bedfordshire Council, this has highlighted the vulnerability of the car park at the cemetery. Approval is sought from the Committee to instruct a contractor to configure the drop down post on the left-hand side gate at the main entrance to allow for the post to be locked with a padlock, thus preventing unauthorised vehicular access but still allowing pedestrian and wheelchair access. Contractors, Funeral Directors and users with mobility problems will be issued with a key to the padlock. The gate will be unlocked prior to funerals and locked up afterwards. All Cllrs agreed.
- A quotation is being obtained from LEF Paving and Landscaping to replace the red engineering bricks at the main entrance at Campton Road with granite sets, which will marry up with the tarmac and new car park surfacing and be installed at a slightly lower level to allow the right-hand side gate to swing shut closed.
- The edging up of the grass along the hard surfaced pathways throughout the cemetery (new + old part) is in progress. The amount of grass removed shows that this task has not been carried out in decades.

The works to improve the surface of the car park (supply, lay, roll and level of a fine layer of crushed aggregate) has been completed, and we have received positive feedback on its kerb ability.

- The set of two steps to allow safe access to the raised grass area has been created; the two refurbished benches stored in the cemetery have now been installed, together with the planting of a half standard rose (Lady Marmalade) between the benches. This area will be an area of contemplation. The rose was planted by the Biggleswade Ivel Rotary Club and KP on 26 February 2022. If the rose thrives, then other standard roses will be planted around the benches.
- Evidence in the form of maps and statements from the Shefford P3 and Shefford Greenspace Conservation Groups has been gathered to support the application for a Definitive Map Modification Order in order to secure that the footpath adjacent to the Cemetery (Amphill to Campton Road) is added to the Definitive map to better ensure the path always remains in the future. The statements have now been signed, and the application is in the process of being submitted.
- The edging up of memorials in the Garden of Remembrance is in progress. A grass cut was carried out in early January.
- The Tree Safety Inspection of all the trees within Campton and Shefford Cemetery will be carried out on 7th March 2022.
- An instruction has been given to 2 Elms of Shefford to remove all remaining wooden grave reserve markers as we now have records (digital + plan) of these reserved graves, and the markers are a trip hazard and impede grass cutting operations.
- The purple crocuses planted in the area behind the noticeboard and around the base of the recently installed bench in the Garden of Remembrance are starting to come through. The crocuses were donated by the Biggleswade Ivel Rotary Club to bring awareness to the fight against Polio.
- Three young Yew trees (of upright habit) were planted by the Biggleswade Ivel Rotary Club on 26 February 2022. The trees have been funded by a Queen's Green Canopy Tree Planting Grant from Central Bedfordshire.
- What we believed to be a tree at far-left corner of the boundary wall is a pillar covered in ivy! 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services have removed the ivy before any/further damage was done to the brickwork on the pillar. The gap in the hedge by this pillar has become an unauthorised path into the adjacent field. Approval was sought from the Committee to block this gap and secure the boundary by recycling a section of galvanised bow top fencing (removed from an old play area in Shefford) and painting it black to match other gates/railings. The cost for installing the fencing is £380; there will be an additional cost to prepare the metalwork and paint the railings (a summer job). It is proposed to remove the overhanging tree branches and gap up this hedge with bare-rooted privet whips next winter. All Cllrs agreed to expenditure.
- Following topping up and seeding, the grass in the 'R' section has established well and the area is looking great. As funding allows, approval was sought from the Committee for another section/row of the cemetery to be topped up, together with individual graves when the weather warms up enough for the grass seed to germinate. All agreed.
- Following a presentation from Rachel Macfarlane from the Heritage Lottery Fund at the last Parks East meeting, local craftsmen have been contacted to explore options for renovating the Chapel, with a view of making an application for a Heritage Lottery grant (an initial project enquiry form will be submitted to see if the restoration would be considered by the HLB) to fund the works. Works would include an upgrade of electrics/lighting/heating, specialist decoration, restoration/manufacture of furniture and flooring, and the installation of solar panels and a compost toilet to bring the Chapel back into use. We are also looking at including the resurfacing of the car park, and the creation of three dedicated parking spaces on Campton Road.
- We have received a request from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to place a sign at the entrance of Campton and Shefford Cemetery for the Committee to review. The sign will indicate

that there are Commonwealth War Graves contained within the cemetery. The sign will be maintained by the Commission on a permanent basis. Initial thoughts were that the sign would be quite intrusive at the main entrance gate; however, if the sign were to be installed on the brick wall to the right of the entrance, the sign would be less intrusive. All Cllrs agreed.

- Neville Funerals have agreed to donate a dumpy bag of granite chippings for topping up of the untended kerbed graves in the old section of the cemetery.
- We have received complaints about the large number of mole hills that are appearing in the cemetery this year. This is apparently due to the wet weather. We have contacted a local pest control contractor to see what options are available to us to control the moles. The options are limited, with the contractor reluctant to carry out any control as this would involve digging into the mole run (which may be under or near grave spaces) to install traps (the moles would not be removed alive, traps could only be set away from existing graves, and several visits may be needed). Approval was sought from the Committee for the Clerks to continue to monitor the situation, but not to go down the route of control at this point, all Cllrs agreed.

08/22 REVIEW OF FEES

There are three main factors that impact the cemetery's fee structure:

1. the fee structures for the other cemeteries in the locality
2. The standard of grounds maintenance; the site facilities; and the cost of maintaining the cemetery.
3. A further factor may also be of impact - the proposed DEFRA Environmental Permitting Regulations. The impact of these proposed regulation for the Campton and Shefford Cemetery will be to reduce the density of burials due to the increased meterage required for each grave space.

A review of the fee structures for the other cemeteries in the locality show their charges are much higher, considerably so for some services. Following visits to in neighbouring parishes to evaluate what facilities they provide, the standard of grounds maintenance compared to Campton and Shefford Cemetery (also taking into account the recent grounds improvements), the following fee structure is being recommended for review by the Committee to ensure that the longer-term aim of the cemetery being self-supporting is achievable: -

- Memorial Permits Ashes memorial permit - £87.00 (previously £75.00, therefore an increase of a sixth which reflects the increases in other local cemeteries over the same time frame)
- Full burial headstone permit - £175.00 (previously £150, therefore an increase of a sixth which reflects the increases in other local cemeteries over the same time frame)
- Additional inscription or replacement memorial permit - £60.00 (previously £35.00, increase reflects the work required to process the permit application)
- Purchase of the Grant of Exclusive Rights to Burial Exclusive rights of burial for 75 years for ashes grave - £250.00 (previously £200.00; the increase matches that of Langford Cemetery, which is a recently opened site and the Clerk carried out extensive research with regards to the fee structure)
- Exclusive rights of burial for 75 years for burial grave - £500.00 (previously £400.00; the increase matches that of Langford Cemetery, which is a recently opened site and the Clerk carried out extensive research with regards to the fee structure)

- Transfer of the deed of grant of exclusive right of burial - £50.00 (previously £35.00, increase reflect the work required for this administration procedure)
- Burials/Interments (not including digging of the grave) Ashes interment - £200.00 (previously £150.00 the increase matches that of Langford Cemetery, which is a recently opened site and the Clerk carried out extensive research with regards to the fee structure)
- Full burial - £300.00 (previously £200.00, this increase is far below Langford; however, their charge of £500.00 seems too high an increase to jump)

The above charges are for residents of Shefford or Campton and Chicksands. Non-residents will be charged at triple the cost charged to a resident's (except for administrative fees - additional/replacement inscription and transfer of deed of grant of exclusive right of burial).

All Cllrs agreed to the proposed changes in charges to be in effect from 1/4/22. The new rates will be displayed on the website.

09/22 CAMPTON BURIAL GROUND

PB has received a response from the Ministry of Justice, which confirms that the Joint Burial Board are responsible for the management and maintenance of Campton Burial Group (but not Campton Churchyard). The Privy Council confirmed that the decision could be challenged, however the outcome regarding maintenance would remain the same. There are works required to the burial ground, TM will arrange a meeting with PB and FF to assess what immediate and long-term requirements there are?

KP mention the Anniversary of the death of Robert Bloomfield, who is buried in Campton and suggested this should be recognised in 2023.

TM and FF are due to visit the Bedfordshire Archives on 15 March 2022 to retrieve all the burial documents from the Archives. It is hoped that the original Deeds to Campton Burial Ground are amongst these documents.

Topple testing of the memorials and an inspection of the perimeter walls and grounds will need to be carried out by the Clerks. The findings will be reported back to the Joint Burial Board at the next committee meeting. TM will arrange a meeting on site with FF and PB.

10/22 RETROSPECTIVE REQUEST FOR MEMORIAL PERMIT

The Clerks have been approached by the owner of grave number E13 regarding a memorial. The grave owner requested that a memorial be supplied at the time of the interment of her late Mother's ashes; however, Neville Funerals, the Funeral Directors they were making the arrangements with, were unable to supply the memorial at the time of the Interment, so the grave owner decided to source one from another Memorial Mason. The grave owner sourced and laid a flat memorial plaque, which conforms to the Rules and Regulations for the Cemetery; however, the memorial was supplied by an online Memorial Mason, and a memorial permit was not submitted to the Clerks. The plaque is not made to the usual standards that you would expect from a reputable Memorial Mason, particularly regarding the depth of the stone; however, there are no rules or stipulations regarding a required depth (either for the Cemetery or BRAMM/NAMM). The grave owner would like to apply retrospectively for a memorial permit on the understanding that if the

plaque breaks or is deemed to be unsafe by the Clerks at any point, then the plaque will be removed immediately. All agreed.

11/22 AOB

None

12/22 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 10:30am on the 22nd June 2022, to be confirmed whether it is face to face or via Zoom.