

MEETING OF SHEFFORD AND CAMPTON JOINT BURIAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held via Zoom on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 10.30am.

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

Apologies Cllr Fensome.

23/22 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the 22nd June 2022 meeting were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

Matters arising: None

24/22 TOPPLE TESTING OF MEMORIALS

As a substantial amount of time has elapsed since the last topple test was carried out in the cemetery, the Clerks + CQ will be carrying out another test on both sections of the cemetery (i.e., old and new) in November. It is expected that more unsafe memorials will be found over and above the seventeen that still need repairing/refixing from the first test. These will be fixed once the grave ownership details have been identified.

Sadly, Keith Green, who so kindly assisted the Clerks in carrying the first topple testing, has died.

Topple testing has been carried out at the Burial ground in Campton, four memorials have been laid flat.

25/22 Ashes Memorial Permit

We have been approached by a family who are requesting permission to lay an ashes plaque within a full burial plot. The plot in question has non-compliant kerb edging + chippings, and in order to approve the memorial permit, we have stated that the grave needs to be brought up to standard before the plaque can be laid in situ. Due to the emotional significance of the kerb edging + chippings, the family are unwilling to bring the grave up to the current standard and have asked permission from the Committee for the memorial permit. It was discussed by the Cllrs, Cllr Mackin proposed that the family are asked to remove the edging and chippings and bring it up to standard prior to a permit being granted, the JBB will happily bring it up to standard for a cost. Seconded by Cllr Fowler, all agreed.

26/22 Rialtas

We have received notification from Rialtas Business Services Ltd that they have handed over the leadership following the sale of the company to Harris Computer Corporation. The cemetery database is held on Rialtas. Rialtas is also the accountancy system used by the Town Council and includes the JBB accounts.

27/22 Staffing

The Clerks have carried out a full day's work in August for the topple testing. No joint working was carried out in September due to the death of Queen Elizabeth II, and a day's work was carried out in October for work on the Campton Burial Ground and preparing the Joint Burial Board meeting. CCPC agreed to the joint working for TM for one day a month ongoing.

Messages have been sent out for Members to attend funerals as the Burial Authority's representative – PM/RF/KP have attended funerals so far. To ensure this task is shared equally amongst committee members, feedback was requested of the best means of corresponding with those members to confirm their attendance. Cllr Longson would like to be contacted via email; all other Cllrs happy to use WhatsApp.

The working party scheduled for Saturday 17th September was cancelled due to the death of Queen Elizabeth II. This will be rescheduled in the new year (late January/early February)

28/22 FINANCE

The bank balance as at 02.11.2022 is £19.5k in credit.

FF is in the process of inputting the income and expenditure for this financial year for Shefford Town Council, which includes all income and expenditure relating to the Campton Burial Ground and Campton and Shefford Cemetery. Once this is up to date, the income and expenditure reports will be produced and sent out to the Committee, along with the variance analysis showing explanations for actual expenditure against budgeted costs.

In terms of the precept, it was agreed that the precept should cover the running costs of both burial grounds. Additional income will fund extra works. There will be an increase in grass cutting costs at the Campton burial ground and perhaps an increase in rates. Cllr Longson proposed a 10% increase in the precept for both councils, seconded by Cllr Mackin, all agreed.

The fee structure will be reviewed 1 April 2023.

29/22 Grounds Maintenance

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.

A quotation is being obtained from 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to replace the netting fencing (originally installed as a temporary measure, whilst a hedge was being established; the hedge failed to establish) + refix the loose fence posts, as this perimeter fencing has been damaged and is dangerous in some areas, compromising the integrity of this boundary. All agreed to the works in principle, the quote will be agreed via email when it is received.

Grass cutting is still ongoing – edging of the ashes' graves will be carried out when the grass no longer requires cutting. The edging up of the grass along the hard surfaced pathways in the old section of the cemetery is outstanding. This will be completed once the ground is more workable (it is rock solid following the prolonged dry spell of weather).

Our dedicated watering team have ensured that the new yew trees survived the extreme hot weather this summer. Unfortunately, despite daily watering, the standard rose bush didn't survive. Therefore, it is not worth planting any more roses as the ground is just too sandy to support them; Plan B may be to install something less high maintenance such as a bird bath, statue or sundial – something that doesn't need watering.

A quotation has been received from Todd's Nursery for the supply and planting of two small Irish Yew trees (*Taxus b. 'fastigiata robustus'*). An application is being made through Shefford Town Council to the Central Bedfordshire Council tree planting grant to fund the cost of the trees.

Central Bedfordshire Council have confirmed receipt of our 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. Notices of the application have been displayed at both ends of the footpath. The application process can be lengthy, so we do not expect to hear the outcome of the application for some time. 3

An order has been raised to Branching Out to carry out the recommendation in the written Tree Safety Survey inspection report for the Cemetery (carried out by Maydencroft on 7th March 2022). The work is to completely remove wire and stakes from the base of a wild cherry tree ref T1, to be carried out by Branching Out Tree and Garden Services. All agreed.

The next Tree Safety Survey is due in September/October 2023.

A fourth litter bin has been installed adjacent to the Amphill Road kissing gate entrance.

The newly installed galvanised bow top fencing to the left of the main entrance will be painted black to match other gates/railings when funding allows.

Following topping up and seeding, the grass in the 'R' section has established well and the area is looking great. As funding allows, another section/row of the cemetery will be topped up, together with individual graves when the weather warms up enough for the grass seed to germinate.

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 to create three dedicated parking spaces on Campton Road.

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.

The tarmac path surface is starting to deteriorate in several areas, which will need repairs/resurfacing in the short/medium term.

The Clerks registered an expression of interest to Solar Together Bedfordshire for the installation of solar panels on the Chapel. This is without commitment.

30/22 CAMPTON BURIAL GROUND

TM/CQ/FF carried out a topple test on the memorials on 11th August 2022. Four memorials were deemed dangerous and were laid flat the same day. Cllr Paul Booton will be making contact with family members who may be descendants of the deceased named on the memorials and are still residing in Campton. A second topple test will be carried out over the winter to ensure no further memorials are unsafe.

A Tree Safety Survey Inspection was carried out in the Campton Burial Ground and the Churchyard by Maycroft Ltd in September 2022. The reports highlighted the recommended works required to three trees, one of which is in the JBB area. Approval was sought from the Committee to carry out the recommendations for any works on trees in the Burial Ground. It should be noted that the Joint

Burial Board are only responsible for the trees in the Burial Ground as the survey also covers the Churchyard. The cost of including the Churchyard was minimal, and a copy of the survey will be passed to Rev Roni Goodman and presented to Campton and Chicksands Parish Council/Central Bedfordshire Council for action as necessary. Cllr Pollard proposed the works, seconded by Cllr Mackin, all agreed.

Following a survey of the perimeter walls, an initial letter from FE Surveying Solutions has been received for review by the Committee. It is clear from this initial letter that a large section (between the burial ground and the adjacent property in Greenway) of the wall is unsafe and unrepairable. The result of this wall failing could be catastrophic financially as well as ruining the reputation of both Councils, as it is unlikely that the Council's Insurance Provider (insured under Campton and Chicksands Parish Council insurance policy), once notified of the unsafe wall, would insure or pay out on a claim. The full report from FE Surveying Solutions will follow once the Committee have decided on a course of action.

FF suggested to mitigate the risk in the short-term, it would be prudent to install HERAS fencing (ballpark figure £1.5 – 2k if bought second-hand) on both sides of the wall + displaying warning signs that the wall is dangerous. This would be in consultation with the neighbouring resident (followed up by a formal letter putting them on notice). This may still leave the JBB open to prosecution if the Insurance Provider refuses to insure the wall. Long-term options for mitigating the risk of the liability might be to remove the wall to a low risk level (say 2/3ft), remove the wall in its entirety, plant a hedge either side of the remaining low wall or removed wall, replace the wall with a hedge or fencing, rebuild a new wall. All these longterm options would need to be costed carefully and will require external funding. It is also worth noting that the resident parks motorhomes/caravans immediately adjacent to the wall + there is a children's trampoline + football net against the wall in the front garden. It was agreed that priority must be given to this issue, and it be dealt with as quickly as possible, both Clerks are very concerned. TM suggested that the JBB carry out research and report back in one months' time to make a confirmed decision. Cllr Mackin will obtain a quote for the removal of the wall and resale value of the bricks. Cllr Ash will obtain quotes for both a full rebuild and a partial rebuild. Cllr Ash and TM will investigate funding. FF will request the full survey and TM will discuss the wall with the Insurance company. CACS PC will speak to the residents in the neighbouring property. It was agreed the JBB will meet on December 8th at 10.30am to plan the works to the wall.

Cllr Ash declared an interest as his wife is a Church warden in Campton.

31/22 AOB

32/22 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at:

10.30am Thursday 8th December 2022 to discuss Campton Burial ground, via Zoom.

10:30am Thursday 16th February 2023, via Zoom.