

MEETING OF SHEFFORD AND CAMPTON JOINT BURIAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held via Zoom on Thursday 2nd March 2023, 2pm.

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

Apologies Cllr Longson, Cllr Fensome

01/23 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the 8th December 2022 meeting were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting, proposed by Cllr fowler, seconded by Cllr Mackin.

Matters arising: None.

02/23 TOPPLE TESTING:

The Clerks + CQ have carried out another topple test in Campton Burial Ground + Campton Churchyard (as this has been confirmed as being the responsibility of CCPC in January 2022). No further memorials were found to be unsafe. The Clerks + CQ will be carrying out another test on both sections of the Cemetery (i.e. old and new) when they next meet. 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.

03/23 RIALTAS:

The Clerks + CQ have restarted the inputting of new interments (those from 2018 onwards), and will continue this work.

04/23 STAFFING:

The Clerks have carried out a full day's work in November and December 2022, and January and February 2023; they will also be carrying out a full day's work in March 2023. Due to TM's scheduled surgery, any joint working in April and May will be carried out online. CCPC agreed to the joint working for TM for one day a month ongoing.

No further working parties have been scheduled for the Cemetery due to other commitments by the Clerks and poor weather.

05/23 FINANCE:

The bank balance as at 27.02.2023 is £34.2k in credit.

The income and expenditure from 1 April 2022 to 27 February 2023 for the expenditure relating to the Campton Burial Ground + Campton and Shefford Cemetery is attached, together with the variance analysis showing explanations for actual expenditure against budgeted costs.

The funeral of the late Stephen Dilley (full burial into pre-purchased grave space X2) was arranged and performed by Independent Hyde Chambers Funeral Home, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk on 1st July 2022. Following a reminder for the unpaid fee for the full burial to be settled (totalling £900), Hyde Chambers requested an invoice be raised, which was sent out on 17th November 2022. Despite repeated requests for payment of the invoice, both in writing and on the telephone, the fee has still not been paid. This debt has been chased again on 23rd February 2023 with a request for full payment of the fee by 1st March 2023. They have been made aware that if payment is not

forthcoming by this date, we will look to contact the grave owner for this outstanding payment, and advise them that until the debt is cleared, we will not grant a memorial permit, or allow any additional burials to take place for this grave space. Cllrs agreed for the Clerks to pursue this matter further if the debt is not cleared – i.e. Contact the family and the small claims court, if necessary. The Councillors also agreed that further interments from Hyde Chambers should be paid for in full in advance.

06/23 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:

- A quotation is being obtained from LEF Paving and Landscaping to repair another crack that has appeared over this winter in the perimeter wall by the main entrance gates.
- Granite setts have been salvaged from another site in Shefford, and will be used to replace the red engineering blocks at the main entrance (thus lowering the level under the gates, allowing them to close easily) when funding allows.
- The cost of replacing the netting fencing (originally installed as a temporary measure, whilst a hedge was being established; the hedge failed to establish) was very high, therefore, the netting has just been refixed securely to the fence post adjacent to the iron railings to secure this boundary.
- The edging up of the grass along the hard surfaced pathways has been completed. Grass cutting has already started in some of the areas in the new section of the Cemetery.
- 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.
- The recommended tree works in the written Tree Safety Survey inspection report for the Cemetery (carried out by Maydencroft on 7th March 2022) have been completed, including the removal of the wire and stakes from the base of a wild cherry tree (ref T1). The next Tree Safety Survey is due in September/October 2023.
- Central Bedfordshire Council have carried out interviews with those staff/councillors/residents who submitted witness statements as part 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. As the landowner, notification has been received by the Joint Burial Board from Central Bedfordshire Council that the application has been made.
- The water that feeds the standpipe was turned off at the mains following a leak from the standpipe tap last December (following the snow and freezing temperatures). A new tap has now been fitted (a push-down pressure tap, as opposed to a turn on/off ordinary tap).
- When funding allows, a feature (bird bath, statue or sundial) will be installed between the benches on the raised area designated for contemplation.
- Funding will need to be set aside to repair the tarmac path surface, which is starting to deteriorate in several areas. In the long-term, some of the paths will need resurfacing, or be changed from tarmac to crushed aggregate paths (plane off the top surface and top up with fine aggregates), such as the pathway through the old section of the cemetery. Cllr Mackin to approach the Churches for any possible funding.

07/23 CAMPTON BURIAL GROUND:

- The details of the tople testing is shown in Agenda item 2.
- An order has been raised to Branching Out Tree and Garden Services to carry out the recommendations in the Tree Safety Survey Inspection that was carried out in the Campton

Burial Ground and the Churchyard by Maydencroft Ltd in September 2022. Before this work could commence, permission was sought from the Tree Officer from Central Bedfordshire Council as the trees are within the curtilage of a Grade 1 Listed building. Permission is not required and therefore the works will be scheduled. Some logs will be left in the top corner of the Churchyard for residents to collect and reuse.

- The Clerks met Ian Hale, a local architect, on site for further advice and expertise on the repair/replacement necessary for the boundary wall adjacent to the property in Greenway and the planning approval required before any works can commence (as the wall is within the curtilage of a Grade 1 listed building). Mr Hale ratified the health and safety concerns raised in the survey report produced by F&E Surveying Solutions + confirmed that the only options open to the Committee would be to rebuild or replace the wall (the wall is too damaged and beyond the repairs detailed in the quotation obtained from Monk and Smith). Estimated costs to rebuild the wall to the existing height may greatly exceed £60k as the work will be labour intensive (no machinery access, so all work will have to be carried out manually) and there may be issues with human remains migrating from the Burial Ground, especially if there are little or no foundations to the existing wall.

Mr Hale advised the Clerks to liaise with the Ward Councillors to gauge their views on the matter before proceeding with the rebuild/replace options, as their support would be desirable for any planning application to have the best chance of succeeding. Cllr Liddiard and Brown are supportive of the fence, they are concerned for the total cost involved in replacing the wall.

If 'replacing the wall' is the preferred option, his immediate thoughts were for a close board fence with wooden posts (+ caps/balls) and a concrete gravel board, maybe with a brick pillar (from salvaged bricks from the existing wall) at one or both ends. He didn't expect the bricks in the existing wall to have much salvage value; however, the coping bricks may be of value (although he advised to keep some to replace any coping bricks in the remaining wall). If Mr Hale was engaged to produce the plans and submit the planning application for the replacement of the wall to a fence, he estimated his fees at around £700 + Central Bedfordshire Council's fees.

Councillor Ash has requested a second opinion from a Surveyor/Architect, TM will contact CBC conservation officer for a recommendation.

Cllrs requested a comparison on costs for all of the options, Clerks will provide this for the next meeting.

08/23 AOB

09/23 NEXT MEETING

Thursday 18th May 2023, 2pm via Zoom.