

MEETING OF SHEFFORD AND CAMPTON JOINT BURIAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held via Zoom on Thursday 15th February 2024 2pm.

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

1/24 APOLOGIES/ DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Cllr Jez Perkins is to replace Cllr Roger Fowler (who resigned from STC in December 2023). JP brings his experience as a Land Management Consultant + previous job role in managing woodland burials for the south of the England.

DOI Cllr Perkins, regarding a Maydencroft quote under grounds maintenance.

2/24 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of 2nd November 2023 meeting were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting, agree deletion of the Zoom recording, proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Perkins.

Matters arising: None.

3/24 RIALTAS:

Clerks have received an offer of help from Mrs Booton for inputting the historical burial records onto the Rialtas Cemetery system. Unfortunately, due to the merging of the cemetery database into the Rialtas Omega Suite, which includes Shefford Town Council's accounting software + purchase/sales ledgers, data inputting can only be carried using FF/CQ's desktop computers located in the council offices at Shefford House. Therefore, it would not be possible for Mrs Booton to carry out the inputting of any data from her own home at her own convenience + if Mrs Booton were to come to Shefford House to input the data, CQ/FF would not be able to carry out their normal day to day work using their computers. However, prior to inputting the burial records onto the cemetery database, research is required to collate all the information ready for inputting due to the lack of details on file, which Mrs Booton might like to assist in. Mrs Booton might also like to assist in contacting/identifying the relevant owners of any grave spaces with dangerous and deteriorating memorials. Clerks will ask for her help with the Campton Burial ground too.

All burial records relating to interments in 2018 and 2019 (including all historical information for the relevant grave spaces and memorial permits and transfer of ownership) have been input onto the Rialtas Cemetery software, and 2020 interments in progress. The historical information retrieved from the Bedfordshire Archives is being categorised into the old grave sections (A to O sections) by grave number, and once all the documentation has been integrated into the current filing system, the A section will be input into the Rialtas cemetery system.

4/24 STAFFING:

The Clerks carried out a day's work in November (pm only on 2nd and 21st) and January (pm only on 19th and 22nd); the Clerks did not meet in December.

CQ and FF are booked to attend an ICCM online 'CRUSE Loss and Grief' course in late February.

5/24 CEMETERY FEES:

The new fee structure for the Cemetery will come into force on 1 April 2024 as agreed at the last Committee meeting and ratified by both Councils.

6/24 FINANCE:

The bank balance on 9th February 2024 is £53,432.32 in credit.

The income and expenditure for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 January 2024 for the expenditure relating to the Campton Burial Ground + Campton and Shefford Cemetery was presented, together with the variance analysis showing explanations for actual expenditure against budgeted costs.

The JBB draft budget produced by FF/CQ was reviewed by both Councils in December 2023, then approved and incorporated into the respective council budgets for 2024/2025.

7/24 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:

A successful application has been made to Central Bedfordshire Council for a tree planting grant for a 10-12cm girth standard oak tree (*Quercus robur*). This tree will replace the oak seedling that was planted near the Ampthill Road perimeter by a young resident, which didn't survive the harsh winter.

The water has been turned off to the standpipe as the tap has split and was gushing out water. A replacement tap is on order.

A Tree Safety re-inspection was carried out in December 2023. Approval was sought from the Committee for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to carry out the recommendation made for T1 (cut overhanging branches to 2.5m high) during the summer months + TM/CQ/FF to monitor T2 over the summer season under the guidance of Cllr Jez Perkins. Proposed by Cllr Perkins, seconded by Cllr Pollard.

Approval was sought for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to top up the levels of grave spaces (and reinstate to grass) identified in certain sections (Q section + W/T/Y/X/V) where the ground is very uneven, with graves noticeably sunken. Proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Pollard.

Following the wet weather spell, CQ + 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services carried out a topple test of the old section of the cemetery + Q section – 3 memorials were laid flat due to safety concerns. No ownership details are held on file for these grave spaces. Further topple testing will be carried out for the remaining sections in the new part of the Cemetery + a re-test will be carried out in Campton Burial Ground.

A quotation for £3658.66 has been obtained from DJT Surfacing (Central Bedfordshire Council's approved contractor) to carry out resurfacing/repairs to the tarmac footpaths around the cemetery, as they are deteriorating to the point that the Council could be held liable if anyone should trip or fall as a result of the damaged/uneven footpath surfacing. Approval was sought for the Clerks to order the works to be carried out as soon as possible. Proposed by Cllr Perkins, seconded by Cllr Fensome.

A quotation has been received from Maydencroft to remove bricks beneath the Chapel gates, cut out the tarmac strip and replace the granite set. The quote is for £800. Proposed by Cllr Pollard, seconded by Cllr Mackin.

8/24 CAMPTON BURIAL GROUND:

The English Building and Restoration company will start the remedial works to the unsafe perimeter wall in late March/early April as per their quotation totalling £7.8k

9/24 CHAPEL:

Leading on from discussions as part of STC's risk assessment review, Cllr Julie Ford expressed an interest in taking on the project for restoring/refurbishing the Chapel. An initial site meeting took place (FF/CQ/TM/KP/JF in attendance) and research is underway by JF to flesh out a proposal for the renovation and ongoing use of the Chapel. Ideas suggested include installation of brick-built toilet (grey water/compostable) + integral storage shed; improved parking facilities; roof solar panels + battery for sustainable ongoing electrical costs; used for funerals, wakes, a community space, weddings, housing a remembrance book (in digital format, to include burial/grave database for cemetery and Campton Burial Ground/Churchyard), and displaying historical information on Campton and Shefford. Views were sought from the Committee on the future sustainable use of the building.

A Cllr raised concerns over security as the Chapel is quite remote, FF suggested utilising an old CCTV camera and highlighted that the area has been cut back so is now in full view of the houses in close proximity.

10/24 AOB

None

11/24 NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16th May 2024, 2pm via Zoom.