

**PERSHORE TOWN COUNCIL
CEMETERY COMMITTEE
Thursday 28th January 2021**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cemetery Committee** held on Thursday 28th January 2021, via Zoom commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: - Cllr D Annis (Chairman)
Cllr Peter Brookbank
Cllr R Gillmor
Cllr J Hemming
Cllr J Palfrey
Cllr C Parsons MBE
Cllr V Smith

Items referred by members of the public

A member of the public attended to ask members to reconsider an earlier decision regarding a memorial that did not comply with the Cemetery regulations together with a request to pre purchase a grave space. He explained the type of memorial the family wished to install which would extend across two grave spaces and he believed that the grave in question was in an inconspicuous section of the cemetery and would not set a precedent.

091. Apologies

There were none

092. Declarations of Interest

There were none

093. Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr Hemming and RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held 18th and 26th November 2020 be signed as a true record of the proceedings with change of Cllr Gillmor's seconding of the budget comparison in minute 083 to Cllr Smith..

094. Matters of report from the minutes

There were none

095. Memorial in Pershore Cemetery

Members considered the request outlined by the member of the public at the start of the meeting. It was felt that whilst the grave was not currently surrounded by others, it was the area of the cemetery which was now being used and the grave would, over time be surrounded by others. Cllr Brookbank and Cllr Smith both felt the committee were in a

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very difficult situation and they needed to decide if they felt they could agree to allowing the purchase of a grave space before death which had been against policy since 2010. If the plot was not to be pre sold then the memorial could not be considered.

Cllr Parsons reminded the meeting that the option of using the existing grave space was now a double depth grave and he believed that if the committee agreed to the prepurchase, a similar offer should to be extended to all Pershore residents. The suggestion that a non disclosure agreement be signed was academic as the request was already in the public domain. Cllr Parsons understood that an agreement had been reached on 30th July 2020 following the Cemetery Committee's refusal to approve the original design, and asked whether this compromise could now be considered.

Cllr Gillmor felt that the offer made by the Town Clerk to reserve the grave space referred to could be honoured with the family purchasing the plot when it was needed and Cllr Parsons supported this.

It was proposed by Cllr Gillmor and seconded by Cllr Palfrey that the Committee agree to honour the offer made by the Town Clerk to reserve the grave to be purchased when required.

Before a vote could be taken, Cllr Brookbank expressed his concerns that there were many sensitive policy decisions to be made regarding the pre purchase before any decision could be taken and he proposed, seconded by Cllr Parsons and RESOLVED that further discussion be deferred to confidential session at the end of the meeting. The resident then asked the Committee to please make an exception to the policy in their case.

096. Finance

It was proposed by Cllr Hemming, seconded by Cllr Smith and RESOLVED that the draft budget comparison to the end of January be accepted.

097. Cemetery Chapel

a. The Clerk advised that the alternative arrangements made for Christmas had been well received and donations of just over £100 had been received towards the Stained Glass Window fund. Cllr Parsons explained that the majority of the work in creating the tree, as well as helping a family unable to attend the cemetery to place a memorial, had been undertaken by the Admin Assistant and it was agreed to buy her a small gift as a way of thanking her for her efforts.

b. The Clerk advised that she had still be unable to speak to a roofing contractor concerning the problem with squirrels. The grounds staff had managed to insert some chicken wire as a temporary solution and it was agreed the Clerk speak to the Conservation Officer for his advice.

098. Cemetery

a. The Clerk advised that she had been advised the Road Traffic Order for the outside of the Cemetery gate was likely to be published in the next few weeks.

b. The Clerk advised that the resident at the top of the field had requested the brambles not be removed and he would endeavour to manage any encroachment himself. Members expressed concerns at the encroachment into the field and it was suggested this may be something for the grounds staff to tackle. The Clerk advised that the field also had ragwort which had meant that the farmer had been unable to graze his sheep there for some months. It was agreed

this be an item for the March agenda.

- c. The Clerk advised that works to the rear gate at the cemetery had been started.
- d. The Clerk advised that following her letters to various families with unauthorized memorials, some had removed these but others had not. She had written second letters to those who had not, giving them until 17th February to remove the memorials or place them within 18 inches of the headstone or they would be removed by the staff. It was agreed those memorials removed be stored for 6 months and if the families did not claim them to dispose of them at the end of that time. Additional letters had gone to other families who had also cultivated the length of the grave and who had not been contacted previously.

099. Cemetery Field

There was nothing to report

100. Items for Information

Cllr Parsons advised that there had not been a significant increase in burials at the cemetery during the pandemic although it was anticipated interments of cremated remains would increase once the restrictions were eased.

101. Items for future agenda

There were none

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS:

It was proposed by Cllr Gillmor, seconded by Cllr Hemming and RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted" agenda item 12, Funerals at Pershore Cemetery

102. Funerals at Pershore Cemetery

- a. Members considered at length the possibility, following the debate under agenda item 5, as to whether they should change their policies regarding pre purchase of grave space and memorials.

It was proposed by Cllr Brookbank, seconded by Cllr Smith and RESOLVED that the Cemetery Committee make no changes to their policy regarding the pre purchase of grave space and that the allocation of graves to families at the time of death remain the responsibility of the Town Clerk.

It was then proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Brookbank and RESOLVED that the Cemetery Committee felt unable to change their policy on memorials but would wish to look sympathetically at any memorial application that met that policy.

- b. Members considered issues in relation to a burial undertaken at the cemetery by a Funeral Director. It was proposed by Cllr Palfrey, seconded by Cllr Smith and RESOLVED that due to a lack of confidence the way a Funeral Director had operated in this instance,

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they be suspended from operating in the Cemetery until further notice. The decision to be reviewed depending upon the results of any legal action that may be taken.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.40

Signed..... Date.....
Chairman