

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the CEMETERY COMMITTEE, held in Meeting Room 1&2 Spetchells Centre, at 7:00pm on Wednesday 6th July 2022

PRESENT

Cllr Jonathan Wheeler (Chair), Cllr Kiran Bell and Cllr Duncan Couchman.

CEM2223/001 Welcome by the Chair

Cllr Jonathan Wheeler welcomed everyone to the meeting.

CEM223/002 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Bryan Futers.

CEM2223/003 Declarations of Interest

None received.

CEM2223/004 Dispensations

None to approve.

CEM2223/005 Public Participation

No items of public participation had been received.

CEM2223/006 DRAFT Minutes of the Cemetery Committee, held on 7th July 2021

The minutes were received for information only. These minutes were agreed as a true record at the Planning, Contract and Works Committee on 28th July 2021.

CEM2223/007 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following verbal report:

7 June 2022, met with Cllr Futers, David Hunt, Alan Hinde, John Rutherford and Geoff Cairns (along with Deputy Clerk) to discuss suggestions received from Cllr Simpson (28/05/2011.)

8 June 2022 met with Cllr Wheeler, Cllr Couchman, Cllr Simpson, David Hunt, Alan Hinde, John Rutherford and Geoff Cairns to discuss suggestions received from Cllr Simpson (28/05/2011.)

16 June 2022 Cllr Simpson raised the following: -

- Weed killing has only been done on one side of the chapel
- Piece of turf missing from Nora Robson's grave hadn't been addressed
- Weed killing along the fence on the high road hasn't been done.
- Pieces of strimmer cable all over the old cemetery (he picked up 9 separate pieces just in one part of the old cemetery)

I emailed David re the above, in addition I visited the cemetery on 19 June 2022 and also disposed of three pieces of strimmer cable.

Cllr Simpson also advised a small tile missing off the 'shelter' in new cemetery – ***to seek a quote along with the pointing of the chapel.***

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30 June 2022, Cllr Kiran Bell reported an issue of dog poo on artificial flowers on a grave in new cemetery. Site visit made and grave/flowers cleaned.

CEM2223/008 Edgewell Cemetery Service Level Agreement (SLA)

a) Cemetery Activity 2021/22

It was **AGREED** to receive 'end of year' figures for the 2021/22 financial year, relating to burials, interments, and memorial work, sent out in advance with the papers.

2021/22	Burials	Interments	Number Memorial Founds	Number Memorial Meets for Founds	Number Memorial Install	Number Memorial Meets for install
total	24	13	16	0	13	0

NCC Charges	2020/21 (variable)	2020/21 (fixed)	2021/22 (year to end)	2021/22 (fixed)	Cost per item
Burials	£9,785.00		£9,651.84		£402.16
Interments	£368.00		£614.77		£47.29
Memorial Meets	£178.00		£0.00		£17.76 (2020-21)
Maintenance		£27,200		£33,537.88	
Sub Totals	£10,331.00	£27,200.00	£10,266.61	£33,537.88	
Total	£37,531.00		£43,804.49		

Cost Type	Cost (£)
Fixed Costs	£33,537.88
Variable Activity	£10,266.61
Total	£43,804.49
Cemetery Income	£28,219.00

Please note there are other cemetery costs throughout the year

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b) Cemetery Activity Q1 2022/23

It was **AGREED** to receive 'to date' financial year figures relating to burials, interments, and memorial work, sent out in advance with the papers.

2022/23	Burials	Interments	Number Memorial Founds	Number Memorial Meets for Founds	Number Memorial Install	Number Memorial Meets for install
total	7	2	4	0	6	0

c) Grass-cutting and Maintenance

It was **AGREED** to receive a confirmation of grass-cutting and maintenance so far in the season, sent out in advance of the meeting.

Edgewell Cemetery Grass cutting

Year Month Start Day 1:Sun, 2:Mon ...

March '22							April '22							May '22						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

June '22							July '22							August '22						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

September '22							October '22							November '22						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
							31													

Grass Cutting Schedule 2022-2023

Grass cutting schedule is as per the SLA:

- Weekly in the New Cemetery and section 5 and 6 of the Old Cemetery
- Fortnightly in section 1 – 4 of the Old Cemetery.

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d) Cemetery Budget Summary 2021/22

It was **AGREED** to receive draft year-end costs for Edgewell Cemetery (including Northumberland County Council SLA Costs for 2021/22, sent out in advance of the meeting).

Expenditure	Cost (£)	Sub Total
Business Rates for Chapel	£1,235	
Utilities (Water & Electricity)	£208	
Fixed Costs	£33,538	
Variable Activity	£10,267	£45,248
Landscaping	£799	
Fencing	£0	
Memorial Safety	£1,906	
Repairs	£542	
Signage	£0	
Arboriculture	£1,200	
Memorial Seats	£900	£5,347
Total	£50,595	
Cemetery Income	£28,219	
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)	£15,506	
Cemetery Budget (Development)	£4,399	
Total	£48,124	

CEM2223/009 Edgewell Cemetery Inspection

It was **AGREED** to schedule quarterly inspections for Edgewell Cemetery, with rotating Committee members and the Clerk in attendance. It was **AGREED** that the first inspection would take place towards the end of September 2022.

CEM2223/010 Edgewell Cemetery Maintenance

It was **AGREED** to receive a list of suggestions raised by Cllr G Simpson, sent out in advance of the meeting with the enclosures. The following comments/responses were noted:

1. New entrance to Old Cemetery – thick weed growth among the planting; possibly remove or leave weeds as they are?
It was noted that Hollybush Nursery are responsible for this and have since been onsite to clear weeds and tidy up.
2. Grass cutting and tidy-up to the new entrance to Old Cemetery (Edgewell Road side): this needs cutting?
It was noted that grass cutting takes place weekly in section 5 and 6 and fortnightly in section 1 – 4 of the Old Cemetery. It was noted that the schedule is weather dependent.

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3. Weeds growing along the fence on the south side of Old Cemetery parallel to the west road: these could possibly be treated with weedkiller or cut back?
It was noted that this has since been cut and weedkiller sprayed.
4. The old central area of the old cemetery, where there are lots of toppled grave stones etc; plan and investment needed to improve this area?
A discussion took place around setting up a Friends of the Cemetery model to improve and maintain this area, and it was AGREED to keep this in mind for discussion at a future meeting.
5. Old chapel – pointing of the east side gable end?
It was AGREED to seek quotes for this work.
6. Old chapel – unsightly weed growth around the chapel, which the Council may wish to remove or leave in situ?
It was noted that weed killer has been sprayed and weeds removed.
7. Installation of table or a stand near Old Chapel to assist residents when are unwrapping flowers or getting water to place on graves: Council may or may not wish to consider this?
It was AGREED to install the next memorial bench (when requested) at this site should the requestee be happy with this and the location.
8. Immediate removal of old pit spoil from a number of graves in old cemetery and replacement with good quality soil and reseeded – Council may or may not wish to undertake this action?
It was noted that new graves are topped up with soil from out of the grave and that good quality top soil is used from Corbridge to top up graves (and reseed) when needed.
9. Immediate re-turfing of a sunken grave in old cemetery?
It was noted that this has since been topped up with soil and seeded. Graves are not turfed due to cost/maintenance.
10. Cutting back of a beech tree in old cemetery to prevent people walking directly over a nearby grave.
It was noted that trees are not the responsibility of Northumberland County Council and that it is currently nesting season, therefore trees and bushes should not be touched. It was AGREED that once nesting season has finished the Clerk will assess the trees and arrange for them to be pruned.
11. Immediate action to ‘level off’ of two ‘mounded’ plots in the old cemetery, which Council may or may not wish to carry out.
It was noted that graves do sink over time (some faster than others) and that time is needed for the ground to settle before levelling.

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12. New cemetery: agree a plan for the removal of soil waste area, to a new location behind the shelter in the new cemetery to allow space for new plots and to reduce visual impact. **It was AGREED to speak to NCC staff about plans to cover up this area, potentially with a hedge and to consider costs for the work.**
13. Removal of unsightly metal fencing located in hedgerow between new cemetery and Highfield Park.
It was noted that the fence was erected due to people using it as a thoroughfare from Highfield Park. It was AGREED to look at the fencing as part of the first Cemetery inspection in September and to report back to the next Committee meeting.
14. Removal of wreaths in old cemetery and 'old items' are certain plots.
It was noted that Christmas wreaths; if not removed by family members (some may be out of area), cemetery staff remove on their behalf after a certain time period. It was noted that the removal of wreaths and flowers are the responsibilities of families and not NCC or PTC staff.
15. North side of new cemetery – extensive growth of 'cow paisley' along the hedgerow – Council may or may not wish for this to be addressed.
It was noted that NCC staff cut this hedge in as far as possible. It was AGREED to look at this issue as part of the first Cemetery inspection in September and to report back to the next Committee meeting.
16. Further work to talk with plot holders about not placing items on plots or fencing them off. Council may wish to consider giving families a cemetery guidelines sheet explaining the rules of the cemetery in advance of interment or before the headstone is placed on a plot, so they are clear that extra items on graves is outside of agreed rules.
It was noted that Edgewell Cemetery Regulations are sent out with each new deed, alongside a letter stating that items are not permitted on plots. The regulations can also be accessed on the PTC website: <https://bit.ly/3o3AOu0>
17. Recruit a part time 'cemetery supervisor' to be onsite to ensure regular basic maintenance and oversight of work that is being carried out by NCC – Council may wish or not to take this forward.
It was AGREED to research into this further and to consider bringing a proposal to a future Full Council meeting.

CEM2223/011 Billy Callender Grave

It was noted that the Crystal Place Supporters Club visit at Billy Callender's grave at Edgewell Old Cemetery is due to take place at 1:30pm on Sunday 24th July 2022. The following actions were **AGREED**:

- Contact Northumberland County Council to request that the grass be cut prior to the visit.
- Cllr Wheeler to speak to Cllr Scott about arranging a venue and food for the event.

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- Clerk/Deputy to speak to Cllr Futers regarding funding a small wreath to be laid on behalf of Prudhoe Town Council from the Chairman's Allowance.
- Clerk/Deputy to send an email to all Councillors inviting them to the event.
- Clerk/Deputy to look into contacting local and national press regarding covering the event.
- Clerk/Deputy to speak to the Mayor about attending the event and giving a speech.

MEETING ENDED AT 8:10PM

AGREED