

## PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

**DRAFT Minutes of the CEMETERY COMMITTEE, held in meeting room 1 and 2 Spetchells Centre, at 7:00pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Duncan Couchman (Chair), Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Dorothy Dickinson, Cllr Jonathan Wheeler, Cllr Kiran Bell, Cllr Ignasious Varghese

**CEM2122/077 Welcome by the Chair**

Cllr Duncan Couchman welcomed everyone to the meeting, expressing a full house.

**CEM2122/078 Apologies for Absence**

None

**CEM2122/079 Declarations of Interest**

None received.

**CEM2122/080 Dispensations**

None.

**CEM2122/081 Public Participation**

No items of public participation had been received.

**CEM2122/082 DRAFT Minutes of the Cemetery Committee, held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The minutes were received for information only. These minutes were agreed as a true record at the Planning, Contract and Works Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**CEM2122/083 Clerk's Report**

The Chair thanked the Clerk for the report sent out in advance of the meeting. The following was reported:

***Memorial Stability Work***

All work has been carried out as agreed.

NCC inspector has been informed of the Council's decision to move to 4-year inspections, as agreed, and the schedule has been updated. Our next full inspection will be carried out from May 2023. Those memorials 'made-safe' and remaining on the list following the interim inspection will continue to be inspected each year.

***Maintenance Work***

The pergola at the south entrance to old, cemetery, seat in the shelter of the new cemetery and two missing roof tiles in same shelter have all been attended to at a cost of £170.

The tap in the shelter at the new cemetery has been fixed.

***Cherry Trees in New Cemetery***

The dead trees have been removed and new trees planted. These are being watered as required by Hollybush.

The results of the tree survey carried for all trees on Town Council land or on land maintained by PTC is part of the agenda.

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## CEM2122/084 Edgewell Cemetery Service Level Agreement (SLA)

## a) Cemetery Activity 2020/21

It was **AGREED** to receive 'end of year' figures for the 2020/21, relating to burials, interments, and memorial work, sent out in advance with the papers.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Burials</i>	<i>Interments</i>	<i>Number Memorial Founds</i>	<i>Number Memorial Meets for Founds</i>	<i>Number Memorial Install</i>	<i>Number Memorial Meets for install</i>
<b>total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>NCC Charges</b>	<b>2019/20 (variable)</b>	<b>2019/20 (fixed)</b>	<b>2020/21 (year to end)</b>	<b>2020/21 (fixed)</b>	<b>Cost per item</b>
Burials	£5,536		£9,785		£391.40
Interments	£347		£368		£46.06
Memorial Meets	£569		£178		£17.76
Maintenance		£26,408		£27,200	
<b>Sub Totals</b>	<b>£6,452</b>	<b>£26,408</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>£32,860</b>		<b>£37,531</b>		
<b>Cost Type</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>				
Fixed Costs	£27,200				
Variable Activity	£10,331				
<b>Total</b>	<b>£37,531</b>	Please note there are other cemetery costs throughout the year			
Cemetery Income	£26,481				

## b) Cemetery Activity Q1 2021/22

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

<b>2021/22 (to date)</b>	<b>Burials</b>	<b>Interments</b>	<b>Number Memorial Founds</b>	<b>Number Memorial Meets for Founds</b>	<b>Number Memorial Install</b>	<b>Number Memorial Meets for install</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>

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**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 via calendar.

The Chair noted that there had only been one note of concern so far in the grass-cutting season and that this had been quickly resolved.

**d) Cemetery Budget Summary 2020/21**

It was **AGREED** to receive year-end costs for Edgewell Cemetery (including Northumberland County Council SLA Costs for 2020/21, sent out in advance of the meeting.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>
Business Rates for Chapel	£1,235	
Utilities (Water & Electricity)	£386	
Fixed Costs	£27,200	
Variable Activity	£10,331	£39,153
Landscaping	£4,225	
Fencing	£2,561	
Memorial Safety	£1,280	
Repairs	£20	
Signage	£670	
Arboriculture	£250	
Memorial Seats	£4,645	£13,650
<b>Total</b>	<b>£52,803</b>	
Cemetery Income	£26,481	
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)	£12,000	
Cemetery Budget (Development)	£15,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£53,481</b>	

**CEM2122/085 Edgewell Cemetery Inspection**

It was **AGREED** to receive the Edgewell Cemetery Maintenance Report sent out in advance of the meeting and compiled by the Clerk following an inspection with NCC Officers on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

It was **AGREED** to pursue replacement bins in the old cemetery, in place of the concrete open-topped bins.

Members were pleased to learn that brown garden waste bins would be installed in both the old and new cemetery so that flowers and planters can be disposed of with due regard to reducing waste.

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**CEM2122/086 Edgewell Cemetery Fees****a) Income/Expenditure**

It was **AGREED** to receive income/expenditure comparison for Edgewell Cemetery for the current year, and previous four years, sent out in advance of the meeting.

Members noted increasing maintenance costs and often reducing income from fees.

The Clerk advised that there is no real trend to activity in the cemetery, so the figures used in budget planning is most appropriately the previous year. The last financial year has seen an increase in activity due to COVID as graveside services were permitted when church services were not. With that in mind some families chose an interment of ashes which they may not have otherwise done.

<b>Edgewell Cemetery Cost/Income</b>	<b>2021/21</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
General Maintenance Costs	£39,153	£34,753	£34,761	£35,051	£32,511
Environmental Development	£13,650	£22,856	£865	£18,882	£9,973
Total Costs	<b>£52,803</b>	<b>£57,609</b>	<b>£35,626</b>	<b>£53,933</b>	<b>£42,484</b>
Income from Fees	£26,481	£19,513	£29,040	£31,925	£22,593

**b) Cemetery Fees**

It was **AGREED** to receive a comparison of current cemetery fees with those of neighbouring burial authorities, sent out in advance of the meeting.

It was discussed that cemetery fees were last increased in August 2019, in line with inflation and the Council would usually apply an increase every other year.

The Clerk confirmed that the rate of inflation between August 2019 and the present day was 2.4% and that NCC had applied a 2.75% increase across all costs.

Members were provided with figures to uplift fees by 2.5% and 3% for residents with non-residents at double. The Clerk also assured members that fees relating to babies and children up to 18 years old are reclaimed via the Children's Funeral Fund, either by the Burial Authority or the Funeral Director. Applications via this fund are not means tested and families do not complete the application, therefore pay no fees at source.

Members were assured by information relating to the Children's Funeral Fund and in view that the Council had never applied fees from birth – 1, welcomed that up to 18 years would also be fee free for families.

Cllrs Futers and Simpson described the negativity that has historically surrounded the doubling of fees for non-residents, explaining that Edgewell Cemetery, with growing costs, is subsidised by the people of Prudhoe.

The Clerk explained that the doubling of fees is only used when there is a clear residency outside of the Parish Boundary. Often people will buy a plot and then move away; resident fees would still be applied in this case. Likewise, someone having only just moved into the town, even if a plot were purchased as a non-resident, would benefit from residents' fees.

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Members were keen to note that all fees were doubled and brought in line in 2019, removing any previous irregularities.

**It was AGREED** to increase Cemetery Fees by 2.5%; the increase will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August and would be received at the Ordinary Meeting in July.

**CEM2122/087      Tree Survey Findings for Edgewell Cemetery**

The Chair commented that he was impressed with the detailed reports and how the information was presented. The Clerk responded that the OTISS web-based system used by MWA Arboriculture was straightforward to use and reports could be used when dealing with contractors.

**a) Edgewell New Cemetery**

**It was AGREED** to receive the map and report of recommendations.

**It was also AGREED** to seek quotations for maintenance work required on trees, as detailed below:

1. Rowan – remove basal shoots (x 3 trees)
2. Rowan – crown lift by 2m (3 trees)
3. Rowan – crown thin by 20% (3 trees)
4. Flowering Cherry – crown lift by 2.5m (x1 tree)
5. Flowering Cherry – crown thin by 20% (x2 trees)
6. Birch – remove broken branch and crown thin by 20%

**It was AGREED** to investigate the boundary in the north-east corner of the new cemetery to establish ownership of ash, elder and hawthorn.

**b) Edgewell Old Cemetery**

**It was AGREED** to receive the map and report of recommendations.

**It was also AGREED** to seek quotations for maintenance work required on trees, as detailed below:

1. Field Maple – crown clean, remove hawthorn and prune to phoneline (1 tree)
2. Bird Cherry – fell to stump and treat stump to prevent regrowth (1 tree)
3. Hawthorn – Prune to clear phoneline, crown lift and cut back to leave 4.5m clearance over road (1 tree)
4. Common Beech and Copper Beech – crown lift and cut back to leave 5m clearance over road (hedgerow group)

**It was AGREED** to continue to pursue Karbon Homes for a site meeting to highlight issues with trees on High Shaw, over the north boundary fence of the Old Cemetery.

**It was AGREED** that on receipt of quotations, sought in line with the Council's Financial Regulations, the work should be agreed via delegated decisions making in view that the Cemetery Committee was not expected to meet again until October.

**END OF MEETING**