

**DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE CEMETERY AND WAR MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF
PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**
held on THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2026 at 6:00PM, at Council Office, The Spetchells Centre,
Front Street, Prudhoe, NE42 5AA

Present

Cllr Angie Scott (Chair), Cllr Dot Dickinson, Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Ignasious Varghese, Cllr Jonathan Wheeler

Shirley Ann Gaut Hall (Clerk)

CEM2526/028 Welcome by the Chair

Meeting opened by Chair Cllr Angie Scott.

CEM2526/029 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Jane Johnson

Apologies not Received

Cllr Kiran Bell, Cllr Glenn Simpson

CEM2526/030 Declarations of Interest

None received.

CEM2526/031 Dispensations

None received.

CEM2526/032 Public Participation

No items of public participation had been received.

CEM2526/033 Minutes of the Cemetery & War Memorial Committee Meeting held on 15th December 2025

It was **AGREED** to receive and agree the minutes as a true record.

CEM2526/034 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following verbal report:-

Plot Subsidence

Following recent periods of torrential rainfall, there has been an increase in the number of burial plots experiencing subsidence. The affected plots will be topped up to restore ground levels and ensure the continued safety and dignity of the burial areas, weather permitting.

Moles

There has been a noticeable increase in mole activity in the upper section of the old cemetery. Fresh molehills are now appearing in close proximity to several burial plots, causing visible ground disturbance. This activity is impacting the appearance and condition of the affected areas and may require assessment and appropriate remedial action.

Removal of Headstone

A headstone was recently removed to facilitate access for the reopening of a grave for interment prior to formal permission being granted. The associated costs are being met by NCC.

Damage to Headstone

Following a recent interment, damage occurred to the base of a nearby headstone. The matter has been discussed with the deed holder, and NCC has agreed to meet the cost of the necessary repairs.

Burial Registers

The burial registers have been submitted to Pear Technology for professional scanning. This process will enable the digitisation of records and facilitate the integration and linking of burial information within the cemetery management software system.

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Chapel Electricity Contract Renewal – March 2026

The current electricity contract for the Chapel is due for renewal in March 2026. In preparation for this, a comparative review of available energy suppliers has been conducted by Utility Bidder to ensure that the most cost-effective and suitable option is selected.

Following this review, the recommended supplier is Yu Energy, offering a 36-month contract with no standing charge, which aligns perfectly with our usage pattern and budgetary considerations. This arrangement results in an estimated annual electricity cost of £70.00, representing excellent value for the Chapel.

It is therefore recommended that the Chapel proceeds with Yu Energy for the renewal of its electricity supply contract commencing March 2026.

CEM2526/035 Edgewell Cemetery Service Level Agreement (SLA)

a) Cemetery Activity Up to Date (Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4) 2025/26

It was **AGREED** to receive 'to date' financial figures relating to burials, interments, and memorial work.

Cemetery Activity (Year to Date)									
2025/2026	Advanced Purchase Plots	Burials	Interments	New Memorial	Replace Memorial No Cost	Memorial Refix/Clean No Cost	Additional Inscription	Transfer Right of Burial	Number Memorial Meets for install
Quarter 1 Apr - June	5	6	0	3	0	0	3	4	0
Quarter 2 July - Sept	2	4	2	5	0	0	0	2	0
Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	7	4	3	1	1	0	3	2	0
Quarter 4 Jan - March	6	9	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	20	23	6	10	1	0	6	9	0

NCC Charges	2024/25 (variable)	2024/25 (fixed) incl VAT	2025/26 (year to date variable)	2025/26 (fixed) incl VAT	Cost per item (2025/26)
Burials	£11,986.52		£11,133.61		£484.07
Interments	£162.63		£341.52		£56.92
Memorial Meets			£0.00		£19.15
Maintenance	£38,447.52			£40,369.89	
Sub Totals	£50,596.67		£11,475.13	£40,369.89	
Total	£50,596.67		£51,845.02		NCC 5% increase on 2024/2025

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Income & Expenditure (Year to Date)			
Cost Type		Cost (£)	
Fixed Costs		£40,369.89	
Variable Activity		£11,475.13	
Total		£51,845.02	
Income			Expected Income To
Income Received 24/25		£8,035.00	£8,035
Income received Q1		£6,679.00	£7,443
Income received Q2		£5,632.00	£5,697
Income received Q3		£5,164.00	£5,873
Income received Q4		£68.00	£8,372
Northern Powergrid way leave			£15
Cemetery Income Received to date 25/26			
TOTAL		£17,543.00	
		<u>£25,578.00</u>	<u>£35,435</u>

Please note there are other cemetery costs throughout the year

b) Cemetery Budget Summary 2025/26
It was AGREED to receive costs 'to date' costs for Edgewell Cemetery.

Summary of Budget and Expenditure for Edgewell Cemetery 2025/26 as 09/02/2026			
Expenditure		Cost (£)	
Business Rates for Chapel		£1,073	
Utilities (Water & Electricity)		£506	
Fixed Costs (including VAT)		£40,370	
Variable Activity		£11,475	£53,424
Landscaping		£615	
Fencing		£719	
Memorial Safety		£114	
Repairs		£13,793	
Signage		£0	
Arboriculture		£0	
Memorial Seats		£3,100	£18,342
Total		£71,766	
Cemetery Income Expected Q1, Q2, Q3 includes 24/25 Q4		£25,621	
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)		£30,000	
Cemetery Budget (Development)		£40,000	
Total		£95,621	
Cemetery Fees have increased as of 1 August 2023 to 1 August 2025			
NCC SLA costs increased in 2024/25 by 5% across the board.			
Balance to date			
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)		£28,720	
Cemetery Budget (Development)		£37,076	

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CEM2526/036 Edgewell Cemetery Inspection

The Clerk advised the members that following regular visits to the cemetery by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, any issues identified during such visits had been reported where necessary forwarded to Northumberland County Council.

Members had agreed at the meeting held 15th December 2025 that they would coordinate amongst themselves to carry out inspection visits, however no visits have been undertaken to date due to adverse weather conditions.

It was AGREED members would coordinate inspection visits going forward.

CEM2526/037 Memorial Garden – Old Cemetery

It was AGREED to receive, review, and consider the feedback collected during the Memorial Garden Consultation. The Clerk noted, with some disappointment, that only one response had been received, which supported the proposal.

The response included the following suggestions:

- Support for proposals that enhance biodiversity while ensuring the area is well-managed.
- Provision of a seat at the top of the slope to allow visitors to enjoy the view across the valley, contributing to a tranquil and attractive space, noting that this had previously been discussed.
- Establishment of a well-managed orchard in the lower half of the slope, offering seasonal interest and enhancing the landscape without obstructing views, as exemplified by other cemeteries such as Jesmond.
- Planting of perennial beds in the upper half of the slope to provide nectar and pollen for wildlife and year-round visual interest for visitors, complemented by additional bulb planting to ensure seasonal colour.

It was noted that members had previously discussed the provision of a seat.

It was AGREED in principle to allocate £10,000–£15,000 from the current 2025/26 budget for the initiative, with a view to issuing a tender contract with a value of £10,000+.

It was noted that Cllr Carol Stephenson and the Clerk would liaise on the wording of the tender document, with the intention that the tender would cover both the design and installation of the scheme.

CEM2526/038 Date of Next Meeting

It was AGREED the next Cemetery and War Memorial Committee meeting will be held at 6pm, Thursday 26 March 2026.

Meeting ended 6.40pm