

**DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE CEMETERY AND WAR MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
OF PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Room 1, The Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe
Held Thursday 9th September 2026 at 7.00PM**

Present:

Cllr Carol Stephenson (Chair) Cllr Jane Johnson, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Ignasious Varghese, Cllr Jonathan Wheeler (Ex Officio)

CEM2627/015 Welcome by the Chair

Cllr Carol Stephenson to welcome everyone to the meeting.

CEM 2627/016 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dot Dickinson (Ex Officio)

CEM2627/017 Declarations of Interest

None received.

CEM2627/018 Dispensations

None received.

CEM2627/019 Public Participation

No items of public participation had been received.

**CEM2624/020 Minutes of the Cemetery & War Memorial Committee Meeting held on
30th July 2026**

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

CEM2627/021 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following verbal report:-

Burial Registers/Mapping

The burial registers have now been scanned by Pear Technology and returned, enabling the digitisation and integration of the historical burial records into the cemetery management system.

The necessary amendments to the cemetery maps have also been completed and finalised. The updated maps are currently awaiting upload to the system, following which the digitised records and mapping information will be available for use within the cemetery management system.

The Clerk noted the significant contribution made by the Deputy Clerk, who had facilitated and supported the cemetery mapping process, identifying, reviewing and accurately mapping the individual cemetery plots.

Members acknowledged the considerable time, effort and attention to detail undertaken by the Deputy Clerk in facilitating this work and expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation.

Chapel

Works are still to be completed to reinstate the damaged windows, as the replacement glass needs to be measured and cut to the required size before it can be fitted. Once the window repairs have been completed, the internal area of the chapel will be cleared to ascertain any internal works which need to be carried out.

Further updates will be provided as the works progress and once the programme for the internal works has been finalised.

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CEM2627/022 Edgewell Cemetery Service Level Agreement (SLA)

a) Cemetery Activity Up to Date (Q1, Q2) 2026/27

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

Cemetery Activity (Year to Date)									
2026/2027	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	2	8	1	6	0	1	0	3	0
Quarter 2 July - Sept	4	3	2	1	0	4	0	3	0
Quarter 3 Oct - Dec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quarter 4 Jan - March	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	11	3	8	0	5	0	6	0

NCC Charges	2025/26 (variable)	2025/26 (fixed) incl VAT	2026/26 (year to date variable)	2026/27 (fixed) incl VAT	Cost per item (2026/27)
Burials	£12,101.75		£5,590.97		£508.27
Interments	£455.36		£179.31		£59.77
Memorial Meets			£0.00		£19.15
Maintenance		£40,369.89		£42,388.39	
Sub Totals	£12,557.11	£40,369.89	£5,770.28	£42,388.39	
Total	£52,927.00		£48,158.67		NCC 5% increase on 2025/2026

Income & Expenditure (Year to Date)			
Cost Type	Cost (£)		
Fixed Costs	£42,388.39		
Variable Activity	£5,770.28		
Total	£48,158.67		
Income		Expected Income To	
Income Received 25/26	£13,853.00	£13,853	
Income received Q1	£8,650.00	£8,650	
Income received Q2	£305.00	£4,290	
Income received Q3			
Income received Q4			
Total Cemetery Income Received to	£8,955.00		
Total Expected Income to date 26/27		£12,940	
	£22,808.00	£26,793	

Please note there are other cemetery costs throughout the year

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b) Cemetery Budget Summary 2026/27

It was **AGREED** to receive costs 'to date' costs for Edgewell Cemetery.

Summary of Budget and Expenditure for Edgewell Cemetery 2026/27 as of 09/09/2026			
Expenditure	Cost (£)		
Business Rates for Chapel	£609		
Utilities (Water & Electricity)	£163		
Fixed Costs (excluding VAT)	£35,324		
Variable Activity	£5,770	£41,865	
Landscaping	£2,266		
Fencing	£0		
Memorial Safety	£255		
Repairs	£714		
Signage	£0		
Arboriculture	£0		
Memorial Seats	£0	£3,235	
Cemetery Records Mapping	£5,961		
Total	£51,061		
Cemetery Income Expected Q1, Q2, includes 25/26 Q4	£23,806		
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)	£30,000		
Cemetery Budget (Development)	£40,000		
Total	£93,806		
Cemetery Fees have increased as of 1 August 2025 to 1 August 2027			
NCC SLA costs increased in 2025/26 by 5% across the board.			
Balance to date			
Cemetery Budget (Running Costs)	£36,273		
Cemetery Budget (Development)	£33,070		

PTC 1:
Electricity £11.80 Water £151.08

PTC 1:
Chapel Repair, £180 for instal CCTV, board window, £340 boarding and measuring for new windows, £40 installation memorial plaque overlooking Bewick Grange, £89 CCTV/signage, £65 fire extinguisher

PTC 1:
Expected Includes: 2526 £13853, 2627 to date £8650+£401
To note received to date £1275

PTC 1:
*Running: Includes income 25/26 Q4 & 26/27 Q1, Q2 (£22,808.00) £16,535.31 spent to date

Clerk:
* £6929.53 spent to date

CEM2627/023 Edgewell Cemetery Inspection

Cllr Stephenson undertook an inspection of the New Cemetery on 9 September 2026 and reported that a significant number of windblown debris and other objects had accumulated throughout the site, particularly along the eastern boundary adjacent to Highfield Park. Most of the debris has since been removed, with a further inspection and clearance visit scheduled for 10 September 2026.

The standard of grass cutting was reported as satisfactory. However, concerns remain regarding the topping up and reinstatement of graves. Cllr Scott advised that she had received a complaint from a resident concerning the condition of a relative's grave. Members discussed the possibility of undertaking a joint litter-picking exercise to ensure that both cemeteries are maintained to a high standard and presented in the best possible condition.

It was also suggested to revisit the previous 'Friends of Edgewell Cemetery' initiative and explore whether there may be an opportunity to engage residents and community volunteers in supporting the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the cemeteries.

It was **AGREED** that a review of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Northumberland County Council, as agreed under Minute CEM267/010 at the meeting held on 30 July 2026,

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was inadvertently omitted from the current meeting agenda. The review will therefore be scheduled for the next meeting.

CEM2627/024 Future Provision and Extension of Edgewell Cemetery

It was AGREED that the Committee should consider the future burial capacity of Edgewell Cemetery and the potential requirement for an extension to ensure that adequate provision is available to meet the community's long-term burial needs.

It was AGREED that an initial investigation be undertaken to identify and assess suitable land that could potentially accommodate a future cemetery extension. Members also agreed that appropriate professional advice and guidance should be sought, including engagement with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and other relevant professional organisations, to assist the Council with the preparation, planning and consideration of any potential expansion.

This would remain under ongoing review, with progress, findings and any recommendations brought back to the Committee for further consideration as the work develops.

CEM2627/025 Date of Next Meeting

It was AGREED that the next Cemetery and War Memorial Committee Meeting will be held week commencing 19th October with date and time to be confirmed.

CEM2627/026 Exclusion of Press and Public

It was AGREED to approve a motion pursuant to the provision of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, by reason of the confidential nature of business to be transacted, as the matter relates to contractors.

CEM2627/027 Memorial Garden Tender

It was AGREED to consider and evaluate the tenders received for the Memorial Garden project. The Clerk noted that only one tender had been received.

Summary of Tender – Edgewell Cemetery Memorial Garden and Heritage Orchard:-

Creation of a Memorial Garden and Heritage Fruit Tree Orchard at Old Edgewell Cemetery, utilising the existing grassed area to the north of the chapel.

The project is designed to provide a peaceful and contemplative space for remembrance and reflection, while enhancing the appearance, biodiversity and community value of the cemetery. The Memorial Garden will incorporate seating surrounded by carefully selected shrubs, perennials, bulbs and pollinator-friendly planting, while retaining and maximising the existing views across the Tyne Valley.

Adjacent to the Memorial Garden, a community heritage orchard will be established with approximately 12 mixed heritage fruit trees, including traditional varieties of apples, pears, plums and other fruit. The orchard will be underplanted with native wildflowers, grasses and spring bulbs, creating an attractive habitat for pollinators and other wildlife while providing an opportunity for visitors to enjoy the orchard as a community space.

The overall design has been developed with biodiversity, accessibility, visual enhancement and long-term sustainability in mind. Planting will predominantly comprise hardy, low-maintenance species to minimise ongoing maintenance requirements. The project will also

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address existing issues within the area, including weeds and the need to improve the appearance and usability of the site.

Interpretation and signage will be incorporated to provide information about the heritage fruit trees, including their varieties and harvesting periods, with potential opportunities for additional memorial or remembrance signage.

The initiative is intended to create a lasting community asset within the cemetery, providing a tranquil place for reflection and remembrance, whilst also encouraging appreciation of nature, biodiversity and local heritage. It is anticipated that the completed garden and orchard will provide enjoyment for cemetery visitors and residents for many years to come.

It was AGREED to award the Memorial Garden to John Gardener to the contract value of £9,120.00.

Members noted following completion of the project the ongoing maintenance requirements would need to be considered, as the tender advertised was design and installation. Within the tender submission ongoing maintenance suggested the 'Friends of Edgewell Cemetery' initiative could be explored.

Meeting ended 7.38pm