



Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Committee
held at the Council Meeting Room, Trane Cemetery, Tonyrefail
at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 13th February 2024

Present: Cllr Glenn Evans (Chair)
Cllr Debra James
Cllr Linda Michel
Cllr Amanda Richards

Absent: Cllr Greg Powell

Officers: Ms Jo van Tonder (Clerk & RFO)

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting: 31st October 2023

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2023 as a true and accurate record.

4. Cemetery Committee Finance report

The Clerk presented the Cemetery accounts for the year to 31st January 2024.

It was noted income was on track to meet the budgeted forecast of £40k for the year.

Members were reminded of the cost of repairs to the operations block that had not been budgeted for that would contribute significantly to the overspend for the year.

5. Complaints, comments and compliments

The Clerk advised a complaint had been made against a member of staff who had been seen throwing away flower pots off plots whilst clearing dead flowers. The matter had been dealt with.

Members were informed of another member of the public who had expressed concern that their piece of artificial grass had been removed from their plot. Once the reasons why the Council did not permit artificial grass had been explained, a compromise was agreed. The family would be supplying a strip of turf to be laid over the plot.

Positive comments had been received from the memorial safety tester whilst on site, who had told the Clerk Trane Cemetery was one of the best maintained he had visited.

6. Purchase of land to the North of Trane Cemetery

Members were informed that the final amendments had been forwarded to the Seller and a response was awaited.

The Clerk was asked to follow up with the Council's conveyancer if no further communication was received by the end of the month.

7. Memorial Bench Policy

To be deferred to the next meeting.

8. Review of Cemetery Fees

Members considered a comparison of burial fees across the region taking into account the current fees of seven other burial authorities.

It was noted that the Council was currently charging a third of the average across the other authorities and on some categories such as permits, was considerably less than that.

Members compared a proposed increase of 20%, 50% and an increase to align the charging structure with the regional average. It was agreed an increase of circa 50% would be most appropriate.

Members agreed the fee structure should be reviewed annually in order that the Council may apply gradual increases thus bringing the Council in line with the average.

Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To increase Cemetery fees by 50%, as per the schedule (amended to allow for rounding) with effect from 1st April 2024.

Purchase of plot (EROB)	
Earthen graves	
Single	600
Double	975
Treble	1,275
Cremation plots	
Grave plot	560
Cremation plot	260
Interment fees	
Full burial	375
Ashes	200

Exhumations	
Full body interment	2,000
Cremated remains	400
Permits	
Memorial headstone	75
Cremation tablet	75
Additional inscriptions	35
Additional costs	
Test dig	150
O/T surcharge	225
Search of records	
CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 - NO FEE	

It was noted the Council currently applies double charges to non-residents of Tonyrefail & District and it was agreed this would remain the case.

9. Changes to Workplace Recycling with effect from 6th April 2024

Members noted legislative changes due to come into force from 6th April 2024. Under this Welsh Government law, the Council would be required to sort all waste into the various categories of recyclable material and dispose of it separately from general waste.

The Clerk suggested this was likely to put additional pressure on the workforce as a great deal of the Cemetery's waste was mixed plastic and plant material (bunches of flowers in cellophane, floral arrangements in oasis) that would take time to separate.

She advised she would be working with the Council's waste contractor over the coming weeks and would report back to the Committee with an assessment of what would be needed to comply with the legislation.

10. Matters pertaining to Cemetery Maintenance

a) Cemetery Inspection findings – 15th November 2023

Members noted the findings of the three members who conducted the inspection in November.

The Clerk reported progress on a number of items. It was noted the lower Cemetery toilets had been painted internally over the winter with the wooden doors stripped down and repainted. In response to the inspection, racking had been installed on the side of the lower garage in order to store the planks needed by the Burials team off the ground.

b) Update on remedial works to pillar

The Clerk advised the contractor was experiencing a backlog of work due to the weather but would be undertaking the works to the pillar as soon as possible.

c) Quotations for the replacement of Cemetery Gates

Members considered the three quotations sourced for the replacement of the main Cemetery gates.

It was noted that one of the contractors invited to quote had provided a price for the double gates only and had omitted the side gate.

Following a brief discussion, it was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To award the contract for the manufacture, supply and fit of double main gates and one side gate to Sovereign Steel at a cost of £3,870 + VAT.

d) Update on drainage survey

The Clerk advised that the contractors had been to the site and part-completed the survey on the drainage system. Several drains were unblocked and cleared.

The final report was still awaited.

e) Estimate for repairs to road sweeper

Members noted the machine was once again non-operational and that an estimate for the cost of repairs had come in just over £300.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To undertake the repairs at a cost of £330.45 + VAT and to limit the use of the machine to those members of staff with proven competency.

11. Matters pertaining to Memorial Management

a) Larger memorial safety testing report

Members noted that, following the last Cemetery Committee meeting, Memsafe were commissioned to carry out stability testing on 62 memorials classed as large (1.5m – 3m). The testing took place on 1st February 2024 in sections A and B. Five weeks prior to testing, a notice was published on social media and the Council's website as well as throughout the Cemetery.

The Clerk advised 62 Memorials between 1.5m and 3m had been tested. There were ten memorial Fails.

One memorial was a Pass Risk Level Amber. This memorial would be monitored and retested in 12 months.

One Memorial was over 3m in height so was visually inspected with no obvious defects or concerns.

The Clerk reported that, immediately following receipt of the results, all memorials classed as Fails were cordoned off and a warning sign attached to the memorial.

b) Remedial treatment of failed memorials

In terms of remedial works, members were reminded that the Council's Memorial Policy with respect to memorials over 50 years of age stated that "no correspondence will be sent but a notice will be left on the grave space for a period of not less than 12 months."

The Clerk presented estimates for i) the laying flat of the ten memorials and ii) the undertaking of a full repair, being £550 and £1,580, respectively.

Members discussed the two options and it was agreed the most desirable outcome would be to maintain the historic and visual impact of these older memorials.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To commission Memsafe to undertake the necessary repairs to the ten "failed" memorials at a cost of £1,580 + VAT (subject to additional joint charges).

12. Options for cleaning and re-lettering War Memorial

The Clerk advised that the local grave maintenance man had offered to clean the War Memorial free of charge if the Council provided the materials. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries with him about the need for any specialist cleaning materials.

As the re-lettering on the Memorial Stones was a specialist job, the Clerk was asked to contact local stone masons as well as RCT Bereavement Services and Memsafe.

13. Contemplation Spaces / Willow dome project

Members noted this project would be commencing in the near future.

14. Date of the next Cemetery inspection

The next Cemetery inspection would take place on 2nd April 2024 at 10:30.

15. Date of the next Committee meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 30th April 2024 at 6:30pm.

Meeting concluded at 7:30 pm.