



Minutes of the Meeting of the Cemetery Committee
held at the Council Meeting Room, Trane Cemetery, Tonyrefail
at 6:30pm on Tuesday, 29th April 2025

Present: Cllr Glenn Evans (Interim Chair)
Cllr Amanda Richards
Cllr Karen Webb

Officers: Ms Jo van Tonder (Clerk & RFO)

In the absence of Cllr L Michel, it was proposed, seconded and resolved that Cllr G Evans would assume the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Linda Michel and Mary Davies.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting: 11th February 2025

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. Cemetery Committee Finance report

The Clerk presented the Draft Cemetery accounts for the year to 31st March 2025. She reiterated that the figures were subject to change as a result of any pre-audit adjustments.

The large underspend on repairs and maintenance (R&M) was considered. The Clerk suggested there was a fair amount of expenditure incurred on R&M and health & safety in the early part of the new financial year.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To make a recommendation to Full Council to transfer £20,000 of the R&M underspend to earmarked reserves to cover the additional health & safety costs incurred in 2025/26.

5. Special Request to extend Exclusive Right of Burial (ERoB) – plot P196

Members were advised that a request had been received from a grave owner looking to extend the Exclusive Right of Burial on plot P196.

It was noted that the current Cemetery Regulations did not address extensions or renewals of ERoBs. The Clerk advised that, under UK law, burial authorities may grant ERoBs for a maximum of 100 years. Extensions or renewals were permissible, provided the total term did not exceed this limit.

Members carefully considered the unique circumstances of this case as presented in the correspondence received.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To grant the request to extend the Exclusive Right of Burial on plot P196 for an additional 50 years beyond the original expiry date of 2062, bringing the total term to 2112.

Resolved: To agree a fee of £1,200 for the 50-year extension, with discretion delegated to the Clerk.

It was agreed to clarify the Council's position on ERoB extensions during the current review of the Cemetery Regulations.

6. Cemetery Governance

a) Awarding of contract for tree works

Members were reminded of the tree survey that had been carried out in February, where various medium- and high-risk works had been identified.

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To ratify the decision taken via e-mail on 24th March to award the works to The Arb Team (high-risk) and Mighty Oaks (medium-risk) at a cost of £1,200 and £2,670, respectively

b) Awarding of contract for electrical works

Members were reminded of the fire safety assessment that had been carried out that had identified works required that included those of an electrical nature. These covered PAT testing and the completion of an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

It was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To ratify the decision taken via e-mail to award the contract for said works to ND Electrical at a cost of £550 (EICR) and £1.50 per item (PAT testing)

c) Revision of Cemetery Rules and Regulations

The Clerk updated members on the review of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations and outlined the proposed consultation process she planned to follow.

d) Adoption of Health & Safety Policy

Members noted the adoption of the Health & Safety Policy by Full Council at its recent meeting.

e) Adoption of Fire Policy

Members noted the adoption of the Fire Policy by Full Council at its recent meeting.

7. Matters pertaining to Cemetery Maintenance

a) Fire risk assessment findings

Members noted the recommendations made following the recent Fire Risk Assessment. The Clerk advised the Deputy Clerk was in the process of sourcing quotations for remedial works.

b) Health & Safety matters – vibration white finger, noise

The Clerk advised that concerns had been raised by the staff regarding the risks associated with prolonged use of vibrating and noisy equipment such as strimmers, mowers, hedge cutters and blowers. In particular, the risk of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)—commonly known as Vibration White Finger (VWF)—was highlighted.

Members acknowledged the legal obligations placed upon the Council in relation to vibration and noise at work, and noted the following actions being taken:

- Updating and implementing new risk assessments, incorporating vibration and noise exposure.
- Introduction of weekly health surveillance forms for staff.
- Replacing high-vibration equipment with safer alternatives.

c) Purchase of strimming equipment

Members noted the Committee had resolved in October 2023, to replace some of its aging strimming equipment. At that time, it was agreed to purchase one Husqvarna 535RXT during the 2023/24 financial year, with a plan to purchase an additional 535RXT and a 545RXT in 2024/25.

Following recent vibration safety training and risk assessment work, it had become evident that one of the remaining trimmers posed a high risk for HAVS, limiting safe usage to just one hour per day.

Following further consideration, it was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To purchase two Husqvarna 535RXT trimmers and one Stihl BG86 blower at a cost of approximately £1,500 and £350, respectively.

8. Cemetery Expansion

a) Quotations for Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Scheme

Members were reminded that, as a condition to the planning consent granted on the change of use application submitted by the Council in 2021, the Council was required to submit a Biodiversity Scheme to the Planning Authority for approval.

The Clerk presented the three quotations received from the five consultants invited to quote. Members noted the procurement checks and balances had been completed for this transaction.

On the grounds that this supplier fully met the Council's brief, offered good value for money and supported the Council's Biodiversity Duty by reducing travel miles through use of a local service, it was proposed, seconded and

Resolved: To commission Acer Ecology to produce the Biodiversity Enhancement and Mitigation Scheme at a cost of £1,950.

9. Memorial Management

a) Outcome of Memorial Testing – year 1, quarter 1

Members noted 236 plots had been inspected, including testing of memorials where applicable. 17 memorials were found to be unstable, failing the required safety checks, which equated to a failure rate of 9%.

All failed memorials had been laid down immediately to prevent risk to visitors and staff. The Cemetery Administrator would be contacting grave owners to arrange for remedial works to be carried out.

b) Timetable for Memorial Testing – year 1, quarter 2

The Clerk advised the next round of inspections was scheduled for July 2025 and would cover approximately 95 plots within Section E of the cemetery.

She went on to explain the reason behind the setting out of a smaller section for inspection in July was to accommodate the busy summer grass-cutting season when limited staff were available.

10. Matters pertaining to Burial Activities

a) Recruitment of Burials Operative

Members were advised that Dylan Smith had been appointed to the role of Burials Operative, following a rigorous recruitment process. It was anticipated Dylan would be starting in early May.

b) Shortage of available burials training places

The Clerk wished to advise members of a nation-wide shortage of specialist trainers and hence, difficulties in placing staff on burials training courses.

It was noted three places had been booked on Cemetery excavator and dumper training in February 2026 for Council staff. In the meantime, two members of staff would be attending generic dumper training in order to offer some level of support in the interim.

11. Date of the next Cemetery inspection

The next Cemetery inspection would take place on Monday, 2nd June 2025 at 10:30.

12. Date of the next Committee meeting

The next meeting of the Committee: TBC after Annual Meeting.

Meeting concluded at 7:29 pm.