

Report of meeting held at the Spetchells Centre, on Thursday 10 March 2016 at 10.00am

Present: Cllr A Gill (Chair), Cllrs B Futers, Mrs J McGee, Ms J Rose; R Whinney (Clerk)

1. **Apologies for absence**—Cllr A Piper
2. **Reports from previous meetings**—the Clerk reported that (i) meetings were being set up with potential fencing contractors in respect of the fencing at the southern boundary of the Old Cemetery (ii) a response was awaited from the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) in respect of the enquiry raised with respect to the making safe of smaller older memorials.
3. **Cemetery Contractor / work record sheets**—Cllr A Gill stated that the work record sheets supplied by the Cemetery Contractor in respect of the work of the Cemetery Attendant were “a waste of time”. He said that the Attendant was at the cemetery full-time, with costs increasing year on year, but not much information was provided on the record sheets. The Clerk suggested that the Council could benefit from regular, perhaps quarterly cemetery inspections at which the Contractor’s performance could be assessed with reference to the service contract between the parties. The Clerk suggested that the next meeting of the group could take the form of such an inspection. It was also suggested that the electricity meter be checked on such an occasion.
4. **Cemetery ownership / registration of title (Old Cemetery)** — Cllr Gill suggested that, in view of the continued lack of progress on the registration of the Council’s title, that the solicitor should be requested to provide a report explaining what was going on and why.
5. **Land ownership, Old Cemetery** –the Clerk supplied copies of the document received from NCC some years previously in respect of the entrance of the Old Cemetery: this appeared to show that NCC owned a strip of land that included most but not all of the width of the entrance road along with the land to the left of the entrance up to the walls of the properties at the foot of Edgewell Avenue. Cllr Gill suggested that the issue of the upkeep of land to the left of the fence needed to be looked at, and it was agreed to make enquiry of NCC regarding this matter.
6. **Stability testing: update** — it was noted that progress needed to be made respecting this item.
7. **Memorial seats**—the Clerk reported that progress was being made on obtaining the seat ends, and it was agreed that it would be good to check with those people who had previously expressed interest in purchasing a seat. It was felt that it would be practical to always have one seat made up and available for purchase.
8. **Plantings on graves**—this matter was discussed following a request for information made by / on behalf of the Cemetery Contractor. It was noted that the most recent example reported had not only involved planting on top of the grave but also behind the memorial, i.e. on land that did not belong to the grave owner in question. It was noted that the rules on this matter were clear on the cemetery notice boards, but that the question was how, and by whom, should the prohibition on memorial items (other than the approved memorial itself), kerbsets, plantings etc, be enforced. While the Cemetery Attendant could enforce the ban on dogs entering the cemetery, this issue would be more problematic. In this case, Cllr Futers was concerned at the nature of the response that would be forthcoming from the grave owner, and suggested that it would be undesirable to escalate the situation. Whilst it was noted that NCC would not place their staff in ‘the firing line’, it was suggested that NCC be asked what they would be prepared to ask their staff to say to anyone infringing this rule. Cllr Rose suggested that a gentle approach would be the most effective, focusing on issues such as the damage to machinery used to maintain the cemeteries. Cllr Gill suggested that the Council could start by declining to cut the grass around memorials where there were plantings, kerbsets etc.

9. Dogs in cemeteries — the Clerk explained that in researching and reporting as he had done at the February Ordinary Meeting concerning the existence of enforceable NCC Dog Orders on (i) the keeping of dogs on leashes and (ii) dog fouling, he had been seeking to advise the Council as to advantages of seeking enforcement of the Dog Orders, rather than having the Council draw public opprobrium on itself by introducing a prohibition that carried no enforceable penalty with it. The Clerk would produce signs for laminating, along with notes / flyers for the Cemetery Attendant to hand out. Cllr Futers expressed his concern about the danger to public health of dog waste generally.

10. Date of next meeting — Thursday 7 April 2016, starting at 10.00am

RW 22/03/2016