

**CEMETERY AND WAR MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Andy Gill (Chair), Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Duncan Couchman, David Robson (NCC Neighbourhood Services)  
Sarah Eden

**1. Report of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**It was AGREED** to receive the report as a true record. Sarah Eden advised that the report should have been received by the council on 14<sup>th</sup> February but due to an oversight on her part it had not been.

**2. Matters Arising**

Sarah Eden advised that she had asked Ian Wood to have a look at the chip on Mrs Stephenson's memorial and that they repaired it on site at no cost. Mrs Stephenson has been advised and although the work has not been inspected, **it was AGREED** that this was a welcome result and a thank you would be sent to Ian Wood.

Sarah Eden advised that the memorial work required as a result of the mason who was refused a license to work in Edgewell Cemetery was still outstanding. Although North East Granite has completed an application and the work has been approved, they are still waiting for the stone to be sent from the non-licensed mason.

David Robson ran through the list of scheduled work from the last meeting and advised what was complete and what was still outstanding.

Hedging, weeding and gulley clearing had been carried out. The coping stone that was loose at the entrance to the old cemetery has been removed and the boards used to cover graves once dug were now secure. In response to Cllr Gill's enquiry about who carried out the hedge-cutting, David explained that the cemetery attendant was not able to use a chain saw and that they needed to be mindful of the risks associated with operating machinery and hand arm vibration, for which there were regulations.

David Robson advised that with it would be very costly to remove the spoil from the wooded area of the Old Cemetery and at this time of year the ground would be churned up as a result of the digger going in to do this. Previously, David advised that the spoil was good enough to re-use for topping up so it didn't build up as much in the old cemetery but at the moment what was being dug was coal and shale.

With respect to topping-up, David advised that it would be too costly and ineffective to use good soil throughout the year as the graves sink so much. Practice is that good soil is used prior to seeding when growing starts. David advised that he had made a suggestion with regards to having a spoil box in the old cemetery, if a path was installed as discussed. **It was AGREED** to revisit this later and to accept that the spoil would have to remain as is for the time being.

Work on the memorial seats is still outstanding and David explained that it is not feasible to paint them at this time of year as it is too cold, the alternative is to take them inside and put on the heating, but that is more labour intensive.

It was discussed that the seats have not been treated for 4 years and that this is part of the contract with NCC. David advised that they would be done in the warmer weather, however, **it was AGREED** that an alternative may have to be looked at if this is not achieved by the end of the summer.

**CEMETERY AND WAR MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

David advised that cremated remains appearing on graves are becoming more commonplace. NCC policy is to lift the turf and put the remains beneath ground level. It was discussed that the reason for this could be cost and although the Town Council had introduced a scattering of ashes fee (less than interment of ashes) whereby the deceased would be recorded as being buried there, this was not being taken up. **It was AGREED** to add signage to remind people that they are not permitted to scatter ashes without permission.

### **3. Use of Cemetery Chapel**

a) **It was AGREED** that the paperwork and files that have been held in the chapel ready for sorting since the Town Council relocated should be put away in the filing cabinets until there is time to sort them and that the room should be made available for use by those having a simply graveside service, for shelter and meeting up, as requested by a grave owner. **It was AGREED** that if the recommendation was approved by the Town Council that they would need to establish a suitable fee for the use of the chapel.

b) Cllr Angie Scott had suggested that the chapel could have a book of condolences or a book of remembrance. This was discussed and **it was AGREED** that it was preferable having the cemetery books in the Town Council office as the Administrative Officer frequently had to look through them to identify graves. **It was also AGREED** that the Town Council should better promote the availability of the cemetery books as a historic record available in the town

### **4. Memorial Work**

**It was AGREED** that moving forward the Cemetery Attendant would no longer be required to observe the Memorial Mason carrying out their work, (1) because he is not qualified (2) because he could be doing other things (3) the industry has moved forward in terms of regulations and the checks and measures put in by the Town Council previously are not as necessary now, (4) Businesses are more likely to take heed of failures in their workforce if they are called back to rectify non-compliance issues, rather than issues being pulled up on-site.

**It was AGREED** that the memorial checklist revised in November 2017 would still stand but that it should be added that the Town Council will always take immediate action where non-compliance is found to have occurred.

**It was AGREED** that the cemetery attendant would complete a post-installation check and any non-compliance should be notified to the Town Council office immediately.

### **5. Unauthorised items on graves**

**It was AGREED** that this would be revisited when the weather improves.

### **6. Pedestrian Gate into Old Cemetery**

A quotation that is beneath the threshold of financial regulations (seeking x3 quotes) has been received to replace the wooden gate with a metal gate, however this is being put on hold until a decision is made in respect of a new entrance into the Old Cemetery, off Edgewell Road, opposite the entrance to the New Cemetery.

### **7. New entrance into Old Cemetery**

NCC Highways have been asked for an indication of the cost a feasibility of a new entrance into Edgewell Old Cemetery from Edgewell Road, opposite the entrance to the New Cemetery. It is expected that this would be a pedestrian and machine only entrance. The practicalities are that visitors can park in the New Cemetery car park and walk straight through, rather than climbing the hill to the existing Old Cemetery pedestrian entrance.

**CEMETERY AND WAR MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**8. Edgewell Cemetery SLA**

The opening and closing of the cemetery gates was discussed. The cost of this in the contract is in excess of £6,000 (including Highfield Park) and Cllrs were advised that no other cemetery in Northumberland is closed; they remain open to the public 24 hours/day.

**It was AGREED** that the contract for 2018/19 is now considered operational and therefore if the council decided to make any changes they would not take effect until 2019/20.

**It was AGREED** to defer this item to a meeting where only the Cemetery SLA would be discussed and to ask David Hunt to attend.