

Hurworth and Neasham Burial Committee

Minute of the Meeting held on Thursday, 3rd March 2011, starting at 6:45pm., in the Hadwin Lounge, Hurworth Grange, Hurworth on Tees.

Those attending:-

Chris Pratt (Chairman), Val Hughes, Gill Hepplewhite, Peter Foster, Ian Holme, Jean Peacock, Don Parr; John Howard, Ken Pattison; Jill Russell; Keith Sandick (Neasham PC) AND John Weighell (Neasham PC).
Also in attendance - Peter Allan - Clerk

Apologies for absence:-

None (Cllr A.Gibson was unwell)

Declarations of Interest:-

None

Chairman's remarks

The Chairman welcomed John Weighell and Keith Sandick, who were representing Neasham Parish Council.

It had been eighteen months since the last meeting of the Burial Committee, and this meeting was called in accordance with the established practice, and prior to the forthcoming election.

Minutes of the Meeting dated 14th July 2009

The minutes, having been pre-circulated, were agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

Recent Communications

The Clerk reported that two people have had their ashes scattered in the Nature Reserve, within the Grange grounds, having received the Council's permission.

2. One person has presented a document substantiating that he has a plot in the graveyard, and required confirmation that the Council's records supported this. Don Parr has made a search of the records, and confirmed that the plot exists and has only one body in the grave.

Presentation by Cllr Don Parr

Cllr Parr made a presentation showing all of the burial plots in the graveyard section, which is still Parish Council property.

The plan indicates that there are:-

160 consecrated plots, of which 5 are reserved, but not yet used, and 80 have only one body in situ at this time.

45 non-consecrated graves (usually used for Catholic graves), of which 3 are reserved, but not yet used, and 35 have only one body in them. Several are priests and Brothers, and therefore are likely to remain with single occupancy.

The graveyard is full, and the committee needs to continue to identify a suitable additional site. There is space for cremations, and room to position cremation plot indicators.

Cllr Parr has also undertaken to chart the remainder of All Saint's Church graveyards, which may contain as many as 800 plots, dating back to the eighteenth century.

Records of the graveyard owned by the Parish Council are filed in the Parish Office, along with a copy of Don Parr's excellent chart.

The Chairman and meeting thanked Cllr Parr for the depth of work which he has done on this project.

System and Procedures

The clerk reported on the current system and suggested improvements.

System:-

In theory, it is understood the Registrar of Deaths should produce a multi-copy document, which provides details of the death, and where the burial service will take place, and where the body (or ashes) will be buried. It appears that there is a breakdown in the communication process as the 'green copy' coming to the Parish Clerk, does not always reach us.

The All Saints Church verger, Mrs Enid Thompson deals with the funeral directors, and arranges for the burial at the church graveyard.

In future, Enid will inform the Parish Clerk, by E Mail, whenever a burial is to take place.

The funds have been amalgamated with the HPC General Account, but are ring-fenced. **The current balance is £2387**; this is in accordance with the auditor's recommendation and PC's confirmation.

There appears to have been no transactions since the last meeting, although there are three registrations entered in the Burial Register. There should be expenditure to the grave-digger, and the Minister, and a charge out to the client; in the past these have balanced at £133.00.

The meeting came to the conclusion that the undertakers must have taken on this responsibility, and if this is the case, then we should let it continue.

Cllr Hepplewhite suggested that, in future we should charge more for the plots, and any services rendered. A figure of £300 was mooted.

Cllr Hughes recommended that a Fund be established to provide money to purchase another graveyard site. Money should be paid into this Fund every year. The discussion which ensued raised the question of the cost and complexities of finding, purchasing, and licensing of an additional graveyard. The cost would be very high. Mr Weighell said that we would need a minimum of 3 acres, and the Chairman's estimate of the cost was circa £60,000.

Cllr Pattison suggested this should be referred to the Finance Committee.

Cllr Foster pointed out that the existing balance of just over £2,000 should be used for maintenance of the property.

The meeting requested that the system should be written up, and placed on record in the Parish Office. **Action Parish Clerk**

Any Other Business

The Clerk reported that a piece of land had been identified, and may be suitable for a graveyard. The Chairman, knowing these things, suggested that the cost of land in this area could be as high as £20,000 per acre. The meeting agreed that the Clerk should make further enquiries, and report back in due course. **Action Parish Clerk**

The meeting closed at 7:15pm, no date was set for the next meeting.