

TOWN HALL AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of Market Deeping Town Council's Town Hall and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 20th May 2020 at 7.45pm. Cllr Miss Moran presided over Cllr Shelton, Cllr Hembrow, Cllr Yarham, Cllr Mrs Redshaw, Cllr Mrs Sked and Cllr Lester. The Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk and one member of the public were also in attendance.

01 Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Miss Moran welcomed members to the meeting.

02 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Broughton.

03 To receive declarations of interest under the Localism Act 2011

There were no declarations of interest.

04 Minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 22nd January 2020

It was proposed by Cllr Shelton, seconded by Cllr Mrs Sked and **RESOLVED** unanimously that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a true and accurate record and they were duly signed by the Deputy Clerk on behalf of the Chair.

05 Clerk's report

The Deputy Clerk informed the members of the following:

Matters Relating to the Cemetery:

1. It is now 3 months since the letters regarding the placement of unauthorised items were sent out and the notices displayed in the Cemetery. The Park Keepers have therefore been instructed to inform the office of any graves from which items will be removed, prior to their careful removal and storage so that the owners may be informed.
2. An incident of vandalism which took place during February was reported to 101. The incident took place in the Spinney and resulted in two trees being cut down and a further tree damaged.
3. Since the January meeting there have been 6 burials, 2 scattering of ashes in the Spinney, 4 interments of cremated remains and 3 reservations.
4. The Cemetery keeper has now retired. The Park Keepers are currently undertaking the extra work in the interim pending the appointment of a new Cemetery Keeper.
5. Due to the restrictive measures imposed as part of the COVID-19 response, and in an effort to safeguard their wellbeing, the Park Keepers are now closing the cemetery gates to the public while undertaking the grass cutting and grave maintenance work.
6. The Sanctum for the cemetery has been reserved.
7. Booking of reserve plots within the cemetery have historically been issued for an incorrect lease period.

Matters relating to the Town Hall:

1. The contract for the purchase of the Town Hall has been signed and is with the legal team.
2. No response has been received regarding the date for the fitting of the support bars for the downstairs windows. **Members agreed to continue to wait.**

3. Before the current COVID- situation, in addition to the regular Full Council and Committee meetings there has been 6 meetings for the Neighbourhood Plan and 1 meeting for the Youth Group. Sir John Hayes MP also held his surgery in the Town Hall Chambers.
4. As approved at the last Full Council meeting, the insurance has now been renewed for the Town Hall with the increased premium to reflect the higher rebuild cost (total premium of £3224.00, increase of £445).
5. Town Hall keys – There is shortage of main door keys. Office records show that 9 have been issued (inc 3 staff members) although there are no records stating how many keys are in existence. **Members agreed that it was important to ensure security of the Town Hall, and, in light of the pending transfer of the Town Hall to the Town Council, it was necessary to change the locks on the main front door and also the office door, and reissue keys accordingly. It was proposed by Cllr Miss Moran, seconded by Cllr Hembrow and RESOLVED with 2 abstentions to instruct the Clerks to organise the changing of the locks.**

06 Park Keepers Report: Update on work activity taking place in the cemetery

The Deputy Clerk, having spoken with the Park Keeper prior to the meeting, gave the following verbal report:

1. All the grass in both the old and new cemeteries has been cut.
2. All the grass at the base of the headstones has been trimmed and edged in both the old and new cemeteries.
3. The driveway, the Spinney, and the old kerbed cemetery graves have been treated with weed-killer.
4. All the hedges have been trimmed.
5. The Park Keepers are waiting for more top soil to arrive before starting to re-seed the graves. **Cllr Hembrow commented that it was important to ensure that the top soil was certified free from Japanese knot weed.**

07 Correspondence received post-January meeting 2020

No	Received from	Date Received	Subject	Committee Response
1	FSB.org.uk	07/02/2020	Hire of Chambers enquiry for a local MP Roundtable event to be held on Friday 15 th May 2020	Cancelled due to COVID-19
2	Resident of Market Deeping	09/02/2020	Request for conifers on NE cemetery boundary to be cut back to the fence.	Work carried out as part of Park Keepers routine maintenance.
3	Resident of Market Deeping	20/04/2020	A request for a deceased resident of DSJ to be buried in MDC. The deceased has a brother buried in MDC. The deceased moved to DSJ roughly 5 years ago.	21/04/2020 – Chairman & Clerk agreed to allow the burial, with triple fees as per the cemetery policy.

4	Resident of Market Deeping	11/05/2020	Reservation request from the parent of a recently interred non-resident for a double plot (2 individual spaces) adjacent to her son. The person now has 2 sons buried in MDC.	Members agreed, with 6 in favour and 1 abstention, to adhere to the Council's policy and refuse the request at this time. Members further agreed to reconsider the request in the event of any changes made to the policy following its review in November 2020.
5	Resident of Market Deeping	11/5/2020	The resident is considering scattering her husband's ashes in the Spinney but has been distressed to see dogs scratching and defecating in there. A request has been made that the Council considers making it 'no dogs' or 'dogs on lead' and put up signs indicating such.	Members agreed unanimously for the Clerks to apply for a PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order) to designate the area as a space where dogs must be kept on a lead.

08 Finances: Omega reports: Review of budget/expenditure/income

The Deputy Clerk had provided members with a copy of the omega report prior to the meeting. There were no issues raised.

Cemetery

09 Chairman's Cemetery Report

Cllr Miss Moran stated how pleased she was with the work undertaken in the cemetery. Cllr Miss Moran then asked the former Chairman, Cllr Lester, if there was anything he wished to add. Cllr Lester confirmed that the cemetery was looking lovely and that the Park Keepers were working extremely hard, especially as the Cemetery Keeper's position was still vacant. Cllr Lester agreed that there was still some topping up of the graves required but acknowledged that the Park Keepers had the task in hand.

10 For members to receive an update on the approved Sanctum facility within the Cemetery and to agree a way forward.

Members had received a copy of the visual images provided by the supplier prior to the meeting. Members were very pleased with the images and were keen to progress this matter. Cllr Mrs Redshaw raised concerns regarding the Halfleet Beck which is currently culverted, and Cllr Lester commented that, although he wasn't aware of the reason, he understood that the area adjacent to the Spinney had historically been left clear for a specific reason and that it was important to ascertain more information regarding this. Cllr Miss Moran suggested that a conversation with a former, long standing, Chair of the Town Hall & Cemetery Committee, could provide some answers. The committee also agreed that a look through the deeds may be prudent to ensure that there are no legal caveats that need to be taken into account. Cllr Miss Moran asked Cllr Hembrow if he would oversee the installation of the base and start making enquiries regarding contractors. Cllr Hembrow agreed and the Deputy Clerk agreed to forward the suppliers contact details onto Cllr Hembrow.

11 For members to set the Cemetery Fees for 2020/2021.

It was proposed by Cllr Miss Moran, seconded by Cllr Mrs Redshaw and **RESOLVED** unanimously to address this item at the next meeting.

12 For members to review the Town Council's Scattering of Ashes Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr Yarham, seconded by Cllr Miss Moran and **RESOLVED** unanimously to continue to implement the policy with no amendments.

13 For members to agree to seek further information regarding Green Burials.

Cllr Miss Moran stated that this is something she wanted to see the Council providing in the future. Cllr Mrs Redshaw commented that this had been considered by the Committee before and, with the absence of no suitable land, the Council had agreed that offering the scattering of ashes in the Spinney was the only achievable alternative. Cllr Lester commented that as the Spinney was not suitable as a Green Burial site, and the Paddock was for recreational use only, the best opportunity for securing suitable space would be land within new developments. It was proposed by Cllr Miss Moran, seconded by Cllr Shelton and **RESOLVED** unanimously that further information be sought regarding the requirements and implications of green burials.

14 For members to review and agree the job description for the Town Cemetery Keeper.

The Deputy Clerk, following consultation with the Park Keeper, suggested the following amendments to the existing job description:

To include in the job description:

- The removal of dead flowers
- The edging of the graves

To remove from the job description:

- The spraying of weeds on the gravel paths (this is undertaken by the Park Keepers)
- Any requirement for the Cemetery Keeper to use the Town Council vehicle.
- Any requirement for the Cemetery Keeper to be involved in the lopping or cutting down of trees.
- Any requirement for the Cemetery Keeper to use the Towns tractor mower.

Councillors suggested reference should be made to the need to undertake relevant training and to further highlight that the position's primary responsibility was to the upkeep of the Cemetery and not to tasks relating to other areas of Council owned land. It was proposed by Cllr Miss Moran, seconded by Cllr Shelton and **RESOLVED** unanimously to incorporate all the amendments into the job description. The committee agreed that the post needed to be advertised and filled as soon as was practicable.

Town Hall

15 For members to receive an update on the purchase of the Town Hall

The Deputy Clerk informed members that the contracts had been signed and were currently with the Council's legal representative.

16 For members to agree to the commissioning of a survey of the Town Hall

It was proposed by Cllr Shelton, seconded by Cllr Miss Moran and **RESOLVED** unanimously that a full survey be undertaken to determine the condition and value of the Town Hall. The Clerks were instructed to invite 3 companies to submit quotations for the survey work.

17 For members to consider the keeping or displaying of a register of past Town Mayors.

Cllr Miss Moran stated that it was a good idea to document the history of the Town Council in this way, and to also include the details of the Chairs prior to the Parish of Market Deeping being granted Town status. Cllr Miss Moran asked whether Cllr Mrs Redshaw would like to prepare a list. Cllr Mrs Redshaw confirmed she would be happy to do so. Cllr Yarham commented that although the committee was in favour of an Honours Board, it would be better to have the renovation work undertaken before the board was agreed upon and installed. Committee members agreed to look at various examples to determine a preference for styles/materials/size etc

Prior to the close of the meeting the Clerk asked the Committee if there were any objections to Cllr Lester being present and voting at the meeting as he had not been appointed to the Committee at the Annual meeting. There were no objections and Cllr Lester’s membership of the committee was therefore retrospectively approved. There being no other business Cllr Miss Moran thanked all for attending and the meeting was closed at 9.10pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15th July 2020 at 7.30pm. The meeting will be held virtually unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Chairman’s signature.....

Date.....