

# LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

## BURIAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 2020/10/05 – 01

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY BURIAL COMMITTEE MEETING held via Zoom<sup>1</sup> on Monday 5 October 2020 at 6.32 pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs S Stockham (Chairman), A Harley, S Holmes, R Holmes and W Leach

Mr S Holley – Town Clerk

Miss C Wheeler – Assistant Clerk

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1. **APOLOGIES**

None.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Burial meeting held on 25 November 2020 were confirmed as a true record, subject to an amendment to reflect the name of the Committee. Proposed by Cllr Harley, Seconded by Cllr R Holmes. Unanimously APPROVED.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

None.

5. **BUDGET PERFORMANCE**

Prior to the meeting Committee Members were provided with a copy of the expenditure to date against the 2021/22 budget. The Clerk was asked to provide the Committee with a copy of last year's expenditure against budget in addition to the Committee's current position. This request was extended to all Committees, where possible.

The Clerk was requested to ascertain the amount held in Earmarked Reserves in respect of a new burial ground.

**Action by – the Clerk**

The Committee's financial position was duly noted.

6. **COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2021/22**

The Committee was invited to identify projects which it wished to undertake in 2021/22 requiring budgetary provision.

Cllr Stockham questioned if comments had been received from members of the public to plant shrubs/wildflowers to break-up the current formal lines/landscape. The Clerk gave a commitment to seek guidance from the Head Groundsman.

**Action by – the Clerk**

Responding to a comment made by a Councillor, the Assistant Clerk advised that a number of years prior the Committee had taken the decision to create a Garden of Reflection to provide members of the public with an area for quiet contemplation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

# LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

## BURIAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 2020/10/05 – 02

Cllr Leach gave a commitment to visit the Cemetery to ascertain if the Garden of Reflection was well signed.

7. **REPAIR WORK TO GRADE II LISTED TABLE TOMBS AT ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD**

The Clerk provided the Committee with an overview of a meeting attended by Cllrs R Holmes, Stockham and himself which had taken place with Mr S Moore, Churchwarden, St Mary's Church to discuss the condition of a number of Grade II listed Table Tombs. The Clerk reminded the Committee that the Town Council had accepted responsibility for the Closed Churchyard several decades previously.

A number of the table tombs dated back to the Eighteenth Century and were in a poor state of repair and/or near collapse. The Clerk advised that normal practice would be to lay unstable gravestones flat; however, it was not felt appropriate to adopt this approach with historic table tombs, especially as they were Grade II listed. Instead, the Church had asked the Council to consider a joint project to make good the ground levels and underpinnings before re-assembling the table tombs. No other restoration work was anticipated and Mr Moore had suggested that it would cost £2-3,000 per tomb, with work required to around 10-12 tombs. Mr Moore acknowledged that the proposed work was at a higher level than the Council would normally undertake, but St Mary's Church was likely to assist by way of grant funding. It was likely that the work could be undertaken on a phased basis. The Committee was aware that gravestones remain in the ownership of the families concerned (who might in theory be approached for a financial contribution) but it was not yet known whether any family descendants still resided in the Town. The Clerk advised that Mr Moore had suggested that the Church could commission a specialist survey to provide a recommended course of treatment and estimate of cost per tomb. Mr Moore felt that the report was unlikely to be received until Spring 2021 at the earliest; by which time the Council would have set its Budget for 2021/22.

In view of the above, the Committee was requested to consider including a sum in its budget for 2021/22 for commencing the project in 2021. In the absence of the proposed survey report, the Committee felt the Council should budget for work on the two tombs most urgently in need of attention, or possibly three tombs, within 2021/22. If the Church could provide the Council with the names of those interred it the Council could ascertain if distant relatives were still resided in the Town. It was also suggested that the project be publicised as a local history project that might benefit from public contribution. It was Proposed by Cllr R Holmes, Seconded by Cllr Leach, that the sum of £7,000 be included in the 2021/22 budget. Unanimously APPROVED.

8. **UPDATE ON THE NEED TO FIND ADDITIONAL BURIAL GROUND**

The Clerk advised the Committee that he had obtained an update from the Head of the Athelstan Trust that the land valuation by the School had resulted in a valuation of £100,000 whereas the Council had been provided with an indication of £20-30,000 for purchasing the land. Furthermore, that there was now a strong presumption against disposing of School land.

The Committee was asked if it wished to look for other possible sites to purchase, or if it wished to restrict interments in Lydney Cemetery to cremated remains only. During discussion it was suggested that a local landowner may wish to donate a section of land

# LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

## BURIAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 2020/10/05 – 03

and that Clerk should review any land owned by either the Council or its Charitable Trusts for suitability.

Action by – the Clerk

9. **CHARGES**

9.1 **2020/21 Financial Year**

Prior to the meeting the Committee were provided with a list of suggested charges which would be payable for the remainder of the current financial year. Several Councillors spoke against the proposed increase in a small number of the charges which reflected the increased charges which had been levied on the Council itself.

It was Proposed by Cllr S Holmes, Seconded by Cllr R Holmes that no increase would be levied on any charges. Vote carried.

9.2 **Raising of Age-Related Charge Threshold**

The Committee noted the raising of the age threshold under which burial charges would not be made from 16 years to 18 years, in line with national guidelines.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Burial Committee would take place on Monday 23 November 2020.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

Draft minutes subject to confirmation