

# LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

BURIAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 2014/09/29 – 07

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BURIAL COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 29 September 2014 at 6.30 pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs C Harris (Chairman), B Berryman, V Hobman, B Pearman, S Rudge and B Thomas

One member of the public

Mr P Blatchly – Philip Blatchly & Son Funeral Directors

Mr M Kennerley – Gordon Blake Funeral Directors

Mrs J Smailes – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Miss K Hammond – Admin Assistant (AA)

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Cllr Harris informed all present that no practice fire evacuation had been scheduled for the duration of the meeting. All attendees were then informed of the locations of the nearest fire exits.

1. **APOLOGIES**

None.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Approval of the minutes of the Burial Committee meeting held on 28 July 2014 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Hobman, seconded by Cllr Pearman.** Vote carried with one abstention.

4. **FUNERAL DIRECTORS CO-OPTION**

Members noted the letters which had been sent to Gordon Blake Funeral Directors and Philip Blatchly & Son in regard to whether they would be interested in being co-opted on to the Burial Committee.

5. **OPEN FORUM**

None.

6. **ST MARY'S CLOSED CHURCHYARD**

Members were asked to consider the quote provided by Richard Cole Contractors in respect to two trees located within St Marys Churchyard which appear to require remedial tree work. The total amount of the quote provided being £1158.80 inc VAT.

The CEO advised that as part of Richard Cole's Contractor's scheduled inspection they have assessed the condition of the trees and the suggested treatment was a 50% crown reduction and pollard also removal of any dead wood coming from the main stem. The trees would be stabilized by shaping them appropriately. It was stressed that under no circumstances were the trees to be addressed via climbing method because of the brittle condition, the work must be carried out with specialist equipment for the safety of the tree surgeon and crew. The CEO advised Richard Cole would contact FODDC with regard to



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gaining Conservation Area Consent and the Church Warden would be asked to confirm that no Faculty was required.

Cllr Harris suggested the trees required urgent attention and remedial action should be carried out as soon as possible due to health and safety concerns.

It was **proposed by Cllr Harris** that delegated powers be bestowed to the CEO and two members to proceed with the suggested emergency tree works in St Mary's Closed Churchyard. Unanimous.

**Action by – the CEO**

### 7. LYDNEY CEMETERY

#### 32 Vault Sanctum Panorama

Members noted that the new vault was now in situ. Members were advised that during the winter months three benches would be made 'in-house' and sited adjacent to the vault. Flower tubs would also be placed either side of each bench thereby providing a second area for quiet reflection.

Members were asked to consider bestowing delegated powers to the CEO and Two Councillors in order to set the fee which would be charged for the plaques for the new Sanctum Panorama Vault. The CEO advised that an impending meeting was due with a Representative of the Columbaria company to consider the recommended retail price.

It was **proposed by Cllr Pearman, seconded by Cllr Hobman**, that a percentage considered appropriate in line with advice from the Columbaria company, plus an admin fee, would be levied. Unanimous.

**Action by – the CEO**

#### Signage

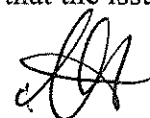
Members noted that signage had been placed in the Old and New Gardens of Remembrance and on the Cemetery Notice Board, advising that the Town Council would not permit the placing of Memorials in these areas and that such items would be removed by the Town Council Ground Staff.

The CEO reported that problems were still however being experienced with regard to personal items being placed in these areas and members were asked to consider whether they wished to place a formal notice in the local paper to remind members of the public that such items were not permitted as they contravened Cemetery regulations.

Cllr Pearman felt that as the topic of personal objects being placed in these areas was not a specific agenda item that it could not be discussed at the meeting and instead deferred and placed as an agenda item for the next Burial Committee meeting.

**Action by – the CEO**

The CEO informed members that a verbal complaint had been received from a member of the public who felt that the maintenance standards in the Cemetery had slipped during the last month, with grass cuttings being left on headstones; also the graves at the top of the cemetery did not flow in line with the older graves. The CEO advised that the Ground Staff had been informed of the complaint and had been requested to brush off headstones if it became necessary and to leave a greater time between cuttings and that the issue was often



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due in part to morning dew. Furthermore the CEO would seek advice from the undertakers with regard to the alignment of the graves.

Mr Blatchly offered the advice; as there are no markings the only way around the alignment of the graves would be for the plot to be laid out by the Town Council's Ground Staff. Mr Blatchly advised that Newnham Parish Council put in 4 pegs, 2 in top, 2 in bottom but the issue with the Town Council is that someone would have to go down to the Cemetery every time there is a burial to mark out the plot.

Mr Kennerly advised however that obviously the alignment may not be possible in the pointed area of the Cemetery, but suggest Council look to mark out plots in future.

Mr Blatchly also advised that the Town Council could enforce its rules concerning the placing of personal ornaments on graves and the families could be requested to sign at time of burial so it is then enforceable. Furthermore Monmouthshire County Council had a template that he could forward to the CEO for consideration.

### 8. GREEN BURIAL SITE

Members noted the letter forwarded to Lydney Park Estate concerning the use of the Millennium Wood and noted that it was no longer viable to pursue this option due in part to the advice received from the Forest of Dean District Council who had indicated that the use of the land would require the submission of a full planning application along with other potential issues such as Environmental Health, the need for a Flood Risk Assessment, Biodiversity, Highway and Visual Impact considerations.

Cllr Harris asked members to consider the fact that more space is still needed and suggested contacting Robert Hitchens again. The CEO suggested that members should continue to build a reserve of money for the project in case further land could be sought.

It was **proposed by Cllr Hobman, seconded by Cllr Pearman** that a sum of £5k be included in the 2015-2016 Budget. Unanimous.

### 9. 2015-2016 BUDGET

The CEO explained the Burial Committee budget to members; advising that the figure included prior Committee decision and if they now include the sum for green burial provision to bear in mind that it would have an effect on the proposed Budget/Precept. Members were reminded that £5k had already been included in the draft budget for a sculpture and that consideration could be given to utilising this sum instead of contributing a further £5k.

Following discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Harris** that the 2015-2016 Budget be increased to £25,000 to include provision for green burial. Unanimous.

### 10. COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Rudge thanked Mr Blatchly and Mr Kennerley for attending the meeting and felt that it was a positive move to co-opt them at the next Burial Committee meeting.

Cllr Pearman felt that the Sanctum Panorama Vault looked very good in situ and also thanked Mr Blatchly and Mr Kennerley for their attendance and their interest.



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Cllr Thomas reported that he had noticed that a tree on the right hand side of the cemetery had fungus on it and the leaves looked yellow which the CEO advised would be noted as part of the tree survey.

11. **MEETING DATES**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Burial Committee would take place on Monday 24 November 2014 at 6.30 pm

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Chairman .....  .....

Date ..... 24.11.14 .....