

**WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 10AM (via Zoom)**

PRESENT                      Councillor Robert Jenkins (Chairman)  
                                      Councillor Julie Baker  
                                      Councillor Dave Bragg  
                                      Councillor Carl Powling (part)  
                                      Councillor Sylvia Wargent  
                                      Councillor Sophie Weaver

IN ATTENDANCE            Petra Palfreyman (Town Clerk)  
                                      Carol Fountain (Cemetery Clerk)

**21/001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence received.

**21/002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**21/003 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 AUGUST 2020, AND MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Proposed: Councillor Weaver, Seconded: Councillor Baker. ALL IN FAVOUR.

**21/004 TO REVIEW THE REMAINING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2020/21 AND CONSIDER ANY FURTHER EXPENDITURE REQUIRED**

Nett income for the financial year is likely to exceed the budget by some £6,400. Expenditure is expected to come inside the budget. The anticipated surplus of income over expenditure will allow for unbudgeted expenditure under 21/007 below whilst allowing £11,000 to be transferred to reserves and some £15,000 to support this year's precept.

**21/005 TO REVIEW THE 2021/22 BUDGET AND ESTABLISH AN ACTION LIST WITH TIMETABLE**

The CDS "Master Plan" for Feldy View Woodland and Firs Road Cemeteries plus a possible irrigation system for Feldy View are the two major expenditure items in the budget. Our Cemetery Clerk will delve deeper into the options proposed in their quotation dated 5th November 2020 and also explore options (and desirability) of an irrigation system. Carol to report back at the next Cemetery Meeting.

**21/006 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE AN INCREASE IN CEMETERY CHARGES WITH EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2021**

A 2% increase in all charges except for Ashes in Feldy View Woodland Cemetery was discussed and agreed.

Proposed: Councillor Bragg, Seconded: Councillor Weaver. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/007 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE QUOTES RECEIVED FOR THE REPAIR OF FELDY VIEW WOODLAND CEMETERY DRIVEWAY

The Committee wishes to repair and make sound the 70 metre driveway across Feldy View Woodland Cemetery. Three quotations were considered with the quote from Maydays thought the best option. In addition the Committee wishes to take the opportunity to extend the improved driveway across the Essex County Council definitive footpath (permission obtained) and down to meet the tarmac roadway – a budget figure of £500 (+/-) was agreed for this additional work.

Proposed: Councillor Weaver, Seconded: Councillor Baker. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/008 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON TREE PLANTING IN FELDY VIEW WOODLAND CEMETERY

The Cemetery Clerk reported that work has been slowed up by the very wet conditions but the weeds have been treated, mulch ordered, 74 saplings set aside, ready for Skippers to plant and mulch as soon as conditions allow.

21/009 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON GENERAL MAINTENANCE IN FIRS ROAD CEMETERY

There is an on-going programme of maintenance in place which is proceeding well, despite the very wet weather. 3 matters of substance were discussed –

- a) It was agreed that we should resurface the entrance roads to Firs Road as they are in a poor state and prone to flooding in wet weather. Three quotes are to be obtained and a proposal put to full Council, as the potential cost is not covered by the 2021/22 budget so would need to be drawn from reserves.
- b) The Committee authorises the groundstaff to remove all unauthorised adornments, pots and plants from on and around burial plots. This to be carried out on a regular basis so that the cemetery can be returned to its intended state, as covered by the rules. Signs to be erected giving one month's notice, thereafter all unauthorised material to be removed. In future contracts are to be signed by all parties (as for Feldy).
- c) The Cemetery Clerk has researched the question of falling branches or trees damaging graves with the conclusion that these are "Acts of God" – the Council is therefore not liable. However, given our duty of care all trees will be inspected by groundstaff on a regular basis and a qualified person will assess all trees across our estate on a 2 year cycle. Should there be an incident then each case will be assessed individually.

21/010 TO REVIEW THE TASK TRACKER

Tracker updated.

21/011 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged when the Cemetery Clerk has required information and proposals from CDS.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.30 am.

Minutes prepared by Councillor Jenkins (verified by Town Clerk).