



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Clare L Copleston** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

14th July 2021

To: Members of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee

Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne

(Copies to other Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **New Cemetery Sub-Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 19th July 2021 at **6.00pm** at the Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis.

Due ongoing Covid concerns, members of the public who wish to attend the meeting are encouraged to do so remotely through the meeting link below. Members of the public may also attend in person and, if doing so, are requested to socially distance as much as possible.

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: [MEETING LINK](#)

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED¹**

AGENDA

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members are invited to elect a Chairman for the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2021/22.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members are invited to elect a Vice Chairman for the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2021/22.

3. APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

¹ *Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.*

The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

5. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

6. MINUTES

Pages 4 - 5

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2021.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2021.

7. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Page 6

Members will find attached the Terms of Reference which relates to this committee.

This report is provided for information.

8. OPTION FOR A SHARED SITE WITH DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL (DTC)

Page 7

Arising from ongoing discussions with CBC and DTC there is a possibility for a joint facility in Dunstable (Cottage Bottom – see attached location / site plan).

This suggestion is put forward for member consideration.

Should members feel that this is worth exploring further it is suggested that completion of the T2 survey work on the land at Grendall Lane be put on hold until it is established whether this site in Dunstable is a viable option. CDS have advised that the Cottage Bottom site also has some reservations but these could probably be mitigated.

Members are advised that no officer consideration has been given as to how a joint facility would work as this is considered premature at this stage.

Members are invited to discuss this option.

9. FEEDBACK FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA)

Pages 8 - 9

Members are advised that feedback from the EA on the land at Grendall Lane has been received and is attached for information.

CDS have advised that the EA has agreed with the proposed monitoring plan, thoughts on zoning of burials and cutting off / rerouting of land drains. Their feedback does highlight that the site would require significant works to make it suitable.

Should members determine that a joint facility with DTC at the Cottage Bottom site would be unsuitable, the resolution from the last Sub Committee meeting, to proceed with the T2 monitoring on the land at Grendall Lane, will be actioned.

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**Houghton Regis Town Council
New Cemetery Sub-Committee
1st February 2021 at 6.00pm**

Present:	Cllrs:	S Thorne Y Farrell M Kennedy T McMahon R Morgan	Chair Substitute
	Officers:	Clare Evans Louise Senior	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services
Also present:	Cllrs:	D Jones A Slough	
	CBC Cllr:	S Goodchild	
Apologies:	Cllr:	J Carroll	

NC126 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll (Cllr McMahon substituted).

NC127 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

NC128 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC129 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2020.

NC130 NEW CEMETERY PROVISION

Members were provided with a report from CDS on the trial trenching work completed on Grendall Lane as part of the T2 survey investigations for land for a new cemetery.

Members discussed the report and its findings.

It was suggested that a joint provision with Dunstable Town Council and also potential provision in surrounding villages be explored as this would widen the geographical land search area.

Although CDS had expressed concerns over the suitability of the Grendall Lane site, it was commented that a significant advantage of this site was that the land was being provided by CBC. It was also noted that ground conditions varied across the site, so whilst not all of the site may be feasible, there were significant areas which would be. It was suggested that thought be given to the site being sectioned, with each section having a designated use, such as double burials, single burials, and ashes. It was also suggested that on land which may be unviable that an alternative use such as allotments could be considered.

Members advised of their reluctance to commission a T3 assessment, without indication that this land remained a viable option from the Environment Agency due to the involved cost.

Members discussed the two alternative options offered by Central Bedfordshire Council, and agreed that these potential sites were either not viable.

Members were advised that the Town Clerk would contact CDS to determine whether a dual use community facility at Grendall Lane was practicable, Dunstable Town Council would be contacted regarding their cemetery plans and Central Bedfordshire Council would also be contacted and provided with members feedback to determine whether they would commission CDS to explore surrounding villages. Members would be provided with an update at the next meeting.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To note the findings of the interim T2 report and to confirm the completion of the T2 assessment and to seek feedback from the Environment Agency in due course.**
 - 2. To explore with CDS a shared use option of allotments and a cemetery and thus a smaller red line location for a cemetery.**
 - 3. To explore with Dunstable Town Council options for a joint facility;**
 - 4. To enquire whether CBC would commission a wider preliminary survey of surrounding villages to explore any options in those localities.**

NC131 FUTURE MEETINGS

Members were invited to consider when this Sub Committee should meet again.

Members agreed to reconvene as and when an update report was ready.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.00pm

Dated this day of

Chairman

New Cemetery Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Functions

- To consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new cemetery for Houghton Regis, including but not restricted to:
 - Environmental matters
 - Policy matters
 - Visual impact matters
 - Design matters
 - Public consultation matters
 - Future operation and management of the cemetery
- To report to the Town Council on the outcome of its deliberations.

Terms of Reference

- The Proposed New Cemetery Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Proposed New Cemetery Working Group shall consist of 6 members. The quorum shall be half of its members (three).

Cottage Bottom Fields, Dunstable

KEY

- Cottage Bottom Fields
- SSSI
- Local Nature Reserve



Darryl Kelly
The CDS Group
Building 51
Wrest Park
Silsoe
MK45 4HS

Our ref: AC/2021/130314/02-L01
Your ref: ENVPAC/1/EAN/00403
Date: 05 July 2021

Dear Mr Kelly

**A TIER 2 GROUNDWATER RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR HOUGHTON
REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
LAND AT GRENDALL LANE, HOUGHTON REGIS, CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE,
LU6 1RS**

We have reviewed the Tier 2 Groundwater Risk Assessment Report for Houghton Regis Town Council, prepared by The CDS Group, no reference, dated 26 February 2021. This review was carried out as part of the agreed programme of work (ref: ENVPAC/1/EAN/00403).

Environmental Setting

The site is underlain by a Principal Aquifer. It is not located in a Source Protection Zone.

According to our records there are no licensed groundwater abstractions within 250 metre radius of the site. Please note that certain water supplies do not require a licence and therefore may not be known to us. The locations of private domestic sources may be held by the Local District Council on the register required by the Private Water Supplies Regulations 1991.

The report makes reference to borehole and well records, and notes an abstraction record approximately 650 metres west of the site. It is not clear whether the Local Council records have been queried.

Technical Comments

According to the report, the anticipated burial rate for this site is estimated as being 30-40 per year. An intrusive investigation has been undertaken which confirmed the ground conditions beneath the site. Seepage / the presence of groundwater was noted at depths between 2.7m and 3.2m below ground level (bgl). Land drains were encountered at several locations at depths of between 0.8m and 1.3m bgl. A steep slope was noted near the site boundary, but it is not clear whether the site topography correlates with the depth to groundwater measured beneath the site.

A number of recommendations are made for burials so that the site can comply with

the minimum groundwater protection requirements, such as measures to ensure the base of the grave is a minimum of 1 metre above the peak seasonal groundwater level and the decommissioning and re-routing of any land drains present as well as zoning the site into three distinct areas based on the ground conditions and depth to groundwater encountered. We generally agree that the implementation of these measures is likely to be required to comply with the minimum groundwater protection requirements.

Care should be exercised when decommissioning land drains to ensure that the proposed works at the site do not cause flooding outside of the site boundary, particularly as some of the drains were noted to be fast flowing.

Further works are proposed to monitor the seasonal fluctuation in groundwater levels and further evaluate the risks from the proposed development. These may help in refining the zoning plan for the site. Any monitoring works should consider the potential impact of the proposed land drain decommissioning and re-routing works which may affect the groundwater level beneath the site.

Environment Agency Position

During the coronavirus pandemic we will not require environmental permits for proposed cemetery developments. Once the pandemic has ceased, we will require permits for cemeteries that represent a high risk to the environment or require active mitigation measures or burial controls to protect groundwater. More details can be found on GOV.UK here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-when-developing-or-expanding-cemeteries-during-coronavirus>

Operators of cemeteries should take appropriate measures to manage their sites to ensure they do not cause an unacceptable risk to groundwater quality. Please refer to guidance referenced above for further details. The guidance provides criteria for assessment whether the site is located in a low risk groundwater area, and whether an Environment Agency site specific risk assessment is required. The guidance also specifies the Minimum groundwater protection requirements for all burial sites. Based on the information provided, at the low end of the average burial rate of 30 burials per annum as specified in the submitted document and the environmental sensitivity of the site, the site would be classed as a low groundwater risk area, and a site specific risk assessment would not be required. The high end of the burial rate of 40 burials per annum would put the site in the higher risk category, and as such further works and potential active mitigation measures would need to be agreed. Further works have been proposed by you, and we agree they are required to ensure that groundwater is adequately protected in line with the current guidance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Neville Benn

Senior Planning Advisor

Sustainable Places

Direct dial 0203 0251906

Direct e-mail neville.benn@environment-agency.gov.uk