

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29th September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess
J Carroll
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
D Jones
T McMahan
R Morgan
A Slough
C Slough
S Thorne

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 6

Apologies: Councillors: E Cooper
C Copleston
M S Kennedy
K Wattingham

12178 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors: E Cooper, C Copleston, M Kennedy and K Wattingham.

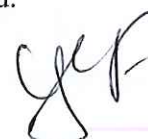
12179 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public stated that there were monetary implications which had not been explored and suggested that further money should be spent either on Grendall Lane or to explore other avenues. Would there be further investigation into additional funding?

It was advised that the continuation of investigation in to Grendall Lane had been presented twice to the New Cemetery Sub-Committee and rejected on both occasions. The resolutions made by the New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting was to continue to explore opportunities.

A member of public asked whether the council had explored all financial avenues, including those with Central Bedfordshire Council for cemetery funding.

It was advised that different parcels of land had been investigated for their suitability in environmental and planning terms, however the environmental report that had been received had presented difficulties for the construction of a cemetery on that land.



A member of the public asked whether the council had intended to ask Central Bedfordshire Council for funding to aid the construction of a new cemetery?

It was advised that development within the growth area had received planning permission, if there were to be an uplift in development value from the granting of permission to when the houses were built, there was a mechanism for Central Bedfordshire Council to seek additional s106 funding, however neither of the s106's included specific funding for new cemetery provision.

It was asked whether HRTC would approach Central Bedfordshire Council for funding as there are pockets of new homes being built in the area.

It was advised that as projects progress, funding streams were sought as and when necessary, as projects determine.

A member of public asked whether Grendall Lane was the only parcel of land under consideration.

It was advised that the resolution had included an approach to Central Bedfordshire Council to see whether the original sites offered were still available.

It was advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had a separate funding pot which did not include s106 money.

12180 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None

12181 MOTION – AS SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURGESS AND COUNCILLOR CARROLL

Members were requested to discuss the resolutions made on 18th July 2022 by the Houghton Regis Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee, based on the following:

The Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee at the meeting held on the 18th July 2022, overstepped its remit regarding financial matters that should be considered only by Full Town Council, and that the resolutions were the outcome of a breach of Standing Orders 13b and 15.

1. Background

The resolutions from the meeting of 18th July 2022 (Minute Number NC148) received were:



1. To recognise the significant works that are likely to be required to enable Grendall Lane to be brought into use as a cemetery and to determine at this time that these works are financially inhibitive for the council and as such further investigations into this site will cease;
2. To notify Central Bedfordshire Council, as landowner, of this position;
3. To continue to search for alternative sites and to present any options to CDS for a preliminary assessment to enable initial consideration by the council.

2. The related Committee Functions of the Sub-Committee as set out on page 11, of the Town Councils Committee Functions & Terms of Reference document, were:

Section 2

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

Section 4

To report and to make such recommendations to Town Council as appropriate.

It was highlighted that concerns had been raised by the consultant over likely difficulties in developing the site at Grendall Lane, based on this information the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee had agreed to cease the investigation on this site and to continue to search for alternative sites.

It was clarified that although the New Cemetery Sub-Committee did not have a budget for day to day expenditure, the sub-committee did have an EMR which had been used to draw funds, as agreed by resolution, for the investigative works necessary.

3. Standing Orders

13 Rules of debates at meetings

- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.

15 Previous resolutions

- a. A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b. When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

4. Considerations

Yof

Members were requested to consider the motion that:

The sub-committee overstepped its remit within the Committee Functions and Terms of Reference as set out in section 2, and whether the process under which the resolution was reached was in breach of Standing Orders 13b and 15.

The Houghton Regis Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee reported to Houghton Regis Town Council.

It was suggested that the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee overstepped its remit.

The Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee had no budget and had no authorisation under its Terms of Reference to consider financial matters. Only the Full Town Council was able to consider these.

At the meeting held on the 18th July 2022, a resolution was agreed to cease the investigative work at Grendall Lane site due to works being financially inhibitive. As this decision related to financial considerations for future works, the committee should have had this decision referred to the full Town Council. It was thus, fair to make the case that the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee had overstepped its remit.

At the meeting held on 18th July, the above-mentioned recommendations were proposed. At this point, the proposal had no second, and so deemed to have failed. An alternative was proposed, which also failed. Committee Members then reverted to the original proposal, which under Standing Order 13b should not have been allowed to be brought back to the table as an alternative option, as it had fallen foul of the six-month rule Standing Order 15, and this should have been advised to the committee.

It was highlighted that Standing Order 15 referred to resolutions which had been agreed, Standing Order 15 does not apply to proposals during debates.

Members were advised that at the last Proposed New Cemetery Meeting it had been suggested that the council approach Central Bedfordshire Council again regarding the land adjacent to Frogmore Road and to continue the search for suitable cemetery sites.

Members raised concerns that money had been spent on investigations for cemetery suitability of Grendall Lane and although the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee had agreed to cease works due to the preliminary findings and potential site development costings, it was felt that additional funds should be outlaid to complete the investigations.

Members were advised that significant advice had been received from Cemetery Development Services based on data compiled over the monitoring period which had been based on the wetter season.

Members were reminded that the meeting was to determine whether the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee had overstepped its remit. Members were advised that if it was agreed that it had overstepped its remit, the council would then be agreeing that the sub-committee had overstepped its remit from the outset.



Considering the information above, we submit the following motion:

The Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee resolutions made at the meeting held on 18th July 2022, should be made null and void, due to it being deemed to have overstepped its remit regarding financial matters that should be considered only by Full Town Council, and that the resolutions were the outcome of a breach of Standing Orders 13b and 15.

The motion was Proposed by: Cllr Carroll, seconded by: Cllr Burgess

Members in favour: 5

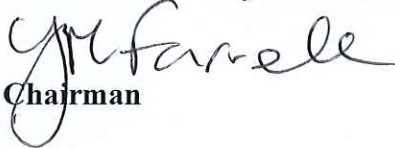
Members against: 5

Abstentions: 0

The chair used her casting vote to vote against the motion, accordingly the motion was not carried.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.07pm

Dated this 19th day of December 2022.


Chairman

