

Houghton Regis Town Council
New Cemetery Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
18th July 2022 at 6.00pm

Present: Cllrs: S Thorne Chairman
J Carroll
Y Farrell
D Jones Substitute
A Slough

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

Apologies: Cllrs: M Kennedy
R Morgan

Also present: Cllrs: S Goodchild
T McMahan

NC141 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2022/23.

Nomination: S Thorne Nominated by: J Carroll
Seconded by: D Jones

No other nominations were received. On being put to the vote, Councillor Thorne was duly appointed as Chair of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022 - 2023.

NC142 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chairman for the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2022/23.

Nomination: J Carroll Nominated by: S Thorne
Seconded by: D Jones

No other nominations were received. On being put to the vote, Councillor Carroll was duly appointed as Vice-Chair of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022 - 2023.

NC143 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy and Cllr Morgan (Cllr Jones substituted for Cllr Morgan).

NC144 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC145 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

NC146 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2021.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2021.

NC147 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members received the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Members received this report for information.

NC148 GRENDALL LANE - UPDATE

Mr Darryl Kelly, CDS, was in attendance at the meeting to present his findings to members and to respond to any queries made.

Members received data evidencing the interim results of the 12-month groundwater monitoring and a report from CDS explaining the data and its implications.

Members were advised of different options available to enable the land to be used as a cemetery in response to the results of the groundwater monitoring:

- De-watering
- Land raising
- Retaining walls over the site
- Alternative land

Members were advised de-watering, the artificial lowering of the water table, could prove costly and would remain subject to planning approval, without any guarantee of permission being granted. Consent would be needed to discharge the water away from the site, several levels of water treatments would be necessary to remove the water from the site due to the water being deemed as contaminated. A Permit would be required for each of the water treatments. The potential cost of this process could be £1 – 1.5m.

Members were advised that land raising would need to use soil that was guaranteed to be clean and contamination free in line with CL:AIRE protocols. Members were advised that soil could be obtained via several avenues, the most cost effective of which would be from developers needing to remove soil from their construction site. It was also suggested that the CL:AIRE website had donor sites which offered soil, otherwise clean soil would need to be bought in. Members were advised CL:AIRE clean soil could be moved without a permit. It was suggested that this option would also cost around £1m to deliver and may be less favourable in planning terms.

Members were advised that using retaining walls would limit the use of parts of the land as the site could not be used in its entirety. The land would be cut in and benched forming burial space, this would need further topographical assessment and structural design at a cost of around £4,225 in addition to Environmental Agency fees.

Members were advised that archives could be searched for parcels of land which could be acquired, however, the cost of purchasing such land could prove cost prohibitive as development in the area was extensive, thus, the value expectation of the landowner would be at a premium, in line with developers affordability.

An alternative motion was proposed by: Cllr Slough seconded by: Cllr Carroll to read:

In the absence of alternative land availability, progress with the topographical survey and structural design work. Once completed, present the findings to Central Bedfordshire Council and the Environmental agency for their feedback.

Members in favour: 2

Members against: 2

Abstentions: 1

The casting vote was against the motion, accordingly the motion was not carried.

The officer recommendation was proposed by: Cllr Carroll seconded by: Cllr Jones

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: Cllrs: J Carroll, D Jones, Y Farrell, S Thorne.

Members against: Cllrs: A Slough

Accordingly, the officer recommendations were carried.

- Resolved:**
- 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.**

Cllr Carroll informed members of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee that he resigned from this sub-committee with immediate effect.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.03pm

Dated this day of

Chairman