

**Houghton Regis Town Council**  
**New Cemetery Sub-Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present:	Cllrs:	J Carroll D Jones T McMahon A Slough D Taylor	
	Officers:	Ian Haynes Amanda Samuels	Head of Environmental & Community Services Administration Officer
	Public:	4	
Apologies:	Cllr:	0	

**NC164 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Members were invited to elect a Chair for New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2024/25.

Nominated	Cllr A Slough	Proposed by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr McMahon

There were no further nominations.

All Members voted in favour of Cllr Slough.

Accordingly, Cllr Slough was elected as the Chair of the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

**NC165 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for New Cemetery Sub-Committee for 2024/25.

Nominated	Cllr Jones	Proposed by:	Cllr Taylor
		Seconded by:	Cllr Jones

Nominated	Cllr McMahon	Proposed by:	Cllr Carroll
		Seconded by:	Cllr McMahon

Members requested a recorded vote:

Members in favour of Cllr Jones: Cllrs Taylor and Jones

Members in favour of Cllr McMahon: Cllrs Carroll, McMahon, Slough

Accordingly, Cllr McMahon was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

#### **NC166 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

#### **NC167 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Given that over recent years, Houghton Regis had seen an erosion of public facilities, could the Council guarantee that:

1. Houghton Regis would continue to support the idea of a cemetery within the town
2. That any new cemetery would not pose a risk to existing green spaces
3. It was also requested that the growing population be considered, considering the diversity of religions.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services made assurances that a written response to the questions would be provided.

#### **NC168 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

#### **NC169 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

#### **NC170 PROPOSED NEW CEMETERY SUB COMMITTEE FINANCIAL UPDATE**

In accordance with Members instructions from the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023, officers gave The CDS Group (CDS) instructions to proceed with the reinstatement of the monitoring wells, replacement of the pipework and inspection covers, Groundwater Monitoring Visits (For 12-months), detailed flux modelling and the production of the T3 Assessment. For the total value of £10,470.00 + VAT.

CDS attended the site on 29<sup>th</sup> June to reinstate the monitoring wells, unfortunately, they were only able to service / reinstate BH2. The other two locations collapsed and were inoperable. The EA requested the additional monitoring data and was likely to expect to see monitoring information from across the site, especially the upper and lower levels of the site (BH1 & BH3).

On 30th June, officers discussed the town council's options with CDS, and they were as follows:

1. To instruct CDS to continue monitoring the single monitoring well, whilst also attempting to contact the EA to determine if they would accept a single borehole running the risk of the EA rejecting the data and having to start the 12-months monitoring again.
2. Or, to instruct CDS to redrill and install the inoperable wells, meaning the town council would be able to supply the EA with a full set of monitoring data.

After consideration with Members, officers gave CDS the go-ahead to redrill the two monitoring wells as per option 2 above, for the value of £10,861.00 + VAT.

Now complete the total project value was £21,331.00, £1,331.00 over the agreed expenditure. Members were asked to retrospectively approve the additional expenditure.

**Resolved: To approve the additional expenditure of £1,331.00**

#### **NC171 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- **Grendall Lane, Houghton Regis - T3 Groundwater Risk Assessment - 2024**

A recorded vote was requested on the exclusion of press and public:

Members in favour: Cllrs D Jones, A Slough and D Taylor

Members against: Cllrs J Carroll, T McMahon

The vote was carried to exclude members of the press and public.

**Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

#### **NC172 GRENDALL LANE, HOUGHTON REGIS - T3 GROUNDWATER RISK ASSESSMENT - 2024**

Members were provided with the Tier 3 Groundwater Risk Assessment Report for the Grendall Lane site. The report concluded that, under current regulations, Grendall Lane was an unsuitable site for the proposed new cemetery. Central Bedfordshire Council would be advised of the result of the assessment.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services proposed that alternative sites be sought outside of the parish boundary and neighbouring councils invited to review options. The sites should not only be appropriate for the proposed use but should also offer longevity of use and affordability.

Members were advised the Law Commission was seeking to reform the law of burial in England and Wales and was gauging solutions for unresolved issues in cremation law. A consultation paper and a summary had been published and views were being sought on their proposals. Officers would respond to the Law Commission consultation, expressing the views of the town council and the issues to be addressed.

It was suggested that while the consultation was carried out, Houghton Regis Town Council could proceed as follows:

1. The town / parish clerks of neighbouring councils contacted to establish if there were suitable options available.
2. Members of the committee could form a Task and Finish group to attend daytime meetings with representatives of CBC and neighbouring councils to review options.

The calendar of meetings could remain as scheduled with an update to be provided at the February meeting. It was confirmed that nothing needed to be budgeted for at this stage.

- Resolved:**
- 1. The results of a detailed Flux Modelling have concluded that the use of the Grendall Lane site as a cemetery would significantly impact the off-site groundwater quality, and therefore, the site should be considered unsuitable for use as a cemetery under current rules.**
  - 2. To notify Central Bedfordshire Council, as landowner, of this position.**
  - 3. To instruct officers to search for alternative sites outside the parish boundary, a partnership approach should be considered, working with neighbouring parishes north of Houghton Regis.**
  - 4. To consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to work with Central Bedfordshire Council and neighbouring parish councils to review land holdings that could be considered suitable, before any options are presented to the Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee.**
  - 5. To respond to The Law Commission's Burial and Cremation Consultation Paper and monitor its outcomes**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.44 pm

Dated this      day of                      2025

Chairman