



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD BY ON 8th JANUARY 2024

- 1. Present:** Councillors: M. Tye (Chair); A. Barton; R. Bolton; S. Parker;
B. Walton; T. Walton
Mrs Carey (Clerk)
- 2. Apologies:** Cllr J. Clifford
The apologies were accepted.
- 3. Absent:** Nil
- 4. Public Question Time:** There was one member of the public present.

Mr Palmer stated that he was upset because he understood that some items had been removed from graves.
- 5. Declaration of Interest relating to items on the Agenda:** Nil
- 6. Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held 6th November 2023 were taken as read and were signed as being a true record subject to one amendment under Public Question Time to read "The family also stated that they had an agreement with the Cemetery Contractors not to maintain the graves – the family are doing this"

The Chair stated that the family do not have a legally binding agreement. The contract is between the Contractors and the Parish Council. It was also stated that no-one is allowed to take a lawn mower into the cemetery.
- 7. Matters Arising from the Minutes.**
 - a. Lodge Maintenance:**
Replacement windows: On-going. Money added to the budget
 - b. Chapel and Lodge roof:** Continue to monitor
 - c. Survey of top field:** As no-one had come forward with a quotation to carry out the ERT profile it was agreed to defer the survey for the time being. It was proposed that the Council would look at how to maximise the existing Cemetery. A working party will be set up to look at the options; to establish how many existing spaces are available and whether any of the old grave could be used.
 - d. Establishment of Friends of Box Cemetery Group:** No further update.
 - e. Online History of the Cemetery:** Alan Payne has arranged a series of talks to be given at the Library on 2nd; 9th; 16th and 23rd May.
 - f. Stone trefoils on Chapel:** Money had been put in the budget for these.
- 8. Cemetery Maintenance:**
Issues raised on the walk round:
 - a. Front gates:** These need a coat of metal protective paint. This will be added to the Groundmen's list of additional jobs.
 - b. Security camera:** Cllr Barton to check the card **Action: AB**
 - c. Access path to top field:** The gaps in the hedge – working party to plant whips to fill the gap
 - d. Branch fallen from the conifer in the Garden of Remembrance:** Clerk to ask the

- Groundsman to carry out a risk assessment to remove this
- e. **Grave NG17 Arthur Stewart**: The unsafe headstone had been laid down. Clerk to ask the Contractors to lift this onto the grave.
 - f. **Grave JB10 – Frayling**: The Contractors to be asked to cut down and plug the large Holly tree that is growing and undermining the grave.

9. Items for discussion:

- a. **Book of Remembrance – recent damage; repair and how to heat the ante-room**
An estimate to repair the damage to the Book of Remembrance had been received from George Baynton in the sum of £1000 + vat. The Insurance Company has stated that this is not covered by the Insurance policy. It was proposed and agreed not to proceed with this at the present time. Committee to pursue the possibility of a grant to cover this. It was agreed to look at a humidity/temperature monitor to be placed in the cabinet.
- d. **Ecological Corridor in Cemetery**: A report had been received from Max Hemmings, Wiltshire Council Ecologist that further documents are required from the planning applicants for the Ecological Impact Assessment; Biodiversity Net Gain and Habitat Regulations Assessment.

A letter had been received from Melissa Hoskings stating that based on the boundaries in the tree survey she would anticipate that an ecological survey and report would take just over a day for both and would cost approximately £200. She recommended that the survey be carried out in May when the growing season is underway as this would allow the full range of species present to be recorded.

- e. **Rules for the Cemetery**: There was a lengthy discussion on the wording of the current rules for the Cemetery.

The Contractors are having difficulty in strimming round some of the graves because of the number of mementoes which are being placed outside of the headstone plinth.

The rules currently state that flower vase holders must be of the same materials as the headstone and must be placed on top of a concrete plinth directly in front of the headstone. A maximum of two would be allowed. The formation of gardens is not permitted. No flowers, shrubs or other plants may not be planted in a grave space and will be removed by the Council. Christmas wreaths will be removed on or after 15th January. Any unauthorised objects may be removed at any time at the discretion of the Council. The grave will be levelled and grassed over by the Council sometime after settlement has taken place.

The Committee discussed how to deal with issues arising from the above rules and various alterations and wording to the rules were suggested.

It was agreed that a sign be placed at the entrance to the Cemetery stating that the Council was not responsible for items placed in the burial ground and any items are placed at the owner's risk.

The Chair closed the meeting to allow Mr Palmer to speak. He disagreed with items being removed from graves. He showed photographs, asking what was wrong with the headstones. In fact, nothing was wrong as all the graves had flowers in the vases or wreaths which are permitted. He was also concerned about the number of broken kerb and headstones in the Cemetery but it was explained that the ground moves and causes damage to headstones. The Parish Council does not have the tens of thousands of pounds required to repair them.

The meeting was reopened.

It was felt that this is a very emotive issue and it is very difficult if there are multiple members in a family who wish to leave flowers etc. If these were all compact and placed directly on the plinth or if there is no plinth directly in front of the headstone it may not be an issue. The Council had removed some items which had been damaged or had been blown around.

It was agreed, where possible, to write to the next of kin if the rules had been contravened to ask for the items to be removed or to leave a written notice on the grave requesting the items be removed. If these are not removed within six months the Council will dispose of them.

It was agreed that the suggested amendments be made to the rules to be brought back for further discussion.

- f. **Garden of Remembrance:** The current rules state that no memorials, vases or other objects are permitted in the Garden of Remembrance. However, the laying of cut flowers is allowed. Three memorials have been sited which have been in situ for over ten years. It was proposed that these items are relocated to the right of the path by the conifer. Where possible the relatives will be contacted and notified of the proposal.
- g. **Health and Safety:** It was agreed that tape and posts to fence off dangerous headstones be kept in the shed in the Cemetery. A copy of the keys is required
- h. **Date for next Working Party:** This will be carried out on 25th February 2024 at 10.00 am to carry out the following:
 - Planting hedging whips
 - Removing some of the laurels near the shed
 - Removing clematis from the trees and shrubs on the A4 border
 - It was agreed to ask Daniel to come along
- g. **Date of next safety check of headstones:** Summer 2024

10. Forward Plan and Risk Assessment:

To be updated.

An Asset list and a Biodiversity Plan is being drawn up.

11. Correspondence:

- **The Lodge:** Interim visit report received. There are three items that need attention: Paint is peeling in the kitchen tap is dripping in the kitchen and mould under the window in the bedroom.
The Agents are obtaining quotations for the work. It was stated that a lime wash should be used on the stone.

12. Items of report and future agenda items:

- a. **Concrete slab in top field:** It was agreed to monitor this. Cllr T. Walton to speak to the tenant re the fence posts
- b. **Standpipe:** it was reported that the standpipe in the top part of the Cemetery appeared to have burst. The clerk is arranging the repair with Wessex Water.

143 Date of next meeting and walkround:

Next meeting - 4th March 2024

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chair