

Meeting of
the Cemeteries Committee held at
The Fellowship Hall (side entrance)
West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.
Date: Tuesday 22nd November 2022
Time: 2pm
Members of the public are invited to
attend the meeting
COVID Guidance at the time applies.
Juliet Johnson, Proper Officer to YTC



Yarm Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
Yarm
TS15 9AH

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Cemeteries Committee

MINUTES

PRESENT - Cemetery Committee Members:

Cllr Alan Moffitt (Chair of Cemeteries Committee)

Cllr John Coulson

Cllr Philip Addison

Cllr Peter Monck

(other Councillors present - Cllr Robert Wegg)

Town Clerk - Juliet Johnson

1. To appoint a Chairman in the absence of the Chair - N/A

2. Apologies for absence - N/A

3. Code of Conduct | Declaration of Interest | Dispensation:

a) To record declarations of interest from members of any item to be discussed

b) To consider, vote upon and record any requests for dispensation

Cllr Monck declared a non-prejudicial interest as regards all matters relating to St Mary Magdalene Church Yard.

4. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

(minutes of Cemeteries Committee meeting held 18.12.20 - previously approved) - **N/A**

5. Proposal to reuse graves 100 years old or more (Yarm cemetery)

- **Cllr Moffitt**

5.1 Cllr Moffitt briefed the meeting as potential prohibitive cost of buying new land to extend places for burials in Yarm and the additional issue of requirement to wait four years for all appropriate surveys to take effect as to whether any land purchased is usable or not.

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5.2 There are approximately **373 plots** currently left which (subject to trees) will serve burial requirements for the next **28 yrs**. Also due to the age of the cemetery there are a number of unplotted graves and graves that have been given plot references that don't exist, which number 88. By reusing graves of 100 yrs. old or more it will provide a further 1,384 new plots which will extend the use of the cemetery by a further 106 years (134 years in total). This is common practice (many towns and parishes reuse graves of a younger age). **The Clerk** gave the legal background to this. Any proposed use of a grave over 100 yrs old would be fully advertised in line with guidance and proper practice (graves over 100 yrs old still being tended would obviously not be included).
Proposal to reuse graves over 100 yrs old on the basis described above - **AGREED**
(to be ratified at full council)

6. Additional uses for the Chapel and how to make it suitable - Cllr Moffitt
(e.g. toilet provision)

6.1 Cllr Moffitt stated that the Chapel could have additional uses if a toilet could be added to one of the current store rooms. The cost of this could be researched i.e. the provision of a single unisex, disabled access toilet (**see 6.2 below**). **Cllr Addison** expressed that care needed to be taken as to additional uses as the Chapel is essentially a holy building. **Cllr Coulson** noted that the building had never been consecrated. The Clapham family would need to be consulted (who'd originally gifted the Chapel to the Council). **The Clerk** referenced that a request for a wedding had been received - achieving a licence for this usage would need to be costed. **Cllr Addison** felt that usage for a wedding would be OK or other religious linked usage. **The Clerk** suggested that additional uses could be defined as to what would and would not be appropriate. The following list was agreed following discussion:
Christmas Concert or Choir, Classical (or similar) concerts, art/ heritage exhibitions (content appropriate), weddings, blessings, talks and lectures, events focused upon reflection.

ACTIONS: a) what's needed for weddings at the chapel (licence) to be investigated & costed - **Clerk**
b) list of additional uses to be ratified at Full Council.

6.2 Additional uses of the Chapel are dependent upon being able to add a toilet. Discussion took place as regards: the Chapel not being on a main drain but option to add a septic tank; whether or not, given potential placement of toilet in one of the storerooms, that the toilet can be access from outside at anytime i.e. the chapel not needing to be open e.g. especially for those with a disability who have a radar key or through 'pay to unlock' technology - there were a number of issues that needed to be further debated as regards this option.
ACTIONS: **Clerk** to instigate research into adding a toilet at the Chapel.

7. Creation of parking spaces - Cllr Moffitt

Cllr Moffitt detailed how a few parking spaces could be added to the Cemetery driveway. Discussion took place regarding a) parking along the left hand side pathway of the approach road (which already takes place on occasion) and b) creating up to 6 spaces in amongst the shrubs on the right hand side of the approach road (adjacent to the fence that separates the railway). Further discussion took place regarding how any created parking spaces could easily be reserved when a funeral takes place (i.e. for the main cortege) - this could be done by the placement of cones and the use of an A board to show that a funeral is taking place.

ACTIONS: **Cllr Moffitt** will look into whether up to 6 spaces can be created on the right hand side of the pathway. This proposal is to be ratified by Full Council once costs are available.

8. Provision of plot map board for users - Cllr Moffitt

Cllr Moffitt proposed that a numeric sign board be installed at the Cemetery (showing the location of all graves possible). The Clerk suggested bricks flush within the grass, stencilled with numbers could be used to indicate specific graves and rows (this is a system deployed in other graveyards to ensure there is no obstacle caused for grass cutting). Stand-up signs (similar to those currently placed re. litter) could also be used to indicate sections).

The Clerk also suggested that the database of burials on the website could be improved by having its own tab (it is currently listed under Agendas & Minutes/Documents).

AGREED / ACTIONS: a) Suitable signboard and bricks/ marker system to be researched (**Clerk & Cllr Moffitt**)
b) Clerk to action creation of a specific Cemetery & Burials website tab

9. Boundary wall between allotments and cemetery land - Cllr Moffitt

Cllr Moffitt has investigated the wall area that has been damaged for sometime (noted to be stable however). The suggestion is to push the coping stones (with the railings still attached) back into position and then put a metal stake to stabilise the wall and then repoint it. **Cllr Addison** confirmed that this could be funded from the historic walls reserve. It was noted that the ivy on the side of the allotments needs removing and that YCAA (Community Allotments Association) might be asked to help with this (including removal of any other detritus on the allotment side). (**Cllr R.Wegg** commented re. alleged use of weedkiller on occasion by YCAA; **the Clerk** asserted that this was not a matter for this meeting but that use of herbicides/pesticides - by allotment holders and others, custom and practice over a number of years - was part of next update of allotment rules and regulations in the context of current legislation that is already adhered to by YCAA). **Cllr R Wegg** suggested that a tin of black metallic paint bought by the previous Clerk some years ago should be found.

ACTION: suitable contractor to advise on solution and quote re. The wall as described above (**Clerk**).

10. Creation of a memorial area - Cllr Moffitt/Clerk

Cllr Moffitt suggested that an area for memorial plaques could be created on the wall of the Chapel (outside).

Cllr Coulson suggested that the wooden cross that had been donated could be used for this purpose.

A specification for any memorial plaques would need to be drawn up (i.e. quality material, size and fixture). Cost of the installation would be borne by the requester. A specif supplier might also be specified to ensure compliance and consistency. Cllr Addison proposed that a charge would be made to cover costs.

AGREED/ACTION: **Clerk** to investigate the practicalities and options for creating a memorial area, the specification for plaques and to also consult the Clapham family. Options can be discussed further at Full Council and any proposal to be ratified.

11. To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda - none currently.

12. To confirm the date and time of the next Cemeteries Committee meeting - TBC as required.

The meeting closed at 3.01pm.

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