

## **CEMETERY & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cemetery & Allotments Committee held at the Community Rooms, Pavilion, Soham on Monday 18 June 2018.

Present: Cllr P Lane, H Ross, C Warner, G Fisher, G Ginn and Mesdames R Aitchison, L Johnston & C Horman

### **CA11/18 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

A resident made representation regarding damage to the war grave memorials at Soham cemetery which he considered was primarily through the use of strimmers/mowers by the grounds maintenance staff.

NOTED Clerks comments that damage to any memorial was unintentional but that it could not be completely avoided or guaranteed and as such there was disclaimer to this effect within the town council's cemetery regulations.

NOTED Clerks comment that the town council had a duty, as custodian of war memorials within its cemetery, to apply similar care and attention to these stones.

NOTED and APPROVED suggestion by resident that subject to approval of RBL Soham Branch, and to avoid further damage where it might be caused by the use of strimmers/mowers that grass cutting around these particular graves would be taken over by its membership.

NOTED Assistant Town Clerk has already approached CWG and requested another condition survey for the war memorials and is awaiting response (last inspection took place in 2016).

NOTED Assistant Town Clerk has already approached CWG requesting a green CWG information plaque which will be installed on the entrance gates indicating there are war dead graves in the cemetery and is awaiting their response.

NOTED as an aside to current matters that the Clerk has received a suggested plinth design for the memorial plaque presented by USAF Mildenhall (passed to Executive Officers -will be a matter for consideration at the next Finance & Policy Committee meeting 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018)

### **CA12/18 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

NOTED Clerk's confirmation of current membership of Cemetery & Allotment Committee to include, under Cllr preference<sup>1</sup>, Cllr Geoff Fisher

Nominations were sought by Clerk for Chairman of the Cemetery & Allotment Committee for 2018-2019.

APPROVED WITH A VOTE OF THANKS to Cllr Geoff Fisher (proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr E Johnston) who was elected as Chairman of the Cemetery & Allotment Committee for 2018-2019 and who accordingly assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

### **CA13/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE OF COUNCILLORS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Palmer. Cllr Chapman was recorded as being absent.

---

<sup>1</sup> All Cllrs are able to specify which Standing Committee they wish to be members.

- CA14/18      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
There were no declarations made by members to items on the agenda.
- CA15/18      **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 19 FEBRUARY 2018**  
Minutes of the meeting of the 19 February 2018 having been previously approved by full council at its March 2018 meeting were received by members.
- CA16/18      **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**  
There were no matters arising from the previous minutes
- CA17/18      **INCOME & EXPENDITURE APRIL 2018 – MID JUNE 2018**  
NOTED & APPROVED new style of presentation of net income and expenditure for financial year which demonstrated current(real time) figures to members ( quarterly report figures will be provided to full council).  
a) APPROVED to recommend to full council virement of all current CIL £ receipts held by Soham Town Council to its general funds consistent with its previous decision made under 125/16 and then for these monies to be placed into the town council's own ring fenced 'reserves and provisions' budgetary account for expenditures related to the following capital projects:  
b) Land Purchase (additional cemetery provision longer term requirement)  
c) Improved equipment for grounds staff to include a two man utility truck or similar (Cllr Johnston to investigate options-COM 15/18i)  
d) Amenity and utility provision to the cemetery to include provision of electric (self closing gates), DDA compliant path to and refurbishment of existing public toilet (currently closed to public due to accessibility and condition (unfit for use) issues)
- CA18/18      **CEMETERY ISSUES**  
a) **Annual tree works**  
NOTED the report (ground survey) undertaken by Eastern Tree Surgery identifying by species, location and condition all trees at the cemetery (within the Conservation area<sup>2</sup>) and from this to provide the town council with a 5 year working plan for tree works.  
NOTED Assistant Clerk has applied and received permission from ECDC for all works recommended in year 1 (with exception see footnote 3)  
NOTED & APPROVED recommendation (schedule of works) for tree works to year 1 which includes felling of an oak and reduction to Robinia tree extending over neighbours garden due to safety reasons  
NOTED SJ Harrison Tree Services has taken over from the town councils preferred supplier to tree works (AJ Bramley).  
CONSIDERED QUOTES received for year 1 tree works (cemetery) and thereafter:  
APPROVED SJ Harrison Tree Services Ltd for tree works to a total of £1800 (inc vat)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to planning approval of ECDC Tree Officers

<sup>3</sup> Current work costs excludes annual apical growth to lime trees within St Andrews closed graveyard which over-arch/hang footpath (used to access High St) to be quoted separately (awaiting permission from ECDC)

APPROVED that subject to receipt of competitive quotes that SJ Harrison Tree Services, at the discretion of the Office, be town councils preferred supplier for tree works at cemetery.

APPROVED that subject to notification of the Committee to allow it to be kept informed the 5 year tree plan to be implemented subject to adequate budgeting by the full council and for this programme of works to be delegated to the Office.

**Cemetery Walk About 2018:**

NOTED currently that no repairs have been undertaken on South Chapel as work (and expenditure incurred) have currently been concentrated on the flint wall conservation programme

APPROVED to write to Deed holders who have acted in breach of Soham Town Council's current burial regulations with particular reference to gravespaces that have:

- I) fencing, decorative or otherwise which act to surround the plot
- II) shrubs plants and bulbs planted within or on top of gravespace
- III) artificial grass laid or any other surface dressing other than natural grass (seed)

and the Committee further APPROVED

IV) floral tributes will be removed 1 month following interment by ground staff unless the town council is informed that the family wish to arrange for their removal

V) generally any floral tributes and other paraphernalia that are not specifically within or on grave spaces will be removed by grounds maintenance staff without prior notification

VI) no kerbs and cornerstones be allowed in the newly opened S Plot irrespective of past (historic) practices (burial regulations to be updated with immediate effect)

*APPROVED that where these conditions (I-VI) have not already been specified in Soham Town Council's current burial regulations that they be included with immediate effect and that these stipulations should be expressly understood by all funeral director before interment takes place.*

NOTED the difficulty and therefore complaint raised by staff acting as caretakers who are routinely stopped from closing the cemetery at 4pm (particularly over the weekend) by visitors (in cars) who refuse to leave at this time and when requested.

APPROVED that until self closing/regulating electric gates may be installed there are sufficient warning signs visible throughout the cemetery informing visitors (with cars) that the cemetery closes at 4pm and that caretakers should lock the gates promptly at this time irrespective of those (cars) still in the grounds (there is street parking outside on Fordham Rd and pedestrians continue to have access to the cemetery 24h/7 days a week).

NOTED that any car locked in may be collected at 7:30am the next morning.

CA19/18

**ALLOTMENTS**

**A) New Tenancy Agreement**

APPROVED Office to install notices at each allotment site informing tenants that if they do not sign the new tenancy agreement on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (when the 2018-19 growing season rent is due) then as their old style tenancy agreement will be considered to have expired (notice period of 1 year running in parallel with the new agreement) they should have vacated their plots for them to be re-let to new Tenants.

APPROVED where the agreement is not signed, no rent shall be taken and suitable action to repossess the garden plots will be taken.

**B) Polytunnel Request (New tenant)**

APPROVED permission for a polytunnel subject to the new tenancy regulation (less than 20% of the available space given over to non-cultivation purposes, structures must be shatter-proof and in the case of a greenhouse/shed be less than 8 foot (h) by 6 foot (w)).

**C) Weatheralls Site**

APPROVED delegation of the clearing of the site and general tidy up to the Office (and expenditure as previously approved CA 07/18)

APPROVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL that all costs of these works be deducted from monies held by the town council under 'allotments-surplus' budgetary heading (not from current income/expenditure amounts).

**D) Berrycroft Walkabout Results.**

NOTED with THANKS to the Assistant Clerk for her recent annual site visit (next one will be Millcroft)

NOTED that most plots have at least a third of their plots cultivated, two plots are currently not tenanted (vacant) but the Office is awaiting confirmation from residents on waiting list. One recently let plot under new agreement has no visible signs of cultivation and therefore a letter has been sent out from the office as well as letters issued to tenants who have done little work on their plots and consequently have become overgrown/unkept

NOTED Cllr Horman is looking into obtaining 'smash wrap' for those tenants who have glass greenhouses and wish to keep them (to be with compliance regarding glass structures by 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018).

**E) SALGA**

APPROVED to recommend to full council payment of SALGA annual insurance premium for the community garden at Berrycroft of £226.74 for 2018 – 2019 season.

CA09/18

**OTHER URGENT ISSUES**

NOTED new tenant (Berrycroft) has repeatedly requested that the glass greenhouse left by previous tenant (Berrycroft) be removed.

APPROVED to investigate whether a local Contractor together with council staff can safely remove and dispose of the glass (subject to risk assessment) and where not to engage professional glass/rubbish removal services to undertake this work

APPROVED to recommend to full council that all costs of these works be deducted from the surplus monies held by the town council (under 'allotments-surplus' budgetary heading, not current income/expenditure account).

NOTED Cllr Lane's enquiry regarding receiving a number of complaints concerning the recent lighting of bonfire -Berrycroft allotment.

NOTED Clerk had issued a letter to individual concerned regarding this civil private nuisance and having received a visit to the Office and apology that no further action was considered necessary.

CA10/18

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

NOTED next meeting of the Cemetery and Allotments Committee to be advised (October 2018).

**The meeting closed at 8:10pm**