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Bandon Hill Cemetery Joint Committee

Meeting of held on Monday, 29 November 2021 at 6.30 pm in Cemetery Chapel, Plough Lane, Wallington

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Muhammad Sadiq (Chair), Robert Canning, Oliver Lewis, Barry Lewis, and Joy Prince

PART A

4/21 **Minutes, Bandon Hill Cemetery Joint Committee, 29 November 2021**

The meeting ended at 7.24 pm

Signed:

Date:

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29 November 2021

BANDON HILL CEMETERY JOINT COMMITTEE

29 November 2021 at 6.30 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Muhammad Sadiq (Chair), and Councillors Robert Canning, Edward Joyce, Barry Lewis, Oliver Lewis and Prince

ABSENT None

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Muhammad Sadiq, welcomed those present.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Barry Lewis.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

5. ANY URGENT BUSINESS

In a slight change to the order of the printed agenda, the Chair advised that, in accordance with convention, the Chair for the 2021/22 municipal year should be a councillor from the London Borough of Croydon.

A motion to appoint Councillor Oliver Lewis as Chair for the 2021/22 municipal year was moved by Councillor Robert Canning and seconded by Councillor Barry Lewis.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Oliver Lewis be elected as Chair for the 2021/22 municipal year

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6. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

The Treasurer to the committee presented the report.

The committee discussed the level of the cemetery's financial reserves and highlighted the importance of generating enough income to maintain the cemetery as well as ensure the accumulation of reserves as contingency for future years when burial space would be depleted and income would be reduced. Officers confirmed that space in the cemetery would not be exhausted for approximately 20 years but added that options for creating more burial space could be explored, particularly as legislation is changed. The Treasurer confirmed that the council would need to calculate the cost of different longer-term options but clarified that the cemetery had relatively healthy reserves in the short term. It was noted that making long-term predictions about the cemetery's finances was difficult as a result of variables such as consumer trends, the level of fees and charges set and changing legislation on the use of burial sites

The committee discussed the rate of inflation and the financial impact on the council of not raising the cemetery's fees and charges in line with inflation. It was clarified that, under the existing contract, the committee was limited in its ability to adjust fees and charges and that the financial impact of inflation would largely be borne by the council.

The committee sought clarity on the costs and benefits associated with including the cemetery's accounts in the internal audit process. The treasurer estimated that the cost of maintaining this process would be low but offered to carry out calculations and report back to the committee. It was also highlighted that it was good practice to have auditing of accounts by a body outside of the cemetery and the committee.

The committee also discussed the recommendation regarding the introduction of a risk register. The Treasurer confirmed that the keeping of a risk register was good practice to assess financial and operational risks and that an update would be presented biannually as part of the Treasurer's Report.

Councillor Oliver Lewis moved the following amendment to the officers' recommendations:

2.6 To confirm that an ongoing annual Internal Audit review of the year-end accounts is required on the basis that the cost of doing so is reported back to the committee annually.

2.7 To agree to prepare and maintain a risk register which should be presented to the joint committee as a standing item.

Councillor Muhammad Sadiq seconded the amendment which was put to the vote and won.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the financial outturn for 2019/20
2. To note the provisional financial outturn for 2020/21
3. To note the forecast outturn position for 2021/22
4. To approve the budget for 2022/23
5. To approve the fees and charges for 2022/23
6. To confirm that an ongoing annual Internal Audit review of the year-end accounts is required on the basis that the cost of doing so is reported back to the committee annually.
7. To agree to prepare and maintain a risk register which should be presented to the joint committee as a standing item.

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7. REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR

The Surveyor to the committee presented the report.

The committee discussed the planting of 20 additional trees over the next three years. The Surveyor recognised that the cost of planting and maintaining the trees was high but was necessary to ensure their survival.

The committee also discussed the installation of a new hard surface pathway leading to a building. The Surveyor confirmed that the use of the building had changed, meaning that a new pathway was necessary. It was also confirmed that the pathway would be tarmac rather than loose gravel.

The committee discussed options for making new grave spaces available, including possibly exploring green burial sites. The surveyor clarified that the recommendation was to put £5k aside for this purpose but that the final cost may be less. It was confirmed that trials on depth would need to be carried out but the work could lead to approximately 60 new spaces.

The committee discussed the installation of signage in the cemetery that had been agreed following a joint visit by members. The Surveyor agreed to follow-up this request following the meeting.

The committee also raised the issue of headstones being moved and left at the end of rows. The Surveyor confirmed that this was done by the contracted maintenance company as part of an arranged piece of work to recover grave space but explained that there had been delays in collecting the headstones.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve funding of £12,000 to plant and water a further 20 trees within the cemetery over the next 3 years.
2. To approve funding of up to £5,000 for specialist services related to making new grave spaces available.
3. To approve funding of £3,000 for shrub planting on the Plough Lane boundary.
4. To approve funding not to exceed £5,000 to provide hard surface access to the old mortuary building.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair requested that the Clerk explore potential dates for the next meeting of the committee and provide members with options outside of the meeting.

Bandon Hill Cemetery Joint Committee

29 November 2021

The meeting ended at 7.24 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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