

Minutes of a meeting of **Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee** held in the Waiting Room, Yeovil Crematorium, Bunford Lane, Yeovil on **Wednesday 16 April 2008**

(7.00pm – 8.30pm)

Present:

Ruth Kendall	Chairman
Dave Gooding	Yeovil Town Council
Alf Hill	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Barbara Strong	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Mary Thomas	Brympton Parish Council
Clive Wakely	Funeral Directors' Representative (non-voting)

Also Present:

Alan Tawse	Clerk to the Committee
Joy Coombs	Administration Manager
Tom Pullin	Operations Manager
Ian Johns	Property Management Team Leader
Nicola Brine	Corporate Accountant
Glenn Ford	Cemetery Foreman
Barbara Appleby	Clerk to Yeovil Without Parish Council

(1) Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

(2) Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 January 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(3) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Julian Freke and Rev Ed Bangay.

(4) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(5) Crematorium Chapel

The Committee considered the report of the Property Management Team Leader (agenda item 4 refers).

It was noted that the recent replacement of the seating in the Chapel had resulted in the capacity being increased from 75 to 93 seats.

Drawings of two options for extending the Chapel were circulated at the meeting.

The first option involved incorporating part of the adjacent enclosed garden area into the Chapel at an estimated minimum cost of £200,000. It was indicated that this option, which would also require the creation of a new exit lobby, would enable the capacity to be increased to 144 seats.

The second option involved extending the Chapel area into the Entrance Hall and creating a sound lobby within the adjoining Waiting Room at an overall estimated cost of £50,000 to £75,000. This would include the cost of permanently removing and relocating the stained glass partition between the existing Chapel and the Entrance Hall to form a new reinforced glazed screen at the front of the building. Members were advised that this option would allow the seating capacity to be raised to 135.

The Committee was informed that both options would result in varying levels of disruption to the use of the Chapel and at some stage would require its closure. It was indicated that the impact could be lessened if work was carried out at weekends, but this would prolong the length of the construction period and result in additional costs.

In response to a query, the Property Management Team Leader confirmed that discussions would need to be held with the Fire Officer to check whether the anticipated maximum occupancy figures would require further emergency fire exit doors to be installed.

The Operations Manager reported that over the past year attendance at 3.4% of services exceeded the seating available. He added that taking into consideration the recent increase in capacity arising from the replacement seating, this figure would have been reduced to 2.8%.

Reference was made to the possibility of creating additional capacity by removing and relocating the stained glass screen and replacing it with a sliding partition. It was pointed out that this would enable the Chapel area to be enlarged as required and that by allowing the Entrance Hall to be used on such occasions as a standing only area, the overall capacity could be further increased.

The Funeral Directors' representative explained that where a large attendance was anticipated at a funeral service, the option of arranging for the service to be held at a church and for the committal to take place at the Crematorium Chapel was always raised with bereaved families. However, families who did not have any connections with the church were not always happy to take up this option, and some preferred to combine the service and the committal, and to hold both elements at the Crematorium Chapel.

Reference was also made to the merits of providing additional lighting in the Chapel.

During the ensuing discussion, attention was drawn to the recent 24% increase in the seating capacity of the Chapel following the purchase of new seating. Given this development, it was felt that any decision to make any structural alterations should be deferred to allow the effectiveness of the new seating to be assessed.

In the meantime, it was proposed that the second option be further investigated and fully costed, along with the possibility of installing a sliding partition and creating an extendable Chapel arrangement.

The Corporate Accountant explained that should the Committee decide to proceed with an extension and the costs involved could not be found from within the existing ten-year capital allocation, it would be necessary for a capital funding bid (for 89% of the costs) to be submitted to the District Council by the end of August 2008 to enable the request to be considered as part of the 2009/10 budget process. She added that the remaining 11% of the costs would need to be met by Yeovil Without Parish Council – as co-owners of the facility.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that in view of the additional capacity arising from the installation of new seating in the Crematorium Chapel, no action be taken at present to extend the Chapel and the effectiveness of the new seating arrangements be monitored and assessed over the next six months;
- (3) that, in the meantime, the Property Management Team Leader, in consultation with the Fire Officer, further investigate the second option for extending the Chapel along with the possibility of installing a sliding partition between the Chapel and the Entrance Hall, and present his fully costed findings to the next meeting of the Committee; and

- (4) that options for enhancing the lighting in the Chapel be also investigated by the Property Management Team Leader and presented to the next meeting.
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(6) Crematorium Capital Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Property Management Team Leader (agenda item 5 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the growing size of the Town, and the need to consider the provision of a third cremator and to review the dimensions of each new cremator when the present facilities were nearing their time of replacement.

RESOLVED: that the matter be noted.

(7) Cemetery Capital Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Property Management Team Leader (agenda item 6 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to savings of £14,340 in the 2008/09 capital allocation to meet the anticipated costs of completing the felting and reslating the Cemetery Lodge roof, which had recently been completed at a cost of £6,400. It was pointed out that during the course of this work, some additional stonework comprising repairs to the tops of the gable pinnacles and to the chimneys had been identified, the costs of which could be met from a carried forward underspend in the 2007/08 capital allocation.

Reference was also made to the need to consider internal improvements to the Lodge including the scope for improved access for persons with a disability.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that the matter be noted;
- (2) that approval be given to the above-mentioned stonework repairs being undertaken at an early date, the cost of which to be met from a carried forward underspend in the 2007/08 capital allocation;
- (3) that the above-identified savings of £14,340 in the 2008/09 capital allocation be noted and transferred to the Cemetery Reserve; and

- (4) that arrangements be made for an internal inspection of the Lodge to be included in the forthcoming annual tour of facilities.
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(8) Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery - 2007/08 Funding

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Accountant (agenda item 7 refers).

RESOLVED: that the current decision by HM Revenue and Customs, which has obviated the need to make a VAT payment of approximately £40,000 for 2007/08, be noted.

(9) Cemetery Deficit

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk to the Committee (agenda item 8 refers).

It was noted that over the past nine years, the electorate of Brympton Parish Council had increased by almost 60% whilst the electorates of the other two constituent councils were largely unchanged.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the need to establish an equitable recharging formula which was easily understood and which fairly reflected the benefits of the present arrangements to the respective current electorates of the constituent councils.

Although it was acknowledged that an immediate move to a directly proportionate recharging arrangement for the *whole* deficit would result in a substantial increase in the present level of recharge to Brympton Parish Council, it was felt that such an approach, if supported, could be introduced on a gradual basis to avoid any short-term funding problems for that Authority.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that the matter be noted;
 - (2) that the analysis of the alternative method of allocating the deficit put forward by the representatives of Yeovil Without Parish Council at the previous meeting, which involved the *whole* deficit being recharged on the basis of the proportion of the combined electorate of the three constituent councils residing in each administrative area, along with the financial implications of these alternative proposals be noted;
 - (3) that the above-outlined comments of the Committee be drawn to the attention of Brympton Parish Council,

and their views be sought on the three alternative funding options identified in the report; and

- (4) that their response be reported to a future meeting at which further consideration be given to the matter.
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(10) Cemetery Risk Assessment

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk to the Committee (agenda item 9 refers).

RESOLVED: that the developments and proposals set out in the above report be noted and endorsed.

(11) Green Burials

The Committee considered the report of the Property Services Team Leader (agenda item 10 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to need to ensure that the Environment Agency was asked to consider the viability of the site for conventional as well as green burials, and for their advice to be sought on what remedial measures would be needed to overcome any problems that might be identified in using the land for these purposes.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) that the matter be noted;
 - (2) that the Property Management Team Leader – in consultation with the Chairman and the Clerk to the Committee – be authorised to negotiate with Integrale Geotechnique over the cost of the additional investigation works that may be required up to a value of £6,000; and
 - (3) that the Environment Agency be asked to consider the viability of the site for conventional as well as green burials, and their advice be sought on what remedial measures would be needed to overcome any problems that might be identified in using the land for these purposes.
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(12) Statistics – April 2007 to March 2008

The Committee considered the report of the Administration Manager (agenda item 11 refers).

RESOLVED: that the matter be noted.

(13) Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(14) Cemetery Mapping System

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Clerk to the Committee (agenda item 12 refers).

RESOLVED: that approval be given to the proposals set out in the above report.

(15) Staffing Issues

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk to the Committee (agenda item 13 refers).

RESOLVED: that the developments outlined in the above report be noted.

Chairman.....