

 *Devizes*
& Roundway
Joint Burial Committee

Town Hall
St. John's Street
Devizes
Wiltshire SN10 1BN
Clerk: Mrs Sarah Todhunter

Clerk: Sarah Todhunter
Tel: 01380 722160
Fax: 01380 722415

MEETING

Date: Thursday, **26 November 2015**

Time: 7.00PM

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - 01380 722160

MEMBERS

Devizes Town Council:

Councillors: Mrs Burton
Mrs Bridewell
Giraud-Saunders
Nash
Parker
Smith
Wooldridge

Roundway Parish Council:

Councillors: Batchelor
Callow
Parsons
Stevens

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meetings held on the 17 September 2015, which have been circulated with the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosures by a Councillor(s) and/or Officers in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the

Committee upon a matter of concern, which is relevant to the Committee. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Committee for this item of business.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Schedule of Payments: Since the last meeting accounts to £27,185.88 (net) have been paid (Doc 5/1).

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – APPEAL BY MRS DIANE BROWN

At the last meeting of this committee, an appeal by Mrs Diane Brown was discussed in relation to the internment fee for her late mother.

It was agreed that given the circumstances, the fee chargeable should be in line with those paid by Devizes and Roundway residents and the attached letter (doc 6/1) is a letter of gratitude from Mrs Brown.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – CHILDS BURIAL AREA

Work to lay out the new Children's burial area in the cemetery has now been completed. The design will provide a more informal feel which we hope may make it welcoming.

The majority of the work was undertaken alongside a second project allowing costs to be shared, which resulted in the project being completed under budget.

Cemetery Staff will mark the grave positions shortly.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – CEMETERY LODGE

Devizes & Roundway Joint Burial Committee entered into an agreement for an assured six month shorthold tenancy commencing on 23 May 2015 and ending on 22 November 2015 in respect of Devizes Cemetery Lodge with Mr Peter Edwards.

The agreement will continue after this point on a rolling monthly basis with a requirement for the landlord to give a two month notice period whilst the tenant is obliged to give a one month notice period.

The monthly rental of £700 continues to be paid by standing order with no notice of surrender of the property having been received from the tenant to date.

Additional to this the tenant has paid a deposit of £1400.00. This has been registered with and paid over to the Deposit Protection service.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – CEMETERY CHAPEL

A recent inspection of the Cemetery Chapel has brought to light damage to one of the stained glass windows forming part of the fabric of the Chapel.

Wells Cathedral Stained Glass provided a quotation in the value of £140. A further quotation was sought from Salisbury Cathedral Glass, the supplier was however unable to provide a second quotation.

An insurance claim was initially pursued by officers however members are reminded that Insurance Claims under the policy are subject to a £250 excess. Officers therefore did not pursue this.

A purchase order was recently raised and the repair has now been completed to the satisfaction of officers.

10. REPORT FOR DECISION – COST OF CEMETERY SERVICES ON THE PUBLIC PURSE

Recommendation

To consider if the cost of operating the cemetery should fall on those who use the services reducing the burden on those residents who do not.

Purpose of the Report

To consider if a shift in emphasis is needed to determine where the funding to operate the cemetery service comes from.

Background

During the Town Council's preliminary budget discussions for 2016/17 the cost of the burden of tax payers to operate the cemetery was questioned as it was felt that this service should be funded by users rather than coming through the Council Tax.

The Town Council has asked that the members of the Joint Burial Committee to consider developing a strategy to shift the burden of funding the Cemetery from the Council Tax to the users of the service.

To help this debate, officers have set out financial information about the cost of the service in the broadest terms and sources of income. Furthermore officers have tried to identify those costs which relate directly to the cost of burials against those which relate to grounds maintenance for the area and democracy. To support these services revenue with the exception of the precept has been split in the same way.

Officers believe that there are actually three element of the service which are distinct but it is for the committee to decide if there should be any differential in how it believes they are funded. These figures, for the purpose of this exercise, are based on 2014/15 which is the last full year.

Cost of Burial Service.

The table below set out cost in providing the burial and memorial service

Activity / Income Stream	Cost	Income
Interment Administration	10958	
Financial Control	3730	
Funeral Services	4239	
Membership and Subscriptions	260	
Cemetery Software	1250	
Insurance	1200	
Grave Digging	12,336	
Memorials	488	
Maintenance of Burial Area		
Grave Digging		13,226
Purchase of Burial Space		10,654
Interment Fees		13,062
Use of Chapel		568
Memorial Fees		6,083
Total	£34461	43,593

Cost of Grounds

The table below set out cost of maintaining the Cemetery

Activity / Income Stream	Value	Income
Cost of Grass Cutting	58,097	
Financial Control	3000	
Maintenance and Repairs	19,283	
Rates	2285	
Electricity	326	
Lodge Maintenance	2068	
Tree Works	300	
Lodge Rent		5,100
Total	85,359	5,100

Cost of Democracy.

The table below set out cost associated with being a local authority

Activity / Income Stream	Value	Income
Committee Admin	3397	
Management Support	1831	
Capital Projects	10385	
Total	15613	0

In the year in question there were 66 interments of different nature.

From the exercise, it is clear that the most significant cost is for Ground Maintenance with the cost of supporting the democratic process not being insignificant.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide how it wishes to respond to the Town Council about placing a greater level of cemetery costs on the users of cemetery services.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Current financial resources are set out in this report. Any implication for changes are unknown at this time.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 and 10 give both Roundway Parish Council and Devizes Town Council the power to provide and maintain cemeteries

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Changing the burden of cost will have a risk implication for the Council however it is too early to know what that is.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

11. REPORT FOR DECISION – GRAVE DIGGING

Recommendation

That the committee confirms the reappointment of A J Stone cemetery services and the appointment of Mr Nigel Embling in providing grave digging services in Devizes Cemetery.

Purpose of the Report

To confirm the work of officers in obtaining quotations for grave digging at Devizes Cemetery.

Background

A review of grave digging is carried out on a periodic basis. Discussion with a number of local Town Councils has revealed the fact that some of the grave digging is undertaken by their own staff, undertaken by Wiltshire Council staff or by two outside contractors. A comparison of A J Stone Cemetery Services and Mr Embling revealed an almost identical pricing structure depending on the depth of the grave.

It is considered beneficial to have two grave diggers on the Joint Burial Committee preferred supplier list.

Options Considered

Members of the committee either accept the reappointment of the grave digging businesses or request that prices be sought from companies in a wider radius of the Devizes Cemetery.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The Joint Burial committees' charges for grave digging reflect a 8% uplift on the grave digging charges being passed on to the person requesting the burial. All charges are required before a burial takes place therefore there is effectively no financial risk unless the cheque from the relevant undertaker is not honoured by their bankers.

The job is specialist in nature, requiring shoring equipment and potentially a mini digger. The use of Devizes Town Council staff is considered cost prohibitive, requiring training, equipment purchase and potentially a new member of staff.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

Contractors are required to have relevant insurance cover for undertaking this activity in Devizes Cemetery.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any resulting from this report.

Risk Assessment

Contractors are required to undertake risk assessments when undertaking this activity in Devizes Cemetery.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

12. REPORT FOR DECISION – FEE AND CHARGES FOR 2016/17

Recommendation

That the committee agrees the fees and charges for financial year 2016/2017.

Purpose of the Report

To set the burials committees fees and charges for 2016/2017.

Background

As part of this year's estimates, officers were only allowing for a 2% increase in charges for cemetery services. However in the light of the earlier report the committee may wish to review that position. Officers have attached the current fees and charges for the committee information.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide any action it wishes to take in relation to fees and charges for financial year 2016/17.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The income generating potential for the cemetery has an impact on the amount of each of the parent authorities has to pay towards the running of the cemetery.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 and 10 give both Roundway Parish Council and Devizes Town Council the power to provide and maintain cemeteries.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware on any environmental implications associated with the decision

Risk Assessment

Officers are not aware on any risk implications associated with the recommendation as set out. Should the committee decide to alter the fees and charged as set out, this could lead to a shortfall in income.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

13. REPORT FOR DECISION – TO AGREE FEES FOR THOSE WHO LEAVE THE AREA FOR CARE REASONS

Recommendation

To review and agree the charges for cemetery services for those who leave the area for care reasons.

Purpose of the Report

To clarify the policy on those who qualify for a reduced fee.

Background

At its meeting on the 17 September 2015 the committee resolved to allow an appeal for reduced local fees for a resident who had moved out of the area for care reasons.

In agreeing the appeal the committee felt that policy of only giving one year at the reduced fee rate to a resident who had lived in either Roundway or Devizes parishes was unfair and should be reviewed.

Officers have attached the flow chart (doc 13/1) which helps to interpret the committee pricing policy. From the highlighted element of the flow chart, the committee will note the existing policy identifies the possibility deceased has moved out of the area for care reasons and make a further exception if it is the care authority who have orchestrated the move.

Within the policy there is no reference to how long a resident was living in the town before they left the area and this maybe something the committee may wish to include.

Options Considered

The committee are asked to agree how those who leave the area for care needs are charged in future.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Any financial or resource implication for the committee associated with this decision is negligible.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

Devizes and Roundway Parish Councils have jointly agreed to fund the Burial Committee on a split based on the number of council tax dwellings in each parish as a %age of the total under section Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970 s1.

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the committee associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the committee associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the committee should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

14. QUESTION TIME

Members will be allowed a short period in which to put questions on matters of concern to the Committee, which are not contained in the report of matters formally considered by the Committee at this meeting. The question may be answered at the meeting or may be referred back to the Committee at a later date. The question may not be the subject of any further debate.

CLERK TO THE JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE