

**A MEETING OF THE WIGTON BURIAL JOINT COMMITTEE WAS HELD ON**

**WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM**

**PRESENT –**

Councillor Heather Robbins (Chairman)  
Councillor Mary Clark (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor John Hamblin  
Councillor Mary Huntington  
Councillor Tony Huntington  
Councillor William Marrs  
Councillor George Girvan  
Councillor John Mattinson

Clerk: Emma Ireton

**WBJC/01/2023 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Jackson

**WBJC/02/2023 TO RECEIVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**ACTIONS from the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June were discussed.**

Councillor Hamblin requested an update regarding the trees planted near headstones. It was explained that some of these trees are causing a problem and lifting the headstone. **ACTION** – committee to identify the problem headstones by marking them instead of using a stake which is a trip hazard. This would be carried out in October after the last grass cut. Family members would be contacted in the first instance before the committee remove the trees.

Councillor Huntington asked if the refund to Woodside had now been made. The clerk asked for clarification around what the refund was to be. It was explained that the required information was sent in an email. It was **AGREED** the refund would be made shortly.

The following minutes were agreed as accurate and signed by the Chairman:

WBJC meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 – **AGREED**

**WBJC/03/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO GIVE NOTICE OF INTERESTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

NONE

**WBJC/04/2023 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Agenda item 12 – to be discussed in part two CONFIDENTIAL.

## **WBJC/05/2023 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To receive any representations from members of the public – Members of the public are invited to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each. The maximum total time for public participation will be 10 minutes. At the close of this item, members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council Members unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

**NONE**

## **WBJC/06/2023 ROLE OF THE CLERK**

Members had a discussion around the roles and responsibilities of the new clerk. It was mentioned that the role would be different from the town clerk with different responsibilities. It was **AGREED** a working group would look at the roles and responsibilities and update the current WBJC clerk's job description before feeding back to the rest of the committee for approval. Working hours were discussed and it was **AGREED** that the clerk would calculate the working hours between now and the next meeting so the actual working hours would be accurate.

## **WBJC/07/2023 FINANCE MATTER**

Firstly, members discussed the end of year accounts for 2022/2023 where they raised some anomalies:

It was **AGREED** that the flowers purchased for the previous clerk would remain allocated to its current cost centre.

There had been a mistake on the 2023 cashbook in July against Saunderson's VAT which needs to be rectified.

It was highlighted that the administration fees from bereavement services had not been recorded in Scribe, this resulted in the VAT not being recorded or the VAT being refunded. **ACTION** – Update 2022/2023 Scribe accounts to include the missed entries and ensure VAT is recorded and refunded.

Members explained that invoices for the precept should be issued to the three councils. **ACTION** – Send invoices.

It was raised that the loan repayments have not yet been paid. **ACTION** – Ensure loan repayments are made to the three councils.

Before the 2022/2023 accounts can be finalised the committee require the following:

- Cost centres and cost codes need to be accurate for 2022/2023 with missing entries included in Scribe.
- VAT for missing entries need to be included.

- Joint committee accounting needs to be presented to the members which states the share of both receipts and income and payments or expenditure applicable to the joint agreement percentage.

**ACTION** – the committee want to use the reserves function in Scribe once the budget has been set for 2024/2025.

In relation to the budget the committee want to have a review at the six-month mark.

A discussion took place regarding the pension situation with the clerk sharing what the LPPA Cumbria had explained. It was **AGREED** that the clerk would again contact the relevant bodies as it is essential to find out what the percentage of the monthly pension payment belongs to the WBJC for budgeting purposes.

It was also **AGREED** that Councillors Girvan and Marrs would aid the RFO/clerk in relation to the budget and joint committee accounting requirements.

The committee went on to discuss contractor payments and the framework agreement, some councillors wanted to know why the framework agreement had not yet been written. The clerk explained that a framework agreement is to prevent regular contractors having to go through the tender process when they carry out regular work. A framework agreement is useful as it allows the council to save time by having a list of approved contractors carrying out work that is under a certain value, it was highlighted that a framework agreement does not relate to money or how a job is invoiced. There were concerns raised over how a specific contractor had often waited in the past to be paid as their invoice needed to be approved by full council. The clerk/RFO reassured members that this was a historic issue and there had been no issues with payments being made for the last six months. The committee were told that a regular contractor's invoice did **not** need to go to full council for approval as the committee could approve, as it was a regular contractor the RFO could also approve if the committee has agreed to this. Some councillors asked whether in this situation a summer agreement could be put in place to pay the regular contractor a fixed and agreed monthly amount. The clerk/RFO explained that while this was an option an invoice would still need to be submitted as a payment cannot be made without one and if the invoice was required for this then the full amount should just be invoiced. It was **AGREED** this type of agreement could be put in place for the summer of 2024.

## **WBJC/08/2023 CEMETERY HOUSE**

Councillor Huntington asked if there were any questions regarding the cemetery report that was sent prior to the meeting. Members asked what was happening to the upstairs of the property in relation to the damp proofing. It was explained that the upstairs of the house did not undergo the damp proofing work, so they are waiting for a date from the residents for the work to be completed.

EPC energy ratings of the house were discussed and while there are no immediate improvements (or new appliances) required, there does need to be a plan as there will be changes in the next two years, or sooner if the existing tenants were to leave.

The government recommends that rental properties upgrade their EPC rating to rating C by 2030. The current EPC rating of the house is E and while this is ok for now, upgrading to C will cost a significant amount of money. It was mentioned that if the current tenants were on benefits, there could be scope for grants and funding to improve the energy efficiency.

Councillor Huntington advised all members to read through the government's document "Domestic private rented property: minimum energy efficiency standard - landlord guidance" prior to budget setting as money will need to be earmarked for future required improvements to the cemetery house. It was also advised that an exemption could also be looked at as it will be above £3500.

### **WBJC/09/2023 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

The grounds maintenance contract is due for renewal, so the committee discussed next steps. It was proposed that as the committee were happy with the work carried out by the contractor they would like to offer a five year contract.

### **WBJC/10/2023 GRAVESTONE REPAIRS**

It was reported that there are 15 remaining headstones to repair and 6 fixed by relatives/owners.

In relation to the quotes to repair the headstones, two companies were approached and provided the following quotations:

Able Memorials

£200 + VAT for each repair. TOTAL= £3600 inclusive of VAT

Clive Hasley

£240 + VAT for each repair. TOTAL= £3420 inclusive of VAT

Able Memorials expressed there would be a delay before they could start with work possibly not being completed until late Spring.

The committee VOTED and the decision was UNANIMOUS to use Able Memorials. Due to the waiting time, they would be asked to start now to allow us to join their list.

### **WBJC/11/2023 GRAVE DIGGING**

It was reiterated so all members know that the grave digging contractors would only refill graves when they have a planned visit to the cemetery. If a grave needs to be filled before then, they would charge £80. It is in the contract that they are responsible for grave for one year.

The committee discussed checking all graves and marking any that need to be refilled but asking the grounds maintenance contractor to fill if there was to be a wait for the grave digging contractor to return.

### **WBJC/12/2023 SHEEP INCIDENT**

Discussed in a confidential section in part two.

### **WBJC/13/2023 GRAVE MAPPING**

A short update was provided, the team are steadily making progress in mapping the graves electronically.

### **WBJC/14/2023 CHAIR'S REPORT**

As the colder weather is fast approaching, it was asked how the chapel would be heated.

**ACTION-** the clerk to research prices to hire industrial heaters which would be included in the hire fee.

**ACTION** – Add the terms of reference onto the full council agenda.

### **WBJC/15/2023 CLERK'S REPORT**

N/A

Meeting Closed – 8:53pm

Date of next meeting: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October

