



**Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND BURIAL COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 6TH JULY 2021 AT 19:30
IN THE MARK CROSS COMMUNITY CENTRE, ST. MARK'S CHURCH, MARK CROSS TN6 3PJ**

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr. L. Buck - Chair

Cllr. A. Martin

Cllr J. Richardson

Cllr. R. Harris

Cllr. J. Cahan

Cllr. D. Hiles

Cllr. N. Wickenden

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT

Trevor Thorpe (Parish Clerk) & Adam Hardy (Deputy Clerk)

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public Forum.

None.

b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85).

Cllrs. Watsons-Smith, Henrick and Kitchenham had submitted apologies for absence, and it was **RESOLVED** that their reasons be accepted.

c) Declaration of personal, prejudicial, and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda, and updates to members' register of interests.

None declared.

d) To resolve that the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 13th April 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be adopted as a true record, and they will be signed by the Chair of the committee.

e) Update regarding matters arising and action items from previous meetings.

Update on matters arising/actions from the 13th of April 2021 meeting.

- Track alongside the Parish Cemetery. Cllr. Wickenden reported that this work was nearly complete but was currently delayed as the access to the source of the hardcore he will use is currently blocked.
- Painting of Beacon in the Rec. Cllr. Watson-Smith has offered to undertake this when he is able.
- Storage area under the Pre-School. Cllrs. Martin and Harris are to allocate and mark areas for the organisations with items stored to use. Once this has been done Clerk will contact the organisations and ask them to tidy or dispose of items. This will enable the Council papers currently stored "off-site" to be returned to this location.
- New play equipment. The issue with severed power connection to the Bowls Club has now been resolved. Contractors are aiming to finish on Friday morning after which our

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contractor will lay turf on the areas requiring. It is hoped that the area will be reopening on Saturday, subject to weather.

- The contractor installing has made secure the area with the power cable beneath. **CLERK** is to arrange for updated utilities plans be obtained from the providers for future reference.
- Cllr. Martin reported that the CCTV covering the Village Hall and car park areas is now fully functioning and footage may be viewed and accessed remotely by the authorised users of the system.
- Forest School/Garden. A local resident has undertaken work in his own time to assist with the creation of this site for the benefit of local children. Spoil from the play area work will be used to infill the pond and combination locks have been obtained to secure the area. A meeting is scheduled on Friday to discuss creation of a vegetable growing area. Some tree work will be required to open up the area and quotes are being obtained.
- Information regarding unused grave plots in the Cemetery. This is covered by item 2b) on this agenda.
- Volunteer work in the Old Burial Ground. Meetings for the volunteers are to be held on the evening of Friday 9th and Saturday morning on the 10th. Ten volunteers have come forward to assist keeping the old burial ground tidy. Deputy clerk is to provide Cllr. Buck with a list of forthcoming weddings so that the group can avoid working at these times. Risk assessment information has been given to the volunteers and Cllr. Buck reported that our contractor has recently cut the grass in this area.

f) Review and comment on the Recreation and Burial Committee workplan.

Cllr. Buck reported that this was on schedule.

g) Receive committee financial reports and agree any actions required.

No actions were required. **CLERK** is to report to Cllr. Buck regarding details of payments in respect of the Forest Garden project

RECEIVE INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF PARISH COUNCIL LAND.

2. ROTHERFIELD PARISH CEMETERY AND OLD BURIAL GROUND

a) Consider action regarding graves not conforming to the Council's published conditions for Cemetery users and visitors.

Concerns were expressed by Councillors that increasing quantities of items were being placed on graves and that much of it did not conform to the Council's published conditions. It was **RESOLVED** to take the following actions to address the issue and to keep the Cemetery in a tidy condition.

- The Chair will install separate signs by the Cemetery gate to draw attention to the Council's conditions. These will also be published on social media to further raise awareness and these conditions will be enforced from 1st September.
- Small items on the graves could also represent a hazard to those strimming and mowing the area, also local wildlife.
- Items removed from 1st September will be retained by the gate for one month in a container so that families can retrieve items of personal value. Cllr. Martin to provide a suitable container for this.
- Clerk will ensure that a copy of the Council's conditions is sent to families whenever an interment takes place.

b) Review record of the used and unused plots in the Cemetery.

Clerk has updated the spreadsheet containing plot location details to highlight plots for which, according to Council records, exclusive rights of burial have not been sold or have been sold but are as yet unused – there are 50 plots in this category. Exclusive rights of burial sold by the Council are of 75 years duration for burial plots and 40 years for ashes plots and plaques on the Memorial Wall.

It was **RESOLVED** the following:-

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- Clerk is to revise the spreadsheet so that it differentiates between plots unsold, or sold but not yet used; also date of purchase if applicable..
- During Clerk's forthcoming holiday the deputy clerk and Council Chair will review this information and identify owners of plots so that they may be contacted by the Clerk. Deputy clerk informed the meeting that GDPR regulations applied in respect of the grave owners concerned and that correspondence on the matter should come from the Clerk.

c) Report from site visit to the Old Burial Ground and recommendations regarding memorials that may require attention.

Cllr. Harris and Buck had recently inspected the area and are of the view that none of the memorials required work. **CLERK** to make diary note to arrange a further inspection in 12 months.

3. RECEIVE DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE

October 5th at 19:30 in the Mark Cross Community Centre. This meeting will discuss budget and precept requirements for 2022/23.

4. REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA

- Keys for the padlock to the storage under the Pre School have been obtained for Cllrs. Harris, Buck, Watson-Smith and Wickenden.
- It was confirmed that the invoice received for the new play equipment is for the sum originally quoted - £25,327.21 plus VAT that will be reclaimed. The installation will be funded by Community Infrastructure Levy contributions received.
- Cllr. Buck advised that our grass cutting contractor will turf the areas of the play area that will require dealing with, and that the cost will be £124.
- Cllr. Martin expressed concern regarding authorising the painting of the play area equipment. It was explained that having been let down by another contractor, a replacement was needed to undertake the work before the installation of the new equipment began. The new contractor, having recently retired, no longer had the public liability insurance required, and that it had been agreed by Cllr. Buck and the Chair that, at the Clerk's suggestion, that he obtain the cover required and recharge the £84 cost to the Council.
- Cllr. Hiles raised concerns regarding a popular walking area which had been fenced off. Clerk recommended that Cllr. Hiles provide further information so that the advice of the ESCC Rights of Way team could be obtained as to whether this was an official right of way.
- Sports Club have reported that they were seeing more dogs being exercised in the Rec. despite the "no dogs" rule, and that some of the signage regarding this had been removed. This will be investigated, and social media used to remind of the "no dogs" rule for this area.
- It is hoped that "sign off" for completion of the new play equipment will take place on Friday; the Chair hopes to attend to assist Cllr. Buck with this.
- Cllr. Richardson reminded that the benches on the Old Burial Ground were either in a poor state or had been removed. Clerk suggested that Community Infrastructure Levy funds could be used to fund replacements. **CLERK** is to forward to Cllr. Buck information regarding the wish for a memorial bench or tree to be installed in the Rec., possibly near the Forest Garden area.

Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:25

..... Parish Clerk.....Date

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