

Embleton Joint Burial Committee

Minutes

**of the Meeting held in the Ladies Room at the Creighton Hall, Embleton on
Monday 6th February 2017 at 6pm**

Present: Bryn Owen; Chair (BO), Neville Fawcett; Vice Chair (NF), Terry Howells (TH), Adam Moody (AM), Craig Silk (CS), Derek Gerrard (DG), Elizabeth Pearson (EP)

Clerk: Geoff Newcombe

In Attendance: Jill Irving (Caretaker), Gary Little

717. Apologies for absence

Gordon Coxon; Adam Moody was the alternative representative from Embleton PC.

- Part of item **721** was taken at this point as it concerned the Caretaker who was in attendance.
- A Report/correspondence of an alleged complaint regarding interment standards and damage to grave surround was received at the last meeting (Item 711) – No subsequent further detail was supplied by the complainant. As requested this allegation was communicated to the Caretaker and asked for her response in writing. The Caretaker responded in writing saying:-
 - There were some excavator tracks on wet ground, not extensive;
 - Artificial grass and wooden sheets used to hide excavated soil and flatten weeds on a very neglected plot;
 - In EJBC cemetery walled plot maintenance is not the responsibility of the grave owner;
 - The undertaker present had no complaints about funeral arrangements; tracks were visible but artificial grass and boards used, very wet; he had received no complaint from family. This was confirmed by the undertaker.

The Caretaker reminded the meeting that approximately 15yrs ago a letter was sent to all grave owners requesting that kerbing should be removed. The complainant may not have been aware of this requirement as he may not have been the grave owner as a considerable amount of time has passed. The Newton PC (NPC) members said that the complaint was not raised by NPC but passed to the EJBC as representatives.

The members asked that the EJBC could not support the complaint, but pass on their condolences and remind him that the kerb/wall maintenance was the responsibility of the grave owner.

(The caretaker left at this point of the meeting)

718. Declarations of Interest

None declared

719. Confirmation of the minutes of the last meetings held 5th December 2016

The minutes were agreed and signed off as a true record.

Proposer: Neville Fawcett

Secunder: Derek Gerrard

Unanimous

720. Matters arising

Links to website agendas/minutes – Craster PC request to have EJBC agenda link to Embleton PC website. CPC Also complained that minutes not on website. TH stated that they would ensure that the minutes were posted on the website and that shortly a new website would be available.

721. Maintenance of Cemetery

- Formal appointment of contractor following receipt of references – members met contractor; also satisfactory references received. Clerk to confirm appointment and formal letter to be sent. Letter to be sent to unsuccessful tenderer's thanking them for their interest. A letter of thanks is to be sent to the current outgoing Caretaker Jill Irving thanking her for all her years of good service to EJBC.

Proposer: Neville Fawcett

Secunder: Derek Gerrard

Unanimous

- It was proposed that the Clerk purchase the Church Warden Handbook for current legal and best practice advice on cemetery operation at a cost of £10.95.

Proposer: Derek Gerrard

Secunder: Elizabeth Pearson

Unanimous

- Headstone Survey Progress Update – Verbal report; BFS reported that all plots now identified, photographed and mostly linked to excel database; however some plots seem to have duplicate reference numbers. Survey and database should be completed before start of new financial year/maintenance contract.
- County Council response to costs submitted for maintenance contract (Item 712) – A response was received to the costing enquiry from Northumberland CC via the County Councillor. They say current rates were used for this tender, but the 2014 tender officer is no longer at NCC and they cannot therefore explain how those tender prices' were derived, but probably under-priced.

722. Long Term Business Plan for Cemetery/House

- Consultation with Parish Council's – CPC, EPC & NPC responses and proposals.

The proposal of Embleton PC (EPC) as accepted at their meeting of 23/01/2017 were thought to be satisfactory; this was also confirmed by Craster PC (CPC) at their meeting of 19/01/2017 and Newton PC (NPC) at their meeting of 25/01/2017. The accepted EPC proposal:-

'Cemetery House be sold should it become vacant subject to two definitive requirements:-

- 1) The house must be offered for sale on the open market through an established estate agent and not sold privately to anybody until this has been done.
- 2) Independent professional advice must be sought to establish the legality and viability of offering the house for sale with a small area of cemetery land sufficient for a parking space and septic tank to be installed.'

No action to be taken to implement these requirements should be taken until or if the current tenant hands in notice to quit. However in the meantime Clerk to try and find a private firm of solicitors with experience in local authority property disposal and conveyancing; and potential EJBC liability for payment of Council Tax on an unoccupied dwelling. The housing Task Force of all EJBC members will meet at 4pm on Monday 3rd April 2017 in the Creighton Hall.

Proposer: Neville Fawcett

Seconder: Bob Foster-Smith

Unanimous

- Consideration of burial and miscellaneous charges for 2017/18

The current scale of Fees for burial, plot purchase etc. were agreed by EJBC minute and effective from 7th December 2015. It was proposed and agreed that the following scale of charges should apply from 1st April 2017:-

Spitalford Cemetery	
Embleton Joint Burial Committee	
Table of Fees 2017/18	
¹ Burial fee	£650
² Purchase of plot	£250
³ Permission for erecting a headstone	£250
⁴ Permission for additional inscription	£75
⁴ Permission to fix a plaque to the memorial wall	£200
⁵ Grave digging: New Double depth grave New single depth grave Re-open grave Child under 15yrs Child not over 1yr Burial of ashes	As arranged between undertaker and grave digger

¹Proposer: Terry Howells

Seconder: Neville Fawcett

Unanimous

⁴as existing

²Proposer: Derek Gerrard

Seconder: Terry Howells

Unanimous

³Proposer: Derek Gerrard

Seconder: Elizabeth Pearson

Unanimous

⁵Proposer: Neville Fawcett

Seconder: Terry Howells

Unanimous

723. Financial.

Bank Balance £8,299.15 @ 20/12/2016

Received since 5/12/2016

- Caretaker Rent x 2 (January & February) - £450.00
- HMRC VAT refund for 2015/16 - £185.33
- Inscription-Plot 1072 - £75.00

Spent since 5/12/2016

- Clerk (pay & expenses) - £289.37
- HMRC (PAYE) - £66.88
- Caretaker Contract Payment (£345) x 2 - (January & February) – £ 690.00
- Caretaker (Interment & Admin Plot 944b) - £180.00
- Creighton Hall (1/12 & 5/12) - £27.50
- NCC Water Charges (£13.73) x 2 (December & January) - £ 27.46
- D. Robertson Rent (2015 £2 & 2016 £2) - £ 4.00

Cheques Required

- Clerk (pay & expenses) - £174.30
- HMRC (PAYE) – £42.60
- Creighton Hall (hire 19/1 & 6/2) - £27.50

Cancel monthly £345 Standing Order to caretaker for maintenance contract after 1st March 2017 payment as contract ending.

Proposer: Terry Howells

Seconder: Neville Fawcett

Unanimous

724. Items for Next Agenda

725. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday 3rd April 2017 @ 6pm.