

Malvern Wells Parish Council

Minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on Tuesday 20th August 2024 at 5.30pm
in Malvern Wells Village Hall Committee Room.

Residents' comments – there were none in attendance.

Present: Cllrs. P. Stanier [PS] (Chair Council), C. Gates (Chair Cemetery Committee) [CG], J. Black ([JB], Janet Baker [JEB], and Tim Kidwell [TK], Colin Fenn [CF], Steve Maud (Cemetery contractor) [SM] - as members Cemetery Committee.

In Attendance

Dr K Howe [KH] (Clerk).

1. Apologies

a) None notified.

2. Declarations of Interest¹

a) CF notified - Trustee Caring for God's Acre, Vice Chair Cemetery Friends.

b) TK notified – Commonwealth Grave volunteer.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

a) CG proposed, PS seconded, committee **approved** (Committee Chair signed in meeting) minutes of last Cemetery Committee meeting held 29th May 2024.

4. Matters Arising

Committee **noted:**

a) Maps & Archives

- CF photographed paper archive maps found in cemetery store at 29th May committee meeting. TK taken paper maps to Worcs. Archive Hub for safe storage. TF advised storage at Worcs. Archive Hub is free. Maps are not complete record of site, estimate about 75% complete. 'Modern' section not included. TF personally funded the photography of maps at cost of £85 and confirmed he does not want recompense. PS thanked TF.
- CF offered to be present when cemetery store documents are organised. Committee agreed this is most urgent priority task to undertake, categorise and list paper records in storage, before mapping and digitalisation project commences.
- JB confirmed MWPC do not own St Peters burial ground. The parish offered it to MWPC, but council refused to take ownership as the records and boundaries were very vague. St. Peters burial ground was passed to MHDC (district council) and is maintained by MHDC. Diocese retains an interest in the consecrated bodies interred. TK offered to ask MHDC if they wish St Peters burial ground included in mapping project for completion.

b) Vision

- Committee have previously discussed reinstating the chapel bell and improving toilets on site.
- TF advised Civic Society has £20k funding for burial grounds. CF advised John Slater (bell expert) may look at bell and know of other grants. Community Boost (accelerator to larger grants) funded repairs in Great Malvern cemetery. Chapel was built 1900. PS suggested Victorian Society.
- Victorian Cemetery Rules plaque needs to be found from storage and put on Chapel wall. SM will look for.
- PS advised she believed cemetery committee's confirmed legal responsibilities had to remain with the parish council.

c) Friends

- Cemetery Friends Working Group could take on 'additional' work such as producing heritage booklet.
- JB agreed having a separate Friends group would help to disperse the additional work more widely.
- PS suggested set up Friends Group and hold initial meeting to support preparation of tombs for photography during mapping exercise.

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- CF's tour for Heritage Open Day is 2pm Sunday 15th September, TK helping, PS doing tea. JB advised he was sure Friends could borrow Village Hall tea urn etc. but PS should ask Ian Burrage formally (as Chair of MWVH). PS confirmed she has keys to Chapel.
- Heritage tour will hopefully kick start the Friends Group. TK will circulate a copy of the Vision document he has drafted.

5. Governance

a) Operating

- Committee **noted** need to add 2024 Cemetery fees and contacts to notice board, Clerk has supplied, PS has keys to noticeboard.
- Clerk supplied new approved Cemetery Committee Terms of Reference (TOR). Committee checked and **agreed** they do have delegated authority to make decisions and recommendations to council as required.

b) Working Groups(s)

- Committee **agreed** Cemetery Working Group (CWG) should have own set of TOR's.
- Committee **noted** CWG could work with contractors on clearing memorials prior to photography for mapping project.
- PS suggested putting notice on cemetery notice board to alert family's memorials will be cleared prior to photography and mapping.

6. Cemetery management

a) Memorial Safety Project

- Clerk advised she has chased Allards (approved cemetery memorial safety contractor). They advised started work on site two weeks ago, on memorials nearest to Chapel. Despite written request from Clerk, Allards had not notified of when attending site. SM confirmed he has noticed some interventions on site, one of the crosses has been laid flat. Committee **noted** this was concerning as contract did not include for memorials to be laid flat. Clerk to speak to Lisa at Allards, again, for confirmation of contract work undertaken. CF confirmed Allards as 'best' stone mason contractors locally. Committee noted Clerk concern at 'delays' on memorial safety project.

b) Mapping Contract

- Clerk advised comparable quotations difficult to obtain. Clerk taken advice from WCALC and done thorough research of alternative mapping contractors. Committee **considered** two quotations received and quotations comparison report undertaken by CF, supplied in meeting. Committee grateful for CF specialist knowledge. CF's report confirmed 'other' mapping contractors do not provide comparable digitalisation services as required by MWPC and available from two quoting contractors. CF will send comparison document electronically for Clerk records. Committee **noted** justification for decision agreed. Other suppliers did not offer the full range of services committee sought, but included additional services not requested during quotation exercise. TK proposed, JB seconded, committee unanimously **approved** AG as preferred contractor total cost £6,683. Committee **decided** not to accept reduced price option offered by AG (£5,290) as wish to maintain control of data. Committee **noted** £450 p.a. charge for council and public access to portal.
- Clerk to notify AG, confirm project start / timeframe, seek clarification on information capture and upload. CF requested clarity on level of detail included / how many columns from burial registers to be digitised, i.e. not just date of birth (DOB), but also date of death (DOD), residence and where died. Will all burial registers and purchase records be photographed, transcribed and uploaded? Does administrator have full access to correct / amend data post upload?
- CF suggested Malvern Family History Society be used as 'second pair of eyes' to check transcription of records is accurate before project goes live.

c) Public requests

- Clerk advised roughly 25 requests received, some ongoing administration awaiting supply of further information and documents required from families.

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- Committee discussed request for kerbstone installation. SM advised that historically (during tenure of previous Clerk), previous Cemetery Working Group took decision not to allow further installation of kerbstones in new section due to issues experienced at time. SM advised it would not be an additional problem for contractors when mowing. Committee recognised that kerbstones may impinge on adjacent plots causing complaints.
- CF asked if there is a burial ground regulations document. SM confirmed there was one previously. Clerk will search archive folders.
- SM confirmed there is a kerbstone installed in the new section. CF advised when a new plot is sold burial ground regulations should be supplied.
- Clerk advised public request for 'wicker' coffin received, cemetery committee documents currently state only solid wood allowed. Ann Dobbins had advised this was for 'good' reasons, Clerk explained advice received. CF suggested committee review regulations to ascertain what previously prescribed. Committee agreed as item for future cemetery committee to review, determine and update relevant documents.

d) Contractor feedback

- As covered above. Nothing further to consider.

7. Remembrance Event

- PS advised she was organising community event at noon. Clerk to supply her action plan from last year remembrance event to PS (Peter Buchanan, lay preacher, attended last year).
- PS notified her 'public safety' concern due to main road between Village Hall and war memorial. PS asked if acceptable for wreaths to be laid at war memorial but hold event at cemetery chapel. Currently road closure and three marshals required (PS will ask Rob Price and SM). TK advised he would be very against this idea. War memorials in the chapel are not local residents but boys from the school. CF concurred war memorial would become 'redundant' and fall into disuse.
- JB asked could the war memorial be moved to the Jubilee Garden? PS will ask TK and CF for advice.

Due to councillors' present being required to attend Staffing Committee immediately following, **meeting closed at 7pm.**

Signed.....

Name

Date.....