

**Minutes of the Asset Management Committee
held on Thursday 26 October 2023 @ 6.30pm**

Present: Cllr Brake, Cllr Irven (Chair), Cllr Murphy, Cllr Terrett, Cllr Westcott and Cllr Whetlor.
In attendance: Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, Ian Hale, Memorial Mason joined the meeting remotely via zoom.

23/14D

To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))
Cllr Irven proposed that **'Apologies given by Cllrs Campbell and Richards are accepted.'**
Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried with 5 votes for and 1 vote against.

23/15D

To receive any Declaration of Interests under Watchet Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted on 9 July 2012) issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 Si No: 146.

Name	Minute No:	Description of Interest	Personal / Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr Whetlor	23/17D (1)	Personal friend.	Personal & Prejudicial	Councillors withdrew from the meeting and did not participate in the discussion and voting.
Cllr Westcott	23/19D (ii)	Son works for the youth service	Personal & prejudicial	

Cllr Irven proposed that the **'order of business is changed on the agenda, with 23/17D considered as the next item of business and 23/19D (ii) moved to the last item'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.

At this point Cllr Whetlor having declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in this item left the meeting at 6.33pm

23/17D

Watchet Cemetery:

- (i) To address a breach in regulations and policy additions, including signage – *paperwork circulated via Appendix 2a* – at this point Cllr Irven introduced Ian Hale to the meeting. He gave an introduction outlining his experience in the industry of over 50 years, and he is a BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) representative, and Chair of the disciplinary panel. He has worked with many Councils advising how they plan and manage their cemeteries in line with cemetery regulations and current policy. Whilst there was sympathy for the family, he restated the following advice.
- The family did not obtain permission for the additional memorial.
 - The family do not own the plot, only the right to bury within the plot for a 75-year period, with permission from the Council.
 - Only an accredited memorial mason is permitted to fix anything within the cemetery.
 - The Council can refuse anything that they feel is not in keeping with the cemetery.
 - The cemetery at Watchet has always been a lawn memorial cemetery, which means no kerbs or items that protrude beyond the headstone.

Members gave their views and sought advice from Ian Hale on this very sensitive matter. He reiterated that a cemetery policy outlines what is allowed, it does not outline what is not allowed, just because something is not listed in a policy does not mean it is permissible. The Council as a burial authority, need to manage the cemetery safely and within statutory regulations outlined in policy. It is always beneficial to seek advice, and unfortunately in this instance the family did not.

Members noted the appeal that had been received from the family, together with a petition that the family submitted before the commencement of the meeting. Members acknowledged the receipt of this, but could not consider it as it was not an agenda item, but will in due course at a future meeting.

After a long discussion, Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the family has not complied with the Committees decision made in the September meeting, which was made in good faith considering the breach of cemetery policy and procedures, of which have been clearly communicated to the family. There is a further demonstration that the decision has not been accepted due to the presentation of a petition to keep the grave in its entirety. Considering this, the Committee request that the kerbing and central loose slate infill be removed fully by the family within 14 days. If the request is ignored, the Council will be forced to instruct a Memorial Mason to remove on behalf of the family. The Committee are fully aware of the distress that this matter has caused to the family and wish to offer them a memorial tree of their choice to be planted in the Memorial Garden at no cost'**. Seconded by Cllr Terrett. Carried.

The Chair thanked Ian Hale for his attendance and invaluable advice throughout this process.

Cllr Whetlor returned to the meeting at 7.17pm.

Members noted the report of a breach regarding plot 342, the family had followed suit by installing kerbing around the grave. The family were informed of the breach and have removed the kerbing. The Committee will keep a monitoring brief with regard to further input from the family.

Members then considered amendments and additions to cemetery documents:

1. Cllr Irven proposed that **'amendments to the Cemetery Policy document contained in appendix 2a are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
 2. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the Memorial Permit Application form contained in Appendix 2a is approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
 3. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'amendments to the Application for Interment contained in Appendix 2a are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
 4. Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'amendments to signage contained in Appendix 2a are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
 5. Cllr Westcott proposed that **'the quote for new signage at the cemetery for £101.74 as contained in Appendix 2a is approved and ordered'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
- (ii) Donation of a Christmas tree in memory of a local resident – information circulated via **Appendix 2b**. Members considered this, and Cllr Murphy proposed that **'this request is approved, and the Groundsman liaise with the family on the trees position'**. Seconded by acclaim. Carried.
- (iii) To consider membership to the 'Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management' (ICCM) – information circulated via **Appendix 2c**. Cllr Westcott proposed that **'the Council subscribe to the ICCM and pay the membership fee of £95'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.

23/16D

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 and adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations contained therein. (LGA 1972, SCH12 Para 41 (1)) (paperwork issued prior to meeting via **Appendix 1**).

Cllr Irven proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 are approved as a true and accurate record.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

23/18D

Henry Davey:

- (i) To review the annual rental payable by the Football Club for the changing room facility-circulated via **Appendix 3** – The Clerk reported that the rental although reviewed, has not increased since 2014. Due to increases in utilities totalling £576 in 2022-23, there should be a consideration to review the rental of £100 per annum. Members discussed this and agreed that the rental should be reviewed, but considering the cost of living increases currently burdening Watchet families, they do not wish to add to the hardships already being faced and will not increase the rental charge for 2023-24. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the Football Club are informed of the Committees decision not to increase the rental for 2023-24, but due to increasing utility costs and the fact there has not been an increase in rental since 2014, they are given 12 months' notice of an increase of 50% to £150 for the 2024-25 period'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried with 5 votes for and 1 vote against.

23/19D

Watchet Community Centre:

- (i) To note the minutes of the SLA meeting with Minehead Eye- circulated via **Appendix 4a** - members noted the minutes.
- (iii) To approve the SLA for 2023-24- circulated via **Appendix 4c**- Cllr Irven proposed that **'the Service Level Agreement for 2023-24 is approved and signed'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried with 5 votes for and 1 abstention.

Cllr Westcott having declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting at 8.04pm.

- (ii) To consider repairs to the pool table – circulated via **Appendix 4b**- members considered a quotation for repairs and Cllr Whetlor proposed that the **'quotation of £50 for repairs to the pool table is accepted'**. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

23/20D

Watchet War Memorial:

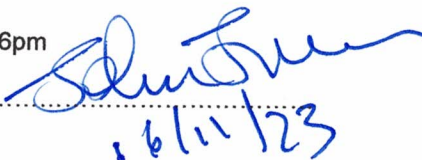
- (i) To consider a quote for cleaning from a local stonemason – circulated via **Appendix 5**- Cllr Whetlor proposed that the **'quotation of £560 is approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

23/21D

Matters to report for the next meeting: – no decisions made

Meeting closed at 8.06pm

Signed.....



16/11/23

Date.....