

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Burials & Memorials Committee Meeting of Porlock Parish Council

held at the Old School Centre on Tuesday the 16th December at 3:30pm

Councillors Present: D McCanlis (Chair), S Colson, J Adlington, D Heath

Non Councillors Present: R Growden

Also present: No members of the public and Clerk J Jones.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Min Ref:	MINUTES	Action:
BM-2025-001	1) Receive apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1)) All committee members	
BM-2025-002	2) Resolve the position of Vice Chair for the committee Committee RESOLVED the position of vice chair was not required for this committee.	
BM-2025-003	3) Receive and resolve non council member committee applications Committee RECEIVED one non-councillor application from Mr Richard Growden.	
BM-2025-004	Committee RESOLVED to co-opt Mr R Growden on to the committee.	
BM-2025-005	4) Receive signed declarations of acceptance of office and undertakings to abide by the code of conduct for elected non council members Mr Growden signed the declaration of acceptance of office. The chair invited Mr Growden to take a seat with the committee.	
BM-2025-006	5) Receive the committee's terms of reference Committee RECEIVED the terms of reference.	
BM-2025-007	6) Resolve any declarations of interest and dispensations granted (Localism Act 2011 s33) No declarations were received.	
BM-2025-008	7) Resolve items to be dealt with after the public, including press, have been excluded (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2)) No items were proposed.	
BM-2025-009	8) Receive an update on committee related actions on the action log report and assign member There were no committee related actions.	
BM-2025-010	9) Public participation (LGA 1972 s 12 paras 10(2) (b)) There were no members of the public present.	
BM-2025-011	10) Receive an update on the memorial restoration programme at Hawkcombe Cemetery and discuss next steps including: a) memorial restoration quotes An invitation has been issued to twenty memorial masons who are BRAMM/NAMM accredited and are within a 50-mile radius. To date six companies have expressed an interest with two having	

provided quotes for zones 9-1. The current memorial company have quoted for zone 10 however cannot carry out the works in December due to other commitments. Members agreed interested parties should quote for all zones to enable a like for like comparison.

BM-2025-012	Request of the two companies the addition of Zone 10 to the existing quotes.	JJ
BM-2025-013	Provide Cllr. Adlington contact details of the remaining four interested companies.	JJ
BM-2025-014	Follow up, by phone, with the remaining interested parties to see if they will be providing a quote for all zones.	JJ
		JA
BM-2025-015	b) unsafe memorials within kerb sets under 75 years 25 of the unsafe memorials have kerb sets, there are a total of 31 kerb sets.	
BM-2025-016	c) unsafe memorials over 75 years 38 of the unsafe memorials are over 75 years.	
BM-2025-017	d) approach to zones and any order of priority The original memorial inspection report is made up of ten zones. All memorial masons have been provided with a copy of the memorial inspection report and the zone map to provide detailed quotes for reinstatement of zones 9-1. As above all interested parties should provide a quote for all zones.	
BM-2025-018	Review regulations with regards to graves over 75 years where the deed has expired.	
BM-2025-019	Members agreed that the work should be carried out as single job and allow the appointed memorial mason to determine the reinstatement order.	JJ
BM-2025-020	e) recovery of costs (Cem Reg 10.1) The clerk explained the complexities involved when it comes to deed ownership and the legal transfer of the deed. It was noted that while the deed holder is responsible for any maintenance of the memorial, without the legal transfer process being completed of the deed responsibility does not fall to a relative. Committee discussed the current regulation regarding recovery of costs. Administrative and legal process and associated costs involved with deed transfers were agreed to be lengthy and potentially cost prohibited and it was agreed as funds had already been allocated to carry out the works that the committee chair put forward a motion at the next council meeting to resolve setting aside cost recovery from deed holders in relation to the current programme of memorial safety works.	
BM-2025-021	Review cemetery regulations with regards to deed ownership and transfer of deeds.	JJ
BM-2025-022	Contact funeral directors to see what information and data they collect from families and how what improvements can be made.	JJ
BM-2025-023	Develop an information pack that can be provided to anyone wishing to purchase an exclusive right of burials and to families following the placement of a memorial.	JJ
	Committee recognised that while there are concerns with historical data and practices, known and unknown, a lot of work has been achieved by the current and previous admin officers to improve records and process.	
BM-2025-024	11) Receive an update on the memorial restoration programme at St Dubricius Church churchyard and discuss next steps Unsafe memorial works are still waiting diocese approval. Safety signage has erected with some signs being reported as missing or removed.	

Notification has been received from the diocese that the method statement provided by the memorial company Fine Memorials was not satisfactory as it stated that they would use aluminium fixing brackets. Further enquiry with the memorial mason showed this to be an oversight and it has been corrected to stainless steel. Contact has been made with the church as requested by the diocese to see if they have contact information for a mason/conservator who may be able to advise better.

BM-2025-025	One of the unsafe memorials was dangerously loose by the pathway and that immediate action should be taken to 'make safe' the memorial ahead of repair. In addition, the safety sign was missing from this memorial and safety notices were missing from the entrances.	JJ
BM-2025-026	Additional quotes to be obtained for the memorial safety works for the churchyard.	JJ
BM-2025-027	Develop a contractor request for information form.	JJ
BM-2025-028	12) Review the current schedule of cemetery fees and committee's recommendations to council The current schedule of fees was adopted from 1 April 2025. The clerk recommended to members that the current charging structure is over complicated and should be reviewed to simplify charges. Members agreed as the current tariff had recently been reviewed (March 2025) any changes required could be considered by members for recommendation to council at the committee to be held circa June 2026 (date to be agreed).	
BM-2025-029	Cllr. Adlington offer to do a review and provide a report of the current fees and structure options.	JA
BM-2025-030	Clerk to provide previous cemetery fees report to Cllr. Adlington.	JJ
BM-2025-031	13) Discuss how to review council's regulations, processes, procedures and approach to: a) cemetery regulations The current regulations, adopted in 2023 have undergone a review by the clerk and the burials & memorials admin officer which has identified multiple areas for amendment. Members agreed that they would review the current draft regulations with 'tracked changes' in turn. Providing opportunity for members to make comments or ask questions. Subject to all questions/changes being agreed in draft, the final draft regulations would go to council for consideration. If there were areas that needed further discussion, then an extraordinary meeting could be called to allow members to debate further.	
BM-2025-032	Clerk to provide current working progress word document (with tracked changes) to members for their review.	JJ
BM-2025-033	Cllr. Adlington to take first review and then pass the review to the next committee member, with each member reviewing the regulations in turn and passing to the next until all members have had opportunity to review.	JA SC, DM, DH, RG
BM-2025-034	b) memorial inspections Annual inspections are required for any memorials identified as loose. Inspections must immediately 'make safe' any memorials identified as 'dangerous'. Provisions have been made in the 2026/27 budget for annual inspections going forward. Annual inspection is now overdue following the initial inspection in July 2024 (report received in Sept 2024). Members agreed that the contractor appointed to carry out the memorial safety works should be requested quote to carry out to carry out then next inspection. It was noted that all future memorial works would be put out to tender and not automatically awarded to the contractor carrying out the safety inspection.	JJ

BM-2025-035	c) forms and record keeping Work is ongoing to continue to bring council forms up to date however to enable members greater insight and ability to comment on current practices and requirements for admin and record keeping it was proposed, and members agreed that the burials and memorials admin officer would hold 'walk through' sessions for members in pairs. The clerk reminded members that these sessions would be to give a general overview of the process and current challenges and not deep dive problem solving exercise.	JA
BM-2025-036	Arrange for members, in pairs, 'walk throughs' of the general admin process and records with the B&M Admin officer.	JJ
BM-2025-037	d) the granting period of the exclusive right of burial Current period for an Exclusive Right of Burial (ERoB) is 75 Years. A better understanding of the period and the benefits and challenges faced with lowering or to keeping with the current is required to allow members to discuss and consider any changes. Cllr. Adlington to research what other burial authorities do, sector best practices and provide a report to members for the next committee meeting.	JA
BM-2025-038	e) management of exclusive right of burials (Extensions and Expirations) Currently there is no process in place to what happens with extensions or expirations of an EroB. As part of the work understanding the term of an ERoB (as above) information will be gathered to understand best practice when it comes to managing ERoB. Cllr. Adlington to included extensions and expirations in the ERoB research paper (as above)	JA
BM-2025-039	f) mapping of existing vacant and future plots A change in plot sizes and current excavation practices require council to review how it currently maps vacant and future plots. No physical markers in the cemetery means guess work when it comes to exactly where a plot is. This causes challenges for those wishing to reserve a plot and ensuring the right plot is excavated when needed and not encroaching on other plots. Members agreed that a plot marker system needed to be implemented.	
BM-2025-040	Cllr. Adlington to obtain a brief of requirements form the parish office and then visit the cemetery with council's caretaker and grounds maintenance contractor to make recommendation to the committee.	JA
BM-2025-041	g) future occupancy of Hawkcombe cemetery Current occupancy of the cemetery is unknown and should be reported on yearly basis to allow council to inform its plans and decision making. The mapping of existing vacant and future plots (as above) will provide data to inform council on what, if any, decisions it needs to take.	
BM-2025-042	h) burials and interments A review of current processes and practices with council's third parties needs to be undertaken to ensure council regulations, process and procedures are being followed, accurate and required information is being collected.	JJ
BM-2025-043	14) Note outstanding/deferred items: There were no outstanding items.	
BM-2025-044	15) To receive any other business - <u>For information only</u> R Growden - There are two headstones in zones 6&7 that are cracked that need investigating to see if they were damaged during 'making safe' works.	JJ

Meeting Closed at 17.25pm