**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**

**BURIAL GROUNDS AND GARDENS OF REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON 23rd JULY 2025**

**AT 10:30 AM AT HARTLEY LIBRARY**

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| --- | --- |
| Present : | Cllr Perry Cole  Cllr Lesley Driscoll |
|  | Cllr Laurence Glander  Cllr Brian Ramsay (*Chairman*)  Cllr Ian Ross |
| In attendance : | Mrs J Tyrrell - *(Assistant Clerk)* |

Before the start of the Committee meeting, Members of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee carried out visual inspections of Hartley Burial Ground, Manor Field Burial Ground, Gardens of Remembrance and the Closed Churchyard.

## 1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED: That,

Cllr Brian Ramsay be elected Chairman of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2026.

**2. Election of Vice Chairman**

RESOLVED: That,

Cllr Ian Ross be elected Vice Chairman of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2026.

## 3. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Larry Abraham.

## 4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 5. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That,

the Minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 5th February 2025, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 6. Financial Report

The Committee considered a financial report showing detailed income and expenditure by budget heading of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee as at 17thJuly 2025.The report was received and noted.

RESOLVED: That,

the financial report showing detailed income and expenditure by budget heading of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee as at 17th July 2025 be received and noted.

**7. Manor Field Burial Ground**

(a) The Committee considered matters arising from the visual inspection carried out before the meeting.

(i) It was noted that the mats used when graves were being dug, were stacked on Mr Glover’s land and should be removed.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk contact the current grave digger and ask them to move the mats on to another area of the Burial ground but somewhere out of site of the public.

(ii) It was noted that the Beech hedges needed a trim on the faces and the top and that the Assistant Clerk should seek quotations for this work.

A quotation had been received from the current contractor for £650.00 plus VAT but it was unclear what area the quotation was for. Members agreed that if the quotation for £650.00 plus VAT was for the Beech hedges, that delegated authority be given to accept the quotation.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk accept the quotation for £650.00+ VAT ***IF*** the quotation was for the Beech hedges or to seek alternative quotations if not applicable.

b) At the meeting in February, the Committee had considered a quotation received from Weed Management to apply a selective fertiliser and seaweed treatment to either a) The current side when the headstones are for b) both sides of the burial ground

Members agreed, that due to the small difference between the price to treat one side of the burial ground against the price to treat the whole area, that they would opt to treat the whole area for £681.45 at a time suggested by the Contractor.

The Assistant Clerk explained that this treatment had yet to be arranged as it was normally arranged in conjunction with the treatment of Manor Field to save on cost. The Amenities Committee had decided to defer the treatment of Manor Field so the Assistant Clerk asked the Committee if she should proceed with booking in the treatment assuming the price was the same. The Committee agreed to proceed at the cost of £681.45 + VAT

RESOLVED: That,

the quotation received from Weed Management for the sum of £681.45 + VAT to treat the whole grassed area at Manor Field Burial Ground at a time suggested by the Contractor for maximum effect, be accepted.

## 8. Hartley Burial Ground

a) During the visual inspection carried out before the meeting, it was noted;

i) The Assistant Clerk had advised Members of the Committee that the memorial bench that had been taped up due to being unsafe, was due to be replaced by the family imminently.

ii) There were several graves that appeared neglected with overgrown shrubs and it was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would write to the grave owners of grave numbers;

409, 353, 376, 391 & 158.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk contact owners of grave numbers 409, 353, 376, 391 & 158 and ask for them to tend their graves or agree to turf where applicable.

## 9. Old Garden of Remembrance

a) During the visual inspection of the Old Garden of Remembrance, Members were disappointed to see that there were a lot of weeds present both in the border, in the heather cross and also in amongst the paving itself. The shrubs also needed to be cut back depending on their flowering pattern and the Sycamores that have self seeded, need to be removed.

There was also a loose part of the paving at the entrance to the Old Garden of Remembrance and it was agreed to ask the Grounds Contractor if this was something that he could attend to (or to seek alternative quotations if this was something he couldn’t attend to).

RESOLVED: That,

1. the Assistant Clerk contact the current Contractor and remind them of their duties in the Burial Ground and to ask them to attend to this area as soon as possible.
2. The Assistant Clerk to make the necessary arrangements for the loose part of paving to be re-fixed asking the current Contractor first for a quotation.

b) Members had been requested to consider an email from a resident with concerns regarding the condition of the Old Garden of Remembrance

Members agreed with the points raised by the Resident as they were also disappointed with the area. It was agreed to contact the Resident to advise her that the Committee shared her concerns and what action was being taken to remedy the matter.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk contact the Resident to advise them of the action that the Committee will be taking.

**10. New Garden of Remembrance**

There were no matters brought up during the visual inspection of the New Garden of Remembrance.

**11. Closed Churchyard**

There were no matters brought up during the visual inspection of the New Garden of Remembrance.

Cllr Glander noted that the hedges surrounding the area, on Church Road were growing into the road and would benefit from being cut back.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk contact the Contractor and to ask them for a quotation to cut the hedges bordering the Closed Churchyard, on the side of Church Road.

**12. Burial Ground – Administration**

In light of the fact that Ash Burial Ground is now full and the Parish Office is receiving more requests from *non-residents* to be buried in the Burial Grounds in Hartley, the Committee had been requested to review the Rules & Regulations. At a previous meeting, the Parish Council had agreed to amend the wording to read;

***“At present there is no exclusive right of space allocated for any burial or interment of ashes, which shall be restricted to residents of the Parish, or to those who have had strong connections to the Parish or to those practising their faith within the Parish at the discretion of the Parish Council.***

Members discussed this wording again and considered amending it *again* to read as follows;

***“At present there is no exclusive right of space allocated for any burial or interment of ashes, which shall be restricted to residents of the Parish. All other requests to be considered by the Parish Council.***

**RECOMMENDED: That**

the wording in the Rules and Regulations for the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance be amended to read as follows;

***“At present there is no exclusive right of space allocated for any burial or interment of ashes, which shall be restricted to residents of the Parish. All other requests to be considered by the Parish Council.***

## 13. Risk Assessments

Members of the Committee reviewed the Risk assessment for each site within the Burial Ground. On the Risk Assessment for Manor Field Burial Ground, it was noted that the risk allocated to “Unstable Memorials” was identified as ‘None’ when it should be Risk Level as ‘Low’ and Target Date as ‘Ongoing’ to align with the other Risk Assessments.

RESOLVED: That,

the Assistant Clerk amend the Risk Assessment for Manor Field Burial Ground so that the Risk Level for Unstable memorials is classified as ‘Low’ and the Target Date is ‘Ongoing’ to align with the other Risk Assessments.

## 14. Commercial Waste Collection Service

Members had been advised that a letter dated 20th June 2025, received from Sevenoaks District Council regarding the cessation of its Commercial Waste Collection Service with effect from 30th September 2025 had been considered by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee on 9th July.

New Government legislation introduced from 1st April 2025, dictates that all businesses in England with 10 or more full time staff, must comply with the new “Simpler Recycling” regulations. This requires separate bins and collections of food waste, paper and cardboard and dry recycling (such as glass, plastic and metal). Small businesses with fewer than 10 full time employees must comply by the end of March 2027.

The District Council does not have the facilities to deliver a full recycling service and is therefore unable to offer a full commercial collection service going forward.

Members noted that although the Parish Council would not have to comply with the new regulations until 2027, it would need to find an alternative contractor to collect the waste from the Pavilion, Burial Ground and Village Hall.

Members had considered quotations from two alternative contractors and agreed to accept a quotation to continue with a bagged collection from the layby by the Burial Ground for any rubbish that was not compostable.

Any rubbish that can be composted, should be added to the Spoil Heap in the corner of the Burial Ground.

The Clerk reported that the collection frequency of the sacks could be specified by the Council. (Currently 2 sacks per week are collected by the District Council)

Members agreed with the suggestion approved by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee.

RESOLVED: That,

1. the Committee agree with the arrangement agreed by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee.
2. The Groundsmaan be advised that any green waste from the Burial Ground should be added to the spoil heap.

## 15. Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11:30

Signed:…………………………………………… Date:………………….

Chairman of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee