WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON

Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 5.30 pm

PRESENT: Jill Dudman, Dr Brent Elliott (Vice-Chair), Prof. Robert Flanagan (Chair), Robert Holden, George Young, Dick Tooze and Councillor Sonia Winifred

ALSO PRESENT: Noshir Patel and Ann Kingsbury

APOLOGIES: Councillor Fred Cowell and Councillor Max Deckers Dowber

The minutes reflect the order in which items were considered at the meeting

1. **WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

   The Chair, Professor Bob Flanagan, welcomed attendees to the meeting and all present introduced themselves.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP**

   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the West Norwood Cemetery Advisory Group on 02 November 2016 be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

3. **MINUTES FROM THE LAST SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the West Norwood Cemetery Scheme of Management Committee on 30 November 2016 be noted.

4. **PROJECT OFFICER UPDATE**

   The Capital Programmes Team Manager, Dan Thomas, and the Project Officer, Steven Wong, updated the group as detailed in the report, advising that:
   
   - The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) decision would be published on 25 January and then, subject to EU law, the selected HLF bid consultant could be revealed.
   - Once the HLF consultant decision had been published, contracts would be signed and work could commence, with a deadline for completion of February 2018.
   - There would be no potential extension of the programme until the consultant had examined it.
   - The HLF Project Manager, Joahanne Flaherty, would start on 1 February 2017 and had already been in receipt of documents which had been put together already to support the bid. The Group requested that Joahanne Flaherty be invited to the next
Advisory Group meeting.

- Atelier Designs had been commissioned to design information boards to encourage cemetery visitors and the design presentation had been encouraging and interesting.
- There was a proposal to have standing plinths opposite the war memorial, which had been received positively. Officers stated that this was a high-quality proposal.
- Having the information boards within the outside railings would ensure they were protected from vandalism; and photoshop mark-ups of the boards would be circulated to Group members.
- The suggestion was to have four permanent pillars which would outline the history of the cemetery and updates of the work being undertaken in the cemetery.
- The logos likely to be used on the boards would be the HLF, the Scheme of Management and Lambeth logos, along with the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery logo.
- All tree surgery work had been completed and there was a meeting scheduled for the following week in order to discuss how to take further vegetation work forward.
- Rebuilds were being looked at where coffins could be exhumed and removed so walls surrounding them could be rebuilt and repaired.
- Historic England had been consulted, and they had expressed concern about removing the coffins. However, options considered whereby coffins were not removed had been deemed impractical.
- The Diocese would be approached in February, and the specialist group would be reconvened.
- The overgrowing tropical trees in the Maxim and other graves would be removed shortly.
- Opening up vistas by removing trees would be part of the landscape management document.
- Legal advice was still awaited from Mark Ruffell, ecclesiastical law specialist, on grave reuse.

5. HEAD OF SERVICE VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Service, Kevin Crook, noted:

- There were only three temporary staff working in cemeteries currently, however more posts were being advertised.
- He had met with Kevin Wallace, Operations Manager, to discuss scrub removal. The re-use area on the southern boundary was being focused on.
- The Friends of West Norwood Cemetery would hope to do detailed follow-up work on clearing individual monuments from ivy, etc.
- Once a bigger team was in place the scrub would be worked on so it would eventually die off and it was expected that it should be entirely removed within three to four winter seasons. This would also result in more grass coming back.
- There had been issues in the past with offenders tasked with clearing scrub being ill-supervised and stealing from the cemetery. Offender work would need a skilled supervisor capable of carrying out the appropriate supervision.
- Councillor Winifred noted that there had been discussions on plans to get residents involved with weeding their local cemeteries. However, the Chair pointed out that they would need to be signed up as Friends of West Norwood Cemetery in order to be covered by the Friend’s insurance policy.
• It was hoped to move the “reclining lady” monument back to its original grave.

6. CEMETERY REGULATIONS - CURRENT STATUS
Dick Tooze had raised the issue of jogging in the cemetery and inviting the voluntary ‘Parkrun’ organisation to hold events within the cemetery, noting the considerable boost in visitor traffic this would bring. In discussion it was raised that:
• The Chair stated that he had no significant issue with jogging through the cemetery provided that it did not involve large groups.
• There was a discussion as to whether or not jogging should be considered a “sporting” activity, which was prohibited under the regulations. There was agreement that there had been a lack of consistency thus far in what had been considered permissible and impermissible within the cemetery.
• Jill Dudman noted that the regulation banning the walking of dogs throughout the cemetery was widely-flouted, and the Group noted the general lack of enforcement of regulations.
• The Capital Programmes Team Manager further suggested that the views of other cemeteries be gathered on the issue of sporting and other recreational activities within the grounds.
• The Head of Service stated that the regulations update was progressing, and the regulations for Lambeth Cemetery were currently being re-drafted by Legal Services. The West Norwood Cemetery regulations would then use Lambeth Cemetery’s regulations as a starting point.
• The Chair of the Scheme of Management Committee, Nicholas Long, added that so long as there was acknowledgment of permanence and the security of Christian burial, the Diocese were unlikely to need further input into the regulations.
• Kevin Crook stated that he would bring a draft of the regulations to the next meeting.
• Regulations were unlikely to be of interest to casual visitors and there was a need to condense them into something which could discourage prohibited activities.
• There had also been conflicting advice from the Lambeth Film Office regarding using photographs taken at the cemetery for commercial purposes. Kevin Crook stated that he would respond to the Group with further clarity around this issue.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 26 April 2017

Date of Despatch: Wednesday 01 February 2017

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