

WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 5.30 pm

Minutes

Present: Reverend Canon Ivelaw Bowman, Professor Robert Flanagan (Chair of the Advisory Group), Nicholas Long MBE (Chair, Scheme of Management Committee), Councillor Fred Cowell, Councillor Pete Elliott, Councillor Peter Ely and Councillor Sonia Winifred

Apologies: Paul Barber and Dr Brent Elliott

Also present: Tim Stephens, Robert Holden

1. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Nicholas Long, welcomed all to the meeting and the following declarations of interest were raised:

- Robert Holden had a family interest and a potential right to burial in five graves; and,
- Nicholas Long was a grave owner.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 13 November 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

3. MINUTES OF THE WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY GROUP

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 05 February 2020 be noted as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. PROJECT MANAGER NLHF PROJECT UPDATE

Dan Thomas, Programme Manager for Capital Programmes, introduced the report, noting that:

- The lead consultant, Donald Insall Associates, were appointed bringing expertise on heritage, conservation and architecture; and continuity from the Round 2 Bid. Likewise, Cavendish Bloor, Quantity Surveyor, also worked on the previous Bid for cost management continuity.
- Curtins, civil engineering consultants, would work up heritage and conservation packages.
- Approvals over ecological considerations and permissions to consecrated ground or graves were needed and would be discussed over the coming months.
- An interpretation consultant would be appointed to consider the whole site and steer items, whilst a party wall surveyor would be appointed to ensure decisions were

appropriate.

- Important upcoming milestones included reporting back to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), preparing interpretation consultant briefs, forming meetings, ensuring the new project governance, and increasing transparency of progress.
- The Chair noted the Scheme of Management Committee's (SoMC's) concern that delivery had slipped and that proper governance was still not in place after initial conversations in November 2019; and instructed officers to ensure progress was made.
- The Project Manager, Preeti Chapman-Kauffman, was setting up Governance Board meetings in due course which would allow monitoring of deadlines and works.
- It was expected that Donald Insall would be able shorten some timelines.
- The SoMC's hope was to have the St Stephen's Chapel construction phase completed by the bicentenary of the Chios Massacre in 2022, but was now scheduled for 2023, and could bring interest into the Cemetery if this timing could be revised. Officers would report back on its delivery.
- Tim Stephens asked that more background material be included in the report.
- Donald Insall would be invited to a joint SoMC and Management Advisory Group (MAG) meeting in the future, including contextual works and findings to date.
- Professor Bob Flanagan, Chair of the MAG, noted that there were 16 monuments to restore, however the finite number of monumental masons would create a bottleneck to undertaken restoration, as it represented the largest monument restoration in country.
- The work programme was 4-5 months behind to date, whilst Donald Insall's assessment of programme notified of a further five months' delay, which was being challenged by the Council. It was noted by the SoMC that it was not acceptable to be one year behind already on only one of five work packages and reiterated the necessity of having an oversight board meeting.
- The Chair noted that regular progress updates were needed to ensure transparency and good information sharing practices, and also needed for the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery (FoWNC) and Cemetery information boards.
- Councillor Sonia Winifred, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture, noted the shared responsibility to progress with works, and that delivery and information sharing was essential.
- The design meetings had now been scheduled and the work programme was live, with visible output to commence once construction packages were tendered and build started. Additionally, officers were pressing for tender earlier than Donald Insall's timelines.
- The Chair also noted that there was likely to be further slippage as works progressed and that Covid-19 would need to be included as part of this and put on the Risk Register. Officers confirmed that lead consultant discussions would cover Covid-19 and potential Brexit impacts to ensure resiliency.
- Greater transparency on decisions and the community's role in decision-making was needed.
- The Chair requested that the oversight group needed to meet to discuss matters and asked for further details to be presented as soon as possible.

5. CAPITAL PROJECT OFFICER UPDATE

Dan Thomas, Programme Manager for Capital Programmes, introduced the report, noting that:

- Considered structural advice following surveys on the Cinema and library to Cemetery boundary wall was that it should be in the main project due to dependencies on Tite Arch and the Visitor Centre works. Officers had added this to the NLHF requirements via a variation order and would be factored into the programme at a later date. Additionally,

there was funding available due to lower consultancy costs and from contingency funds, but attendees were keen to understand the full implications and noted that contingency funds should be left until later in the programme when the costs of high-risk elements such as entrances and graves were fully known.

- The Catacombs scaffolding and membrane designs were to be shared with the MAG and SoMC prior to going to Planning for approval, but were not yet ready.
- Officers were also meeting with PCSG, environment consultancy, on trees to agree a schedule and programme of works, to be steered by the Chair of the MAG and the Bereavement Services team. In discussion it was noted that trees had made some monuments structurally unsound, such as with the Burgess tomb, and increased risk from falling trees and branches.

6. OPERATIONS UPDATE

Kevin Crook, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods, noted the report and provided the following responses to questions:

- Cemetery scrub and litter clearance had commenced from mid-January, but wet ground had delayed efforts, with the area behind the Greek Chapel and near the Crematorium to be included in further clearance later in the year.
- Subject to final agreement, budget had been identified for two additional members of staff to join the Maintenance team from early Summer.
- The Catacombs fencing had been secured following a break-in from Rose Garden side.
- Dulwich College students would be back on site on Tuesday lunchtimes over the coming weeks.
- The quote for Maddick Mausoleum works had been received, but advice from Doug Black, Design & Conservation Manager, was needed on replacement handles. The quote for Benjamin Colls relief work was still pending.
- Concerns had previously been raised on conservation management as the Cemetery was designated as part of Lambeth's Local Plan as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), as part of a national drive for greater biodiversity, and was reflected in the draft Maintenance and Management Plan (MMP). The Chair stated that this had been announced by Harrison's without a full review; and although attendees respected the SINC, it was previously agreed that the primary purpose and provision was the burial of the dead, and not ecological considerations.
- Professor Flanagan noted that the nature conservation area currently designated by Harrison's was wetland and had significant memorials which was not appropriate, and should be moved to the bee area where it would not come into conflict with those visiting monuments; reiterating that these plans had not been suitably discussed.
- The Chair of the MAG also noted that strimming needed to start in June and not late Autumn.
- Officers confirmed that the MMP would be reviewed in due course, taking note of water stages, hierarchy of priority of Cemetery uses, and interdependencies. The Chairs of the SoMC and MAG would identify contentious areas and come back to officers to initiate discussion.
- The map in the agenda pack (page 20) was noted as being overly complicated and was difficult for both the team on the ground and attendees to accurately follow.
- The Stillbirth Memorial, detailed in the agenda pack (pages 35-40) was to move to the Rose Garden, and attendees agreed the proposed wording and design, noting that they were sensitive and considerate. The Chair commented that the planned memorial was in keeping with purpose and better allowed bereaved parents to come and leave flowers,

whereas the current site was over graves and had been placed without Authority.

- Councillor Sonia Winifred asked whether a Book of Memory was agreed for the Stillbirth Memorial and stated that if it were publicised then it would be used. The Chair also stated that the Stillbirth Memorial was now and was to only be a focal point for bereavement and did not contain internments.
- Lambeth had developed separate Cemetery Regulations for each of its three cemeteries, with those for Lambeth and Streatham Cemeteries now implemented, and asked attendees for comment, feedback and to address points raised in discussion prior to further agreement.
- The Chair noted that Lambeth's policy on single use plastics meant that such tributes should not be left on graves and conformed with other local authority and national practices.
- Attendees noted that the consultation needed to ensure the local community was given a genuine choice. For instance, the banning the leaving of single-use plastic on graves could be explained during a consultation instead of being consulted on when Lambeth policies prohibited many items being left. As such, it would be necessary to inform people of the Council's intentions or otherwise open to complaints on the consultation process.
- Officers noted that although the current regulations prohibited the placing of some items, this was still done and there were likely to be complaints when enforcement started. Reverend Cannon Ivelaw Bowman commented that the removal of items might be viewed by some as a desecration, and the Chair suggested that a note of any transgression might be necessary, but regular enforcement would see a decline in incidents and adherence to regulations.
- During discussion, it was noted that Jacqueline Landy, Bereavement Service Manager, was responsible for enforcing the Regulations and adherence to the Activity Plan.
- The apiary license (agenda pack, pages 25-33) was included to improve the management of beehives and beekeeper-cemetery relationship, and this had now been signed and sealed.
- To carry out a site visit with the FoWNC to discuss sites for crematorium swift bird boxes. The SoMC was content to proceed with proposals.
- The Chair noted that whilst the SoMC could order trees, such as the one growing through the Burgess Memorial, to be removed, it was for officers to action proposals.

At the conclusion of this item at 18:28 Councillor Peter Ely and Councillor Pete Elliott left the meeting.

7. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Beth Cross, introduced the report and provided the following responses to questions:

- Officers were still developing a new information leaflet planned to be ready in April.
- Detail on activities and statistics would be presented to the next meeting.
- The Chair noted that information-sharing between Lambeth and the FoWNC needed improvement with monthly updates so that the newsletter and noticeboard could be updated in a timely manner.
- The Lambeth website was now live and it was planned to link this with the FoWNC website and Cemetery noticeboard in the future.
- Once an appropriate supplier was sourced it would be feasible to increase cemetery activities, within reason, but the current proposals were provisionally sorted until April 2021.
- The Information leaflet would contain a seasonal programme of what activities had taken

place to date, and then officers would aim to plan further ahead. Advice from the NLHF mentor focused on a longer-term strategy, involving public viewpoints, delivery of volunteering over the next five years, and a shift to take into account the wider Project Management Group.

- The Chair of the MAG reiterated that there were limits of what could take place in the Cemetery as it was a cemetery and not a park.
- Officers would also meet with the Robson Road Resident Association who had expressed interest in public engagement in the Cemetery.

8. REVISED CEMETERY REGULATIONS

This item was discussed above during the *Operational Update*.

The meeting ended at 6.39 pm

Date of Despatch: Thursday 16 April 2020

Contact for Enquiries: David Rose

Tel: 020 7926 1037

E-mail: drose@lambeth.gov.uk

Web: www.lambeth.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank