

WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 7 February 2018 at 5.45 pm

Minutes

Present: J. E. C. Briant, Nicholas Long MBE and Dick Tooze

Apologies: Jack Kelly, Paul Barber, Councillor Fred Cowell and Councillor Max Deckers Dowber

Also present: Robert Holden, Steven Wong, and Kevin Crook

1. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Nicholas Long, welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that the meeting was not quorate and would proceed on an informal basis.

Declarations of interest:

- Nicholas Long was a grave owner;
- Robert Holden was a grave owner for five graves; and,
- Julian Briant was also a grave owner.

2. MINUTES OF THE WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (01.11.17)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the West Norwood Cemetery Scheme of Management Committee held on 01 November 2017 be noted and deferred to the next meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE WEST NORWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY GROUP (17.01.18)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the West Norwood Cemetery Advisory Group held on 17 January 2018 be noted; subject to the following correction:

- Dick Tooze's apologies be recorded.

4. HLF BID UPDATE

The Capital Project Officer, Steven Wong, updated attendees as detailed in the report. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The initial draft on chapters 1-3 of the Conservation Plan were undergoing internal review and had been generally well received, sections 4-5 were shortly to be received and reviewed, with the full draft to be shared with the Heritage Lottery fund (HLF) mentor by 16 February.

- The costing of the drainage and paths strategy was being drawn up by the Quantity Surveyor, with the internal review nearly complete.
- The boundary wall proposals internal review was almost complete, with cost estimates awaited.
- The final survey works were being commissioned for both the Hubbard and Robson Road entrance proposals, with both options to be submitted for pre-application advice.
- It was noted that both entrance options appeared viable; however, Robson Road would be more expensive and required services to be moved, whilst Hubbard Road had a more restrictive space for paving due to grave locations. Both proposals would be gated but not restrictive to wheelchair users, and both proposals still required costing which might be prohibitive.
- The HLF mentor had suggested that two other sections of wall should at Hubbard Road receive railings to look uniform, which the Chair considered an improvement to aesthetics and security.
- Feedback from the HLF had been received on St Stephen's Chapel and would be made available for comment by the Steering Group with ideas for a pilot for future use to be considered in the summer; with the legal process for the transfer of ownership from Greek Enclosure Trust also underway.
- Updates were to be made to the Visitor Centre external designs, following HLF mentor advice.
- The monuments survey and works survey was complete.
- The above packages were to be submitted for pre-application shortly.
- The pre-application plans and proposals would be taken to public consultation in the spring.
- The mid-project HLF evaluation meetings were to be scheduled for April.
- The monoliths draft text was nearing sign-off, with planning application submitted in February.
- The activity themes and ideas continued to be developed, with local engagement continuing, most recently with meetings from Picture House, South London Theatre and South London Care.
- The Chair noted that Beth Cross had now joined team as the Activities Coordinator, which included oversight over the volunteering program, and had met with the Chair.
- The Chair also noted that the next phases for the Steering Group were to narrow down options (e.g. entrance placement), to deduce feasibility, and noted a number of hard decisions to be made over the next months.

5. CAPITAL PROJECT OFFICER'S UPDATE

The Capital Project Officer, Steven Wong, updated attendees as detailed in the report and the discussion proceeded as follows:

- A brief for the restoration of the Letts and Thomas memorials, due to its value, had gone out to three suppliers and officers were awaiting submissions expected in mid-February.
- There was no movement on the grave reuse pilot work and would now await the new financial year.
- The boundary wall between the cinema-library and the cemetery had been delayed and new drainage along the path was needed.
- The capstone on one of the piers at the proposed Hubbard Road entrance was to be righted.
- Officers were to go back to the Asset Management Group (AMG) and Asset Management Cabinet Advisory Panel (AMCAP) to bid for further rounds of funding and receive a

provisional sum, including the scaffolding rebuild and rose garden. In addition Joahanne Flaherty and Beth Cross would provide figures leading up to the award of the HLF funding.

- The Bid's current phase was due for submission on 31 August, but would not receive authorisation until late January 2019; and during that time officers would produce plans for pre-emptive work.
- Scaffolding work was separate to the HLF bid, with the Council providing funding and involved a combination of maintenance and repair. Although the professional inspection company had confirmed that some scaffolding was reusable, the entire structure would need to be rebuilt, and officers were awaiting quotes and were in the process of getting a provisional sum.
- The Chair asked that the former Effra culvert, blocked in part, be reviewed for work to ease drainage in the cemetery, noting the pooling around the Gilbert Memorial.
- Dick Tooze asked officers to review whether DNA could be taken during grave re-use, noting potential objections from the Church of England, to see whether it was worthwhile, could be useful to companies such as Ancestry or to descendants. The Chair also noted that this might require Home Office license and consent from a descendant, but would be useful to have this understanding, and asked Dick Tooze to formulate a paper on justification for consideration.
- The Chair thanked officers for petitioning and receiving Faculty for the Letts and Thomas memorials which constituted a huge amount of work in difficult circumstances, and would be invaluable for graves in consecrated areas and further works.

6. OPERATIONS UPDATE

The Head of Neighbourhoods, Kevin Crook, updated attendees as detailed in the report. In discussion, it was noted that:

- The memorial bench removal programme, previously agreed, would start on 05 March, with 2-3 benches to be removed per month.
- Good weather conditions had permitted grass cutting up to December and would resume in March.
- It was aimed to have the team carry out scrub clearance for 3-4 weeks from January-February and it was noted that much positive feedback on the grounds had been received last year. The Chair added that Bob Flanagan, Chair of the Advisory Group, highly approved.
- There were more self-set trees than anticipated and stumps were being chemically treated.
- The Community Payback Team were now based in the cemetery out of the mess hut, and spent weekly Wednesday sessions leafing and clearing debris. The Chair asked whether they could also clear debris from trenches adjoining the east and north perimeter walls, which might help improve drainage and this would be raised with the supervisor. It was also noted that any interesting finds in the trenches be catalogued with a view to identifying them later.
- 127 memorial trees had been identified, but only 25 had been recorded. These trees had also been offered without Faculty and it was expected that numbers were much higher. It was proposed to remove 30-40 trees at a time after asking people with connections to contact the office and leaving signs in situ for six months. Those recorded specimens would have their 25-year tenures honoured after which they would be removed, with a discussion to follow on some of the larger examples. The Chair suggested that photos be taken of when plaques were installed and again after six months had elapsed so that there was evidence.
- The Chair noted his approval for addressing the memorial bench and tree removal, but

asked that a regularising position, long overdue, be formulated by the Council. There was not an even distribution of benches or trees and officers would circulate a spreadsheet detailing location.

- The Chair noted that memorial trees and benches had been offered under previous management which did not have formal authorisation, but were offered on a 25 year tenured basis which was expiring and therefore presented a natural opportunity to seek removal.
- Hard Sun, a BBC drama, had part of its first episode filmed in the cemetery, which received a good fee.
- Some wooden-edged litter bins were due replacement from summer onwards.
- There remained two vacancies in the Bereavement Services team due to be advertised shortly. In addition, there was a directorate restructure going for consultation later in February and officers would update at the next meeting.
- There had been a rotting tree between two monuments in Square 56, which had blown over and damaged nearby memorial stones, with one rested on its back to protect it, as raised by Robert Holden. The team had used a digger to remove the tree, but had not laid tracking so the grass had been damaged, which was noted for future works, but officers confirmed that no graves were scheduled to be dug there. Bob Flanagan had previously raised the issues of rotting trees damaging memorials and that this would need to be contended with in the future.
- During discussion, it was noted that scrub clearance from particular graves should be raised with Kevin Crook's team, the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery (FOWNC) or through Bob Flanagan.

The meeting ended at 6.43 pm

Date of Despatch: Thursday 15 February 2018

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