

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERY SUB-
COMMITTEE

To: All Members of the Crematorium & Cemetery Sub Committee

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONSED TO ATTEND
a meeting of the
CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERY
SUB COMMITTEE

A meeting of this Sub Committee will be held
At the TOWN HALL, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3PJ
on THURSDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2023
at approximately 7pm (following the Planning Applications Panel)

AGENDA

10. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence

11. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda (see notes)

12. **MINUTES**

To receive and approve the minutes of the Crematorium & Cemetery Sub Committee meeting held on 27th July 2023 (M1) (attached)

13. **PUBLIC ADDRESS/ADDRESS BY TOWN COUNCILLORS TO SUB COMMITTEE**

To hear any address to the Sub Committee from members of the public and other members of the Town Council on matters within the responsibility of this Sub Committee

14. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To move that the public and the press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which should be regarded as confidential are to be discussed

15. **CREMATORIUM UPDATE**

To receive a written report from the Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager on crematorium operations (attached in a private and confidential appendix)

16. **READMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To move that the public and the press be readmitted to the meeting

17. **DATE AND AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 1st February 2024, at Huntingdon Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon, PE29 3PJ.

15th September 2023
Town Hall
Market Hill
Huntingdon
PE29 3PJ

Philip Peacock

**PHILIP PEACOCK
TOWN CLERK**

This meeting will be serviced by the Town Clerk – 01480 410383

Copies for information to:

The Members of Huntingdon Town Council, Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk.

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

(1) Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.

(2) A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it

(a) relates to you, or

(b) is an interest of -

(i) your spouse or civil partner; or (ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or (iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

(3) Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -

(a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;

(b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);

(c) any current contracts with the Council;

(d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;

(e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;

(f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or

(g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.

B. Other Interests

(4) If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.

(5) A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -

(a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Council's administrative area, or (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

**CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERY SUB
COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 27th July 2023.

Present: Councillors: K Brockett (Ex-Officio); J Cole; D Cole, M Fearon; S Gifford; G Hunt; B Luckham; A McAdam (Chairman); S McAdam; A Norton and P Pearce (Ex-Officio).

Absent: None

In Attendance: Councillors M Baker; A Blackwell; P Kennington; T Sanderson and K Webb

9 members of the public

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor asked for nominations for the election of Chairman. It was proposed and seconded that Cllr A McAdam be appointed as Chairman of the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee for the ensuing year. With no further nominations, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr A McAdam as Chairman of the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee for the local government year 2023/24.

2. **APOLOGIES**

There were none.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman asked for nominations for the appointment of Vice Chairman. It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Gifford be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee for the ensuing year. With no further nominations, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to appoint Cllr S Gifford as Vice Chairman of the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee for the local government year 2023/24.

4. **TERMS OF COMMITTEE**

It was advised that the terms of committee were the same for all of the Council's committees and it was for Members to decide on the following:

- i. Whether the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee was open to members of the public to attend. It was agreed that members of the public would be able to attend unless commercially sensitive information was being discussed.

- ii. Whether the Crematorium and Cemetery Sub Committee should appoint any co-opted members for specific items that fall under the responsibility of the committee. It was agreed to co-opt members when and if it was required.
- iii. Whether all agendas and minutes should be kept/marked as 'Private and Confidential'. It was agreed that the agendas and minutes would be made available to the public.

Clerk's Note: Cllr Blackwell left the meeting.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

6. **PUBLIC ADDRESS/ADDRESS BY TOWN COUNCILLORS TO SUB COMMITTEE**

A Member indicated that they wished to speak, and it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting.

Mr Ali addressed Members regarding Item 8 on the agenda to speak in support of the members of the Muslim community who had requested permission to install kerb set boundaries around graves to prevent people walking over the plots. Mr Ali noted the alternative offered was a mound built up on the grave, but pointed out this would need regular maintenance to prevent the mound washing away in wet weather. It was felt that HTC should be responsible for the maintenance of the mounds instead of the deceased's families.

It was noted that the local Muslim community was growing, and HTC should seek to engage with the community more and update its burial regulations to meet the needs of different beliefs and practises.

A Member shared their research into Muslim burial practises, and noted their support for accommodating different beliefs. It was noted that HTC had previously engaged with representatives from the local Muslim community, who had advised the council when drawing up the current regulations. The HTC Estates Team also had a good reputation across the local area for the quality of the graves dug to meet Muslim burial requirements.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments, and it was then proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED to reconvene the meeting.

7. **CREMATORIUM UPDATE**

Members had before them a report on crematorium operations. The Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager gave Members a verbal overview of the report and asked Members if they had any questions.

An issue had been highlighted regarding the high temperatures in the area around the cremator, which created a health and safety issue for the technician. It was noted that solutions to the problem were being investigated.

A Member questioned if the crematorium income was covering both running costs and the repayments of the public works loan. The RFO explained that costs were covered by both the HTC precept, and crematorium income. It was noted that the amount covered by the income would increase as cremations increased.

A Member questioned if the Sapley Lodge was being used at its full potential. The Crematorium & Cemeteries Manager explained that the lodge could currently accommodate 2 wakes per day. Due to the set up of the media system, different music could not be played in the chapel and lodge at the same time which currently reduced the capacity to accommodate additional wake bookings during the day. Options to work around this were being looked into.

A Member asked if ashes interred in the memorial wall would be kept there indefinitely. It was explained that the length of the lease for plots would likely be 10 years.

Members thanked the Crematorium and Cemeteries team for their work, and noted the report with thanks.

8. **BURIAL MOTION**

Members had before them the following motion regarding burials at Primrose Lane Cemetery:

1. Huntingdon Town Council notes that the current regulations for Primrose Lane cemetery provide for a headstone;
2. Huntingdon Town Council notes the desire amongst some parts of the Muslim community in Huntingdon for kerb sets in the section set aside for Muslim burials at Primrose Lane cemetery;
3. Huntingdon Town Council notes that the provision of cemeteries is a statutory duty for Huntingdon Town Council;
4. Huntingdon Town Council believes that serious consideration should be given to the request of any resident or group of residents of Huntingdon for services to be provided in a particular manner, particularly where those services are a statutory duty;
5. Huntingdon Town Council resolves to hold a consultation on amending the regulations for Primrose Lane cemetery as below:
 - i. Huntingdon Town Council directs the crematorium and cemeteries manager to compile the names and addresses of the next of kin responsible for burial plots at Primrose Lane;
 - ii. Huntingdon Town Council directs the communications officer to write to everyone identified at 5(a) with a single question survey asking as to whether they would support or oppose a change to the rules regarding burials at Primrose Lane such that small kerb sets may be permitted in the relevant section of Primrose Lane;
 - iii. Huntingdon Town Council directs that the consultation shall be open for a period of no less than twenty-eight calendar days and shall be completed by the end of 2023;
6. Huntingdon Town Council remits the results of the consultation to the leisure and community services committee for consideration.

As discussed during Public Address, it was noted that some members of the local Muslim community had requested permission to install kerb sets around graves.

Members debated this topic in depth. Some Members felt that the services provided by HTC should adapt to meet the different needs within the community. Others raised concerns that changing the regulations for one group would set a precedent, and noted there were other cultures and religions with different practises around burials who currently abided by the burial rules.

Members questioned if there was a way to strengthen the mounds proposed as an alternative to reduce the amount of maintenance that would be needed. It was explained that the Head Groundsman had been consulted and he had suggested that if the mounds were built with clay-based soil, they would be more resilient against the rain.

It was suggested that consulting families of those already buried in Primrose Lane about the proposed changes may cause upset for those who have previously buried loved ones without the option for kerb sets.

It was suggested that if Members wished to discuss this item further, it be referred to the Leisure & Community Services Committee.

Following discussion, the motion was seconded and put to a vote.

3 Members voted for

4 Members voted against

9. **DATE & AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 26th September 2019 at the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon.

CHAIRMAN