

Rogerstone & Bassaleg Joint Burial Board

Minutes of the Burial Board Meeting

Tuesday 7th March 2023

**Held at Tydu Community Hall, Welfare Grounds, Tregwilym Road,
Rogerstone NP10 9EQ & Also via Zoom Remote Attendance**

Present:

Cllr A Hobbs (R), Cllr S Bowen (R), Cllr N Tarr (G) Cllr S Mlewa via Zoom (R), Cllr J Reynolds via Zoom (R)

Apologies

Cllr S Jones (R), Cllr P Appleton (G),

Absent

Cllr N Upham (R), Cllr L Cummings (R), Cllr J Harris (G), Cllr K Sayer (G),

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1.1

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. CLERKS REPORT

1. Burials

To give Members an indication of demand, the following has been taken from 1st April 2022 – 28th February 2023 Figures shown in brackets are last years figures

- 8** new full burials (4) **(one double width plot – American Casket)
- 12 existing plot full burials (4)
- 3 new cremated remains (6)
- 5 existing plot cremated remains (4)

2. Operational

2.1

Representations have been made to Wales Audit regarding the Annual Return Outcome Reports for 2019 / 2020 & 2020 / 2021 which have still not been received. It is concerning not to have had either of these reports after such a long delay, however Members will be able to take some comfort from the Internal Audit Review(s) which did not raise any issues & were issued in a timely manner & reported to Members.

Wales Audit have been chased up for an explanation several times but the e mails remain unanswered. As the e mails are being ignored, no further chase ups have been sent & it is intended to take up the matter when the Audit Outcomes are eventually received.

Members will need to consider appointing accountants for the 2022 / 2023 end of year accounts and internal audit. Walter Hunter & Co have quoted an increase of 9% on last years fees which is less than current RPI & CPI rates. Walter Hunter are therefore recommended for appointment.

Following discussion, Walter Hunter were appointed for 2022 / 2023 Accounts & Internal Audit.

2.2

During the adverse weather in January an area of the cemetery towards the bottom of the tarmac access road flooded & remained waterlogged for 2/3 weeks & complaints were received from 2 bereaved relatives & the gravedigger who believed the re-occurrence of a leaking Dwr Cymru water pipe was contribution to the situation. Dwr Cymru were contacted to check for any leaks in the area however none were reported back.

At the time of the flooding, there were several other areas which were waterlogged due to the exceptionally adverse & prolonged periods of rainfall, St Woolos was flooded worse than Rogerstone & Bassaleg & even the football pitch at the Welfare Ground (which had previously benefitted from a £250k drainage scheme) was under water for a similar period.

There is no drainage system at the cemetery, which normally relies on the natural slope of the land & dissipation through the soft landscaping. However, the future proposal to remove the bottom half of the access road from the hammerhead may improve the situation during exceptionally adverse weather. Members may wish to consider bringing this scheme forward to try to improve the situation, however this will have financial implications for the administration & works on site.

Members agreed to consider bringing forward the above scheme at the June AGM.

2.3

A complaint has been received via a Councillor that tyre tracks have caused damage to the grass verge adjacent to the hammerhead turning area, it was requested that a

small fence or rocks were placed at the perimeter of the tarmac to prevent vehicles causing a reoccurrence.

Rocks or a small fence would impede grounds maintenance activities & may create a H&S issue, particularly when natural light is poor. The aesthetics of a fence or barrier in the centre of the cemetery may also be something to consider, a low box hedge may be preferable, but would have maintenance implications.

To provide some context, complaints of tyre track on soft landscaping are very rare.

Members agreed to continue monitoring the situation.

2.4

The Grounds Maintenance of the cemetery for the new financial year will need to be considered. The existing contractor has notified me that there will be no increase in rates for 2023 / 2024 despite the current RPI & CPI rates, therefore given the quality of service & flexibility of the existing contractor, it is recommended that he is re-engaged for the new financial year.

Following discussion, DS Preece were re-appointed for 2023 / 2024

2.5

There have been 2 incidents of black bags & rubbish left outside the cemetery which has been cleared away by RCC staff. It looks as though it could be a local litter picking group who are depositing the bags there so efforts are being made to try to establish who may be responsible. Newport City Council will collect rubbish from litter picking groups & have been approached to collect any future deposits.

Cllr N Tarr is to raise the matter at the next meeting of Graig Community Council to try to establish if a local litter picking group are responsible.

2.6

When recording a recent burial, it became apparent that there are a number of electronic burial records missing for the period February 2018 to January 2020, however there are records available in the manual register, subject to verification. The existing records for this period should therefore be verified & once complete, the electronic register updated.

Members agreed to meet the costs of this additional work, which was anticipated to be 12 – 16hrs.

3. **Financial**

3.1

The income & expenditure transactions of the day to day revenue account from 1st December 2022 to 28th February 2022 are as follows:

December

Income: £2138.50

Expenditure: £0

January

Income: £3029.00

Expenditure: £178.98

February

Income: £1839.00

Expenditure: £417.56

Account Balances at 28th February 202

Current Acc: £34,399.00

Reserve Acc: £75,117.47

The Clerk circulated the Bank Statements for these 3 months showing the income & expenditure & answered any questions from Members

NB

The Clerks salary will be one end of year transfer to Rogerstone Community Council payroll.

4. 2022 / 2023 NJC ANNUAL PAY AWARD

4.1

Members agreed to implement the NJC national pay award for Local Government Officers.

5. 2023 / 2024 CEMETERY FEES

5.1

Members agreed to mirror the fees for 2023 / 2024 which Newport City Council have recently implemented for services which the Joint Burial Board provide, so that cemetery fees throughout Newport are consistent. The increase to fees is 10%.

6. 2023 / 2024 BUDGET & PRECEPT

6.1

Members agreed to consider the 2023 / 2024 Draft Budget at the June AGM when they can be produced with the benefit of knowing the 2022 / 2023 outturn (End of Year Accounts)

6.2

It was agreed to increase the Precept to Rogerstone & Graig Community Councils by 10% which is in line with the increase to fees & charges. The 2023 / 2024 Precepts will therefore be:

Rogerstone Community Council £998.40 X10% = **£1098.24**

Graig Community Council £665.40 X10% = **£731.94**

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

7.1

There was no urgent business to discuss.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was agreed is as follows:

- Tuesday 20th June 2023 (AGM), 7.00pm in Graig Community Hall

Zoom facilities via a laptop will be available for the meeting.