

Goudhurst Parish Council



BURIAL AUTHORITY

Minutes of a Meeting held on 18 October 2022 at 5.00pm in St Mary's Church

Present: Cllrs Barry Noakes, Caroline Richards and Guy Sutton. Rev. Rachel Robertson and Mrs Claire Reed, Clerk.

1. Apologies were received from Cllr Phil Kirkby (working).
2. Questions and statements from the public. There was none
3. Churchyard maintenance contracts for 2023-24

It was agreed to make the following changes to the St Mary's maintenance contract for 2023-24:

- To keep the sandstone walls free of growth for example ivy and self-seeded saplings.
- To trim around the headstones to remove weed growth.
- To remove self-seeded saplings from in and around graves.
- To reduce the grass cutting to every 3 weeks during the growing season (Mar – Oct).

Changes to Christ Church maintenance contract for 2023-24:

- To keep the hedge at the rear of the graveyard tidy.
- To keep the righthand hedge in the lower graveyard (in use) tidy.
- To reduce the grass cutting to every 3 weeks during the growing season (Mar – Oct).

4. Application for a compost bin in the Victorian Cemetery

It was **resolved** to refuse permission for the siting of a compost bin adjacent to the morgue in the Victorian Cemetery. The PCC will be asked to remove the bins as soon as possible. **Action: Clerk**

5. Memorial application for the late Dennis Knight

Members considered the application and raised no objection to the application as submitted. **Action: Clerk to inform the memorial mason**

6. Memorial application for the late Jean and John Peart

Members were unable to decide on the application due to a lack of information. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should contact the applicant to seek clarification on the materials to be used, the method of fixing the plaque to the tablet and for a sketch of the proposed design. **Action: Clerk.**

7. Memorial Testing

It was noted that quotes have previously been received for memorial testing. Members expressed concern over the implication of memorial testing and the liabilities associated with the Parish Council engaging in this type of testing. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact

Council's insurer to seek and advice and also other local Burial Authorities. Rev Rachel Robertson agreed to seek advice from the Church's insurer. It was further agreed that more information on what the test entails should be sought form the contractors.

8. Burial Authority Budget for 2023-24

Members considered the draft budget for 2023-24. It was **resolved** to continue with the digitisation of the burial records with a budget of £3,000 for 2023-24 and to budget £1,500 for memorial testing. **Action: RFO**

9. Unauthorised items on graves

It was **noted** that unauthorised items had still not been removed from a number of graves. It was **resolved** to write again to the grave owners in January with a clear deadline for the removal of the items. **Action: Clerk**

10. Digitisation of Burial Records

It was **noted** that the digitisation of the records is progressing well but there is still a substantial number of records, mostly pre – 1960, to be digitised. The team are currently focussing on digitising records of the most recent interments.

11. Items for information

11.1 It was **noted** that the Clerk has arranged to meet Council's arborists to assess the leylandii on the west boundary of the burial grounds on 31 October.

11.2 It was **noted** that the clean up day at St Mary's has been rescheduled for 19 November.

11.3 The next meeting of the Burial Authority will be on 21 February 2023 at 5pm in St Mary's.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm

Claire Reed
Clerk