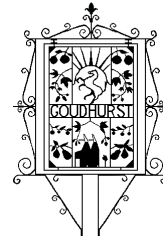


Goudhurst Parish Council



Burial Authority 28.11.23

MEETING
28 November 2023 13:00 GMT

PUBLISHED
23 November 2023

Goudhurst Parish Council



To: Cllrs Edward Hodgskin, Phil Kirkby, Geoff Mason and Mrs Caroline Richards.
Cllr Antony Harris (ex-officio). Rev. Rachel Robertson (advisor).

I summon you to a Meeting of the Burial Authority on Tuesday 28 November 2023, 1.00 pm at the Hop Bine, Goudhurst, where business detailed on this agenda will be discussed.

Goudhurst Parish Council recognise that there are continuing risks associated with COVID-19 and are supportive of individuals wearing masks in meetings and maintaining a social distance. We will continue to provide hand sanitiser at the entrance to the Village Hall. In order to keep everyone safe, please do not attend a meeting if you have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 5 days. We will continue to review the risks and will comply with any future controls recommended or mandated by HM Government.

Members of the Public and the Press are welcome to attend this meeting. At the Chairman's discretion, 15 minutes will be set aside for questions from members of the public each one of whom may be invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes in total relating to items on the Agenda or about issues of local concern. Thereafter they have the right, and are welcome, to stay and observe the rest of the Meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1.

Please inform the Clerk if you intend to film or record the Meeting.

Claire Reed
Clerk to Goudhurst Parish Council
23 November 2023

Parish Council Office - The Hop Bine, Ranters Lane, Goudhurst, TN17 1HN
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A quorum for the Burial Authority is 3 Members.

Agenda

Location
The Hop Bine

Date
28 Nov 2023

Time
13:00

	Item	Page
1	Apologies for absence	-
2	Declarations of Interest	-
3	To receive questions and statements from the public and press.	-
4	To resolve to approve the new Grass Management Plan for the cemeteries.	4
5	To consider the weed growth in the Victorian Cemetery and Burial Ground and to decide on any action needed.	-
6	To resolve to approve the updated maintenance contracts for the cemeteries.	6
7	To consider and make a decision on the number of plaques to be added to the new memorial bench in the Burial Ground and the fee to be charged.	-
8	To consider and make a decision on the future location of Burial Authority meetings.	-
9	Items for information	-
9.1	Removal of the cypress growing out of a grave in the Victorian Cemetery.	-
10	Next meeting Tuesday 19 March 2024, 6pm at St Mary's Church	-

St Mary's Churchyard – Plan Bee Proposal

Firstly, the PCC would like to thank Geoff Mason for all the work and enthusiasm he has put into this proposal, as agreed we are coming back with our thoughts in writing.

Goudhurst Parish Council has responsibility over maintaining the three graveyards associated with St Mary's Church, with the church building itself being maintained by the St Mary's PCC. GPC's proposal is to align maintenance with Kent's Plan Bee to encourage growth in the number of native flora and fauna species in the Churchyard, the Victorian Graveyard and the Burial Ground by allowing certain areas to go un-mown for longer than is traditional. GPC have presented a sympathetic management plan for the Churchyard having met with members of the PCC in September 2023.

This response concerns only the Churchyard; however we would also like to see the management plan for the Victorian Graveyard to the south of St Mary's.

The PCC has no dispute with the aims of the plan but has three areas of concern:

1. The actively used cremation plots against the church and to the north must be neat, accessible and weed free.
2. Weeds cannot be allowed to grow between paving slabs and bricks, nor against the church building. Such growth would damage the fabric of the paths and walls and would detract from the site's aesthetics.
3. There is a worry that the long grass areas may, towards the end of their season, look unkempt.

In all cases we ask that GPC are adaptable in their management in order to meet the PCC's expectations of this being only an improvement – if at any time the weeds prove damaging or the overgrowth detracts, we would expect GPC to act.

In the case of the longer growing areas GPC has suggested that one of the zones is left to see what dormant wildflowers will emerge, whilst in the other pro-active seeding of native wildflowers is done. As time goes on we can assess which would work best in achieving Plan Bee's aim.

In the case of concerns 1 and 2 the PCC believe that careful and limited herbicide use would be more effective in stopping weed establishment than the alternatives suggested. GPC have proposed manual weeding by volunteers backed up with milder treatments than a commercial herbicide. An adaptable approach would be to closely monitor growth under the GPC plan on

the understanding that if available volunteers cannot keep it as we expect, herbicides can be used.

It is important that the community see that the change in management is deliberate and positive, to that end we'd offer space in the foyer for an educational display and suggest that small weatherproof signs could be placed strategically around the Graveyard. It was also suggested that – as in some other churchyards and parks – the longer growth areas are roped off.

St Mary's is at the centre of a beautiful village, is the focal point of community worship and the backdrop for many showpiece moments in our lives: whilst we fully agree with the ethics of Plan Bee and understand that the maintenance of the open spaces is under GPC control, our expectation is that it always looks it's best and that it's fabric cannot be damaged. Wild flowers and insect populations grow over time and we'd want to stipulate that GPC are always adaptable throughout that growth in ensuring our expectations are met.

October 10th 2023

St. Mary's Maintenance Contract March to October 2024

Groundscare

Conditions of contract

The Contractor is to provide all of the equipment required to undertake the maintenance work.

All arisings are to be removed from site, except mulch cuttings as agreed.

The use of weed killer is not permitted.

The Contractor should take due care when undertaking the work as commensurate with working in a public space.

Special care is required when working around gravestones and monuments to ensure they are not damaged.

The Contractor must advise the Council of any damage or repairs that become evident whilst undertaking the maintenance work or any damage they cause whilst in undertaking their work.

No work is to be carried out on Sundays.

Work around the churches and churchyards should not be undertaken when a wedding or funeral is in process.

Evidence of public liability insurance will be required prior to the awarding of a contract.

Work Required	Frequency	Price
1. Mow and strim in Back Lane Play area adjacent to the Church Rooms.	Every 2 weeks from mid-March to mid-October	
2. Mow and Strim in the Burial Grounds to the South-East of St Mary's Churchyard.	Every 2 weeks from mid-March to mid-October	
3. Mow and Strim in St Mary's Churchyard as per the agreed Cemeteries Grass Management Plan.	See Cemeteries Grass Management Plan	
4. Mow and strim in the Victorian Cemetery as per the agreed Cemeteries Grass Management Plan.	See Cemeteries Grass Management Plan	
5. Cut grass footway on south side of the highway.	Monthly May to September	
6. Maintain stone walls in the Victorian Cemetery and Burial Ground clear of ivy and other plants growing out of them.	As required	
7. Ensure hedge along the much-used path from the Back Lane steps towards the Church is kept tight and tidy so as not to impeded the use of the path. Please leave the Shepherds Crook clear of the closely adjacent hedge.	As required	
8. Trim around ashes tablets on the north side of St. Mary's.	Annually	
9. Maintain hedges in St Mary's Churchyard, the Victoria cemetery and the Burial Ground. To include the laurel hedge at the north end of the Burial grounds which should be kept to a height of no more that 4ft. Please do not carry out any work on the yews that are on Parish Council land.	Annually, outside of nesting season	

Goudhurst's Plan Bee – Cemeteries Grass Management Plan

Version 1 November 2023

Area	Cut Length	Arisings	Frequency	Months
Short	No change (? cm)	Remove all	Every 2 weeks	Mid March – Mid October
Medium	10cm blade	Remove all	Monthly	After bulbs have flowered
Long grass/ meadow	Standard	Remove all	3 times a year	February, July, October
Tussocky bank, south side of St Mary's Church	Standard		Once a year <i>Note: the area immediately adjacent to the road may need additional cut(s) to prevent encroachment on the road.</i>	September