



## **OAKLEY AND DEANE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **BURIAL GROUND AND CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE ("BG&CYC")**

#### **MINUTES**

**MEETING HELD ON 12 October 2023**

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**LOCATION:** Newfound Pavilion

**TIME:** 6:00pm

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllr Amanda Hayman, Cllr Linda Wain, Cllr Dave Condliffe, Cllr Trevor Green, Cllr Alex Rowley, Mrs Nicola Beere (Clerk)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Lucy Archer

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Matthew Hayman (volunteer co-opted to Burial Ground and Churchyard Working Party), two members of the public.

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**Public session:** Mr Simon and Mrs Elaine Turner were invited to speak. They expressed their concern that the BG&CYC might be intending to ban faux flowers in the churchyard. They also wanted the BG&CYC to be aware that recently, grass cuttings had been left strewn around the burial ground and that dogs being walked in the field behind the burial ground were able to enter the burial ground by squeezing under the fence.

The Chair explained to Mr and Mrs Turner that the committee was in the process of considering the current and proposed new rules for managing the burial ground and that this would include how best to manage fresh and faux flowers. The aim was to produce a set of new rules that would ensure that the interests of all visitors to the burial ground were balanced. She reassured Mr and Mrs Turner that minutes of the discussion would be published and that the public's opinions were welcomed.

The Clerk confirmed that there had been historical issues with the grass cutting and that some of the contractor's equipment had recently been stolen. She explained that the contractor would mow and strim the grass every 2 weeks during the growing season but could not use a leaf blower to collect the cuttings. The Clerk will be meeting with the contractor next week to discuss the maintenance of the grounds. The Clerk will also be looking at ways to secure the burial grounds so that only assistance dogs can enter with their owner.

Mr and Mrs Turner then left the meeting.

**1/BG/23**

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were given by Cllr Archer.

**2/BG/23**      **Disclosure of Interests**  
None

**3/BG/23**      **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**  
Cllr Hayman was elected as Chair. It was agreed that it was unnecessary to appoint a Vice Chair.

**4/BG/23**      **Review of Draft Burial Ground Regulations and Guidance**

Draft Regulations and a Report with a Summary of key points, dated 11.10.23, were circulated in advance.

The Chair explained that the draft Regulations had been prepared by the BG&CY Working Group and were largely the work of Matthew Hayman a co-opted volunteer, that the draft Regulations took into account the Council's current Burial Ground Regulations as well as the published regulations of other burial authorities including, locally, Old Basing and Whitchurch, and that the Report consisted of a Summary at the beginning, highlighting the main changes and points for discussion, and a more detailed Report behind.

The Chair took the committee through the introduction to the Report and the members discussed the draft Regulations up to and including Regulation 5.1.

**Reg 1.1:** Office hours to be omitted: they can be found on the Council website. Reference to Deputy Clerk to be removed.

**Reg 1.3:** Reference to the Plans of the burial ground being available for inspection "during office hours" to be removed. The Clerk advised that the Plans are a work in progress and currently show burials but not cremations. The Clerk will upload the current Plans to One Drive, together with all the relevant application forms referred to in 1.3. Only the fees are currently available on the Council's website so Regulation 1.3 may need to be amended further.

**Reg 3.1:** There was discussion about whether "& Deane" (in square brackets in the draft) should be included. It is not clear on what conditions the burial ground was given to Oakley & Deane parish but the Clerk currently treats applicants from residents of Deane in the same way as those outside Oakley parish. All burials and services for Deane are organised by the Rector of Overton. Agreed to omit "& Deane".

**Reg 3.4:** Further consideration is required as to whether the Burial Authority should impose a minimum residence period in Oakley for individuals living in care homes outside the parish at the date of their death. No decision made.

**Reg 4:** There was a lengthy discussion about the meaning of an Exclusive Right of Burial ("EROB"), generally and in the current Burial Ground Regulations.

Current Regulation 6.3 allows the Authorised Officer (the Clerk) to grant (a) an EROB for a period of 100 years, (b) the right to one or more burials in any grave space not subject to an EROB and (c) the EROB in the adjoining grave space for a close relative. Some Members and the Clerk felt that the EROB could only refer to the purchase of a right to exclude further burials in a family grave while the Chair understood it to include the ability to reserve a plot in advance, prior to death.

Although the current Burial Ground Regulations appear to allow the reservation of an empty plot pre-death (Reg 6.3(3)) the Clerk advised that this was not usually allowed although it was possible that some plots had historically been reserved in this way. The Clerk will investigate the Burial Authority's records further and report back to the Committee.

The Clerk confirmed that single burial and cremation plots could be "reserved" as plots of double or triple depth for future family members.

The Members agreed that provision would have to be made for any plots regarding which an EROB in the widest sense had already been issued, but that for the future the Burial Authority would not allow plots to be reserved pre-death except in double or triple depth family plots when one family member has already been buried or interred. Agreed Regs 4.1 and 4.2 of the draft Regulations would be omitted.

Further discussion of Regulation 4 was postponed until the Clerk can provide the Committee with information about what plot or plots have been reserved in advance, and the terms of the reservation e.g. the ability of the Burial Authority to reallocate a plot and any refundable fee paid in advance.

**Reg 5.1:** "Two" working days' notice will be amended to "four" and the hours for notice to be given will be amended to between 10 am and 3pm.

Discussion was halted at this stage to allow the main Council Meeting to start. It was agreed that the BG&CY Working Group should continue to discuss the draft Regulations and bring their conclusions to the Committee.

**The next meeting date to be confirmed.**

**Meeting closed at 19:25:**

**Signed..... Dated.....**