

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BURIAL GROUND AND GARDENS OF REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2009 AT 6.00 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY.**

**Present :** Cllr Mr A Barnett  
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby (Chairman)  
Cllr Mr J Minns  
Cllr Mr B Ramsay

**In attendance :** Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)

A visual inspection of the Burial Ground, Gardens of Remembrance and closed churchyard had taken place before the meeting.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood.

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Burial Ground and Gardens of Remembrance Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**4. Financial Report**

The Committee examined a financial report indicating the current net position of the Burial Ground and Gardens of Remembrance Committee as at 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

RESOLVED: That, the financial report, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be noted.

**5. Fees for use of the car park at Manor Field**

The Committee reviewed the fees for the use of the car park in Manor Field by All Saints Church for weddings, funerals and christenings. The Committee noted the current annual fee was £25.

In view of a number of concerns raised recently by residents in respect of parking outside the church during the Sunday service, the Committee felt that All Saints Church should be reminded of the availability of the car park at Manor Field to alleviate the problem. Arrangements would need to put in place to ensure the gate at the car park was locked after the Sunday service.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) a fee of £25 continue to be charged for the use of the car park in Manor Field by All Saints Church for weddings, funerals and christenings and,

(2) All Saints Church be reminded that the car park at Manor Field was available for use during the Sunday service.

## **6. Burial Ground**

(a) The Committee considered matters arising from the visual inspection undertaken before the meeting.

The Committee noted that the grave owners of the late Douglas Fredrick Eatwell, the late James Edwin Elvin, the late Albert Hoyle and the late Alfred G Taylor had been informed about the condition of their respective memorial stones which had been reported as being unstable at the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) arrangements be made for turfing the graves of the late Sheryn Catherine Beecroft g.63, the late Millicent White and Royce Gerrett g.420, the late June Beryl Morgan g.210, and John Alan Buckingham g.210B and,

(2) the turfing of the grave of the late Frances Mary Rich, agreed at a meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008, be put in hand.

(b) The Committee considered a request from the sister of the late John Field to plant a commemorative tree with suitable plaque in the churchyard or Garden of Remembrance. The Committee considered the Garden of Remembrance to be unsuitable for planting a new tree, but felt there could be sufficient space in the closed churchyard.

RESOLVED: That, the request to plant a commemorative tree with suitable plaque in the closed churchyard be approved in principle, subject to agreement over the position and species of the new tree.

## **7. Garden of Remembrance**

(a) There were no matters arising from the visual inspection undertaken before the meeting.

(b) The Committee considered a request to plant a rose bush in the Garden of Remembrance near the ashes of the late Evelyn Hunt. Whilst the Garden of Remembrance was being temporarily rested, the Committee was advised that some interments were still taking place and therefore there would be insufficient space to introduce any new planting. Furthermore previous requests for memorial shrubs and plants from the bereaved had been declined.

RESOLVED: That, the request to plant a new rose bush in the Garden of Remembrance be declined.

## **8. New Garden of Remembrance**

(a) The Committee considered matters arising from the visual inspection undertaken before the meeting.

RESOLVED: That, arrangements be made for the application of a selective weedkiller in the new Garden of Remembrance.

(b) The Committee considered a complaint from a member of the public regarding the inscription permitted on the tablets in the new Garden of Remembrance. The Committee was reminded of the rules and regulations relating to the Garden of Remembrance approved by the Council on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008, which only permits the following information to be inscribed on the tablet: name/s, date/s of birth and date/s of death.

Whilst the Committee understood the complainant's concerns, the Council had agreed the regulations relating to the inscriptions on tablets to provide uniformity and it would be unfair on those who had already commissioned tablets in the new Garden of Remembrance to revise the rules at this stage. It was suggested that the complainant could consider the

installation of a bronze plaque on the wall surrounding the Garden of Remembrance as the form of wording was more flexible, subject to a maximum number of letters.

RESOLVED: That, no further action be taken.

#### **9. Closed church yard**

The Committee felt the ornamental hedge could benefit from more regular maintenance.

RESOLVED: That, arrangements be made for maintenance contract to be revised to allow a monthly cut of the ornamental hedge either side of the lychgate.

#### **10. Memorial safety**

The Committee considered amendments to the Council's policy on its memorial safety programme and testing, in line with new guidance issue by the Ministry of Justice on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The Committee examined two risk assessments of the memorials located next to the main tarmac path and away from the main tarmac path.

RECOMMENDED: That.

(1) the two risk assessments of the memorials on grave located next to the main tarmac path and away from the main tarmac path, as set out in appendix 2 attached to these minutes, be approved,

(2) the memorial safety programme and testing policy, as set out in appendix 3 attached to these minutes, be approved and adopted by the Council and,

(3) subject to (2) above, the Diocese of Rochester be advised of the Council's memorial safety programme and testing policy in order for the Faculty granted on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008 to be amended accordingly.

#### **11. Date of the next meeting**

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Signed:.....  
Chairman

Date:.....

**Hartley Parish Council  
 Summary of Receipts and Payment  
 (as at 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009)  
 Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance**

Title	Receipts		Payments		Net Position Underspend (+) /Overspend (-)
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	
Grass cutting			1,050.00	.	1,050.00
General maintenance			1500.00		1,500.00
Maintenance contract			1,750.00	138.50	1,611.50
Spoil removal			450.00		450.00
Plinth					
Graves/interments	1,260.00				-1,260.00
Interment of ashes	960.00	80.00			-880.00
Memorials	420.00				-420.00
Plaques	540.00	245.00			-295.00
New B/G grass cut			450.00		450.00
New B/G advance wks			500.00		500.00
All/St grass cut			750.00		750.00
All/St gen main			200.00		200.00
Health and Safety			500.00		500.00
Lay by					
Blue Sacks			50.00		50.00
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>3,180.00</b>	<b>325.00</b>	<b>7,200.00</b>	<b>138.50</b>	<b>4,206.50</b>
V.A.T.		0.00		0.00	
<b>GROSS TOTAL</b>		<b>325.00</b>		<b>138.50</b>	

**Memorial Safety Risk Assessment Chart**

**Hartley Burial Ground**

**Section/Area:** Memorials located away from tarmac path

	<b>Memorials</b>		<b>Access/ Traffic</b>		<b>Environment</b>
1	Monolith memorials	1	Inaccessible/ no visitation, overgrown	1	New lawn section, well maintained
2	Memorials below 500mm	2	Away from roads/paths, seldom visited	2	New lawn section, average maintenance
3	New lawn memorials – back to back	3	Accessible, reasonable numbers	3	Older lawn section
4	Old lawn memorials – back to back	4	Signs of misuse in area	4	Older section no kerbs
5	Lawn memorials under 1 m	5	Accessible, well visited	5	Older section with kerbs
6	Lawn memorials upto 1.5 m	6	Adjacent to well used roads and footpaths	6	Old section, kerbs, vaults, average/good maintenance
7	Old jointed memorials over 1.5 m	7	Very well visited on ongoing burials in section	7	Old section, kerbs, vaults, poor maintenance
Activity rating number: (memorial + access/traffic + environment) 6 + 3 + 3 = 12					
Additional comments: Majority lawn memorials averagely maintained. Some memorials with kerbs. Section currently used for burials					
Action required: <b>Medium risk</b> Undertake visual and hand test. A full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years is recommended. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials found to be unstable should have notices placed on them or near them, or cordoned off or laid down whichever is deemed appropriate.					
Assessors signature: Print name:			Validated by: Date:		

**Memorial Safety Risk Assessment Chart**

**Hartley Burial Ground**

**Section/Area:** Memorials located adjacent to tarmac path

	<b>Memorials</b>		<b>Access/ Traffic</b>		<b>Environment</b>
1	Monolith memorials	1	Inaccessible/ no visitation, overgrown	1	New lawn section, well maintained
2	Memorials below 500mm	2	Away from roads/paths, seldom visited	2	New lawn section, average maintenance
3	New lawn memorials – back to back	3	Accessible, reasonable numbers	3	Older lawn section
4	Old lawn memorials – back to back	4	Signs of misuse in area	4	Older section no kerbs
5	Lawn memorials under 1 m	5	Accessible, well visited	5	Older section with kerbs
6	Lawn memorials upto 1.5 m	6	Adjacent to well used roads and footpaths	6	Old section, kerbs, vaults, average/good maintenance
7	Old jointed memorials over 1.5 m	7	Very well visited on ongoing burials in section	7	Old section, kerbs, vaults, poor maintenance
Activity rating number: (memorial + access/traffic + environment) 6 + 5 + 3 = 14					
Additional comments: Majority lawn memorials averagely maintained. Some memorials with kerbs.					
Action required: <b>Medium risk</b> Undertake visual and hand test. A full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years is recommended. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials found to be unstable should have notices placed on them or near them, or cordoned off or laid down whichever is deemed appropriate.					
Assessors signature: Print name:			Validated by: Date:		

## **Memorial Safety Assessment**

### **Score sheet**

Note: A memorial should only be considered as unsafe if it moves and will continue to move until it fall to the floor under an initial firm but reasonable force (approximately 35 kg)

3 – 8

#### **Low risk**

Initial visual and hand test recommended using experienced/trained staff. Consideration may be given to visual inspection only for subsequent inspections.

If memorial is found to be unstable place notice on or near memorial and assess future needs on an individual basis.

9 – 17 **Medium risk**

Recommended that the area have a visual and hand test on every memorial using experienced/trained staff. Some memorials may need specialist inspections.

A full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years is recommended. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials found to be unstable should have notices placed on them or near them, or cordoned off or laid down whichever is deemed appropriate.

18+

#### **High risk**

Area will need a visual and hand test on every memorial using experienced/trained staff. Some memorials may need specialist inspections.

Memorials will require full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials found to be unstable should have notices placed on them or near them, or cordoned off or laid down whichever is deemed appropriate.

## **Hartley Parish Council**

### **Memorial Safety Programme & Testing Policy**

The memorial safety programme and testing policy approved and adopted by Hartley Parish Council on \*\*\*\*\* follows guidance issued by the Ministry of Justice in January 2009 entitled, “Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials: Practical advice for dealing with unstable memorials”.

The Council has adopted a risk based approach to its policy, proportionate to the management of risks associated with memorials in burial grounds.

#### **Risk Assessment**

The Council will undertake an assessment of the risks associated with the memorials in Hartley Burial Ground to assist prioritisation of the more detailed inspections. The risk assessment will take account of the different types of memorials, their surrounding environment and the likelihood of members of the public visiting or walking past particular memorials. The risk assessment will establish a profile of the memorial types and classify them as being either a low, medium or high risk.

#### **Communications**

The Council will ensure arrangements for the inspection and, where appropriate, the testing of memorials are widely understood and properly communicated.

Hartley Parish Council will ensure that,

- the range of precautions likely to be necessary to manage the risks are clearly identified,
- records are maintained of the inspection and results, noting in particular those memorials where action is necessary or likely to be necessary in future,
- an effective system is in place for securing specialist assistance on remedial action when a visual check reveals a defect outside the experience and knowledge of the person carrying out the check,
- an effective system is in place to enable people to report damage to memorials and to trigger checks following potentially damaging activities,
- procedures and timescales are established for contacting relatives or other memorial owners.

The Council will advise all existing memorial owner/s of its safety and inspection regime on memorials in Hartley Burial Ground as set out in this adopted policy and on any implications that may arise subsequently. This will be carried out by writing to each memorial owner/s at the last known address recorded in the Register of Purchased Graves in advance of any formal inspection.

Early consultation with the local media will be carried out to develop a positive publicity campaign to fully inform the public on the actions being undertaken by the Council. Notices will be published for 2 successive weeks in a local newspaper which the Council considers will provide the best publicity in the area serving Hartley Burial Ground.

Notices will be placed at the entrance to Hartley Burial Ground, in the Council's newsletter and on the Council's website, informing the public of works that are to be undertaken and advising on contact details for anyone seeking further advice.

A permanent notice displaying the Council's contact details will be placed at the entrance to Hartley Burial Ground so that visitor/s may notify the Council of any problems in the Burial Ground.

The Council will consider arranging a public 'open morning' to demonstrate how the memorial safety tests will be carried out in advance of the formal inspection.

The relevant Church Authorities will be informed of the Council's memorial safety programme and testing policy at least 3 months in advance of any formal inspection and the Council will consider any representations.

## **Inspection of memorials**

A memorial will only be considered unsafe if it moves and will continue to move until it falls to the floor under an initial firm, but reasonable force to approximately 35 kg.

The first stage of the inspection process shall involve a visual assessment of each memorial. The visual inspection will focus on:

- damaged or eroded bonding,
- movement of parts of a memorial from its original position,
- kerbstones breaking apart,
- undermined or unstable foundations,
- leaning memorials,
- evidence of structural damage or disturbance,
- presence of vegetation which may destabilise the memorials or cause cracks to widen.

The profile of the memorial types as determined by the risk assessment, together with the visual inspection, will help to assess which memorials require a hand test and how these hand tests should be prioritised.

**Low risk:** Memorials located in an area of the burial ground determined as a low risk and being tested for the first time will have a visual and hand test on every memorial undertaken by experienced/training staff. For subsequent inspections consideration will be given to a visual inspection only.

**Medium risk:** Memorials located in an area of the burial ground determined as medium risk will have a visual and hand test on every memorial undertaken by experienced/trained staff.

**High risk:** Memorials located in an area of the burial ground determined as a high risk will have a visual and hand test on every memorial by experienced/trained staff and may require specialist inspections. If a specialist inspection is required it will not normally be appropriate to use a hand test to confirm stability.

Where memorials, (that do not require a specialist assessment), have visible signs of damage or defects, a hand test will be used to determine the stability of the memorial. The hand check will be carried out by standing to one side of the memorial and applying a firm, but steady pressure in different directions to determine to what degree the memorial is loose. If some instability is detected following the hand test, a judgement will be made as to whether the movement is limited, or whether there is sufficient movement for the memorial to present a high risk to people's health and safety.

Where memorials, (that do not require a specialist assessment), have no signs of defects, a hand test may not be necessary, but may still be used to confirm that the memorial is stable.

Visual and hand checks will be carried out by person/s with a working knowledge of memorials and their defects.

Memorials will be fully inspected on a minimum frequency of 5 years. Memorials showing early signs of instability will be monitored every 12 months. Memorials found to be unstable will have notices placed on or near them, and cordoned off or laid down immediately, as deemed necessary.

## **Precautions**

Following inspection and/or testing any precautions taken by the Council to memorials found to be unstable will be proportionate to the risk of people suffering injury or harm.

In most cases where a memorial is found to be unstable, the Council will place a warning sign near to or on the unstable memorial, until such time as the repair may be

arranged. In some situations it may be more appropriate to cordon off the area until the memorial has been made safe.

Immediate action will only be taken if any memorial is found to be so unstable that there is an imminent risk of it toppling. This action may include restricting access or laying the memorial flat, whichever is deemed most appropriate. Routine staking will not be carried to temporarily stabilise an unsafe memorial.

In all cases where a memorial is found to be unstable, the Council will effect permanent repairs as soon as practicably possible to minimise upset and distress amongst the bereaved, and any detrimental effect on the appearance of the burial ground.

Following the identification of any unstable memorials and in addition to placing a warning notice near or on the memorial, the Council will, where possible, notify in writing the last known memorial owner/s at the address recorded in the Register of Purchased Graves, giving the memorial owner/s 10 weeks to inform the Council how and when the defect is to be rectified. If no response is received or a negative response is received from the memorial owner/s, the Council will determine how the memorial will be permanently made safe.

Memorial owners will be required to ensure all repairs are carried out by memorial masons registered with BRAMM, (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) and in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Practice and British Standard BS 8415.

## **Keeping records**

The Council will keep records of:

- risk assessment,
- inspection undertaken to each memorial,
- results of the inspection, and what action will be necessary or likely to be necessary in the future.

The records will show that:

- proper checks have been made,
- those who might be affected are identified,
- significant risks will be dealt with, taking account of the number people who may be exposed and the likelihood of the risk,
- any precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is acceptable.

Memorial owner/s may be provided with a copy of the relevant records, if so requested.