

Goudhurst Parish Council



BURIAL BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting held In Christ Church on Tuesday 20 July 2021

Present: Cllrs Mrs Caroline Richards (Chairman), and Barry Noakes
Also Mr David Nichol (Adviser and Representative of the Friends of St Mary's) and Rev Rachel Robertson.

Apologies: Cllrs Guy Sutton and Chris Ditton (both on holiday) and Phil Kirkby (attending to his office communications following a lightning strike.).

The Chairman welcomed Rev Rachel to the meeting, the first Burial Board she has attended.

The Chairman noted that the meeting needed 3 Councillors to be present so this meeting was not quorate. It was **agreed** to continue with the meeting anyway since no decisions will be made.

Those present took the opportunity to walk around Christ Church Churchyard. They **noted** that the area is being kept well mown, neat and tidy.

Churchyard hedge. There was a query about the height of the hedge on the eastern curtilage of the lower burial ground. **Action: Deputy Clerk** to check how much of the hedge and adjacent trees are on Christ Church property or the neighbour's land before considering putting remedial work in hand.

Mowing arisings from the top area of the Churchyard. Mrs Tina Gallagher, on behalf of Christ Church PCC, had raised a query prior to the meeting about the grass cuttings from the top area of the Churchyard. The wheelie bin positioned by the lynch gate is being overloaded. Those present considered the solution to be that Christ Church PCC should arrange with TWBC Street Scene for an additional bin to be provided. Borough Cllr David Knight is in discussions with TWBC about bins across the Parish and the matter of the Christ Church situation is included in those discussions. **Action: Deputy Clerk** to liaise with Borough Cllr David Knight and to respond to Mrs Gallagher in due course.

Those present then convened in Christ Church.

To receive questions and statements from the public and press. There were none.

Declarations of Interest. There were none.

Rules and Regulations of the Burial Board

Memorial benches. It was **agreed to recommend to Council** that a clause be added to our Rules and Regulations. That is applicants be informed that Council will only allow high quality benches from Memorial Benches UK of Staplehurst. Those wishing to establish a bench on Parish Council land need to obtain permission from Goudhurst Parish Council.

Regulations generally: Items on graves. The meeting took the view that the Regulations relating to Goudhurst Burial Grounds need to be re-written so as to be more precise about what is allowed and what is not allowed on graves in the lawned areas. **Action: Deputy Clerk** to draft a re-write of the current Section 15 of the current Rules and Regulations relating to Goudhurst Burial Grounds. This draft text is to be reviewed by the Burial Board before being submitted for approval by Council. Following on from this, Council be asked to consider recommendations from the Burial Board for a

policy to deal with retrospective removal from graves of not-permitted items. **Action: Deputy Clerk** to draft a proposal covering various options.

Memorials at Goudhurst Burial Grounds. The Chairman proposed that applications to introduce polished black marble memorial headstones in Goudhurst Burial Grounds should no longer be approved in Goudhurst Burial Grounds. It is felt that they do not fit well with the overall effect of the Burial Grounds with monuments of other hues. **Action: Deputy Clerk** will arrange a site meeting with the Chairman of the Burial Board together with Mr David Nichol and Members who have an interest in this.

Fees and Charges

It was **agreed to recommend to Council** that these revised Fees and Charges from 01 September 2021 for a period of 1 year be approved:

Graves:	Exclusive right of burial in an earthen grave	£1,400.00	to	£1,450.00
	Interment	£400.00	to	£450.00
	Approval of Monuments	£260.00	to	£280.00
	Additional inscription	£260.00	to	£280.00
Ashes:	Exclusive right of burial in the ashes section	£1,100.00	to	£1,150.00
	Interment	£400.00	to	£450.00
	Approval of Memorial Tablets	£260.00	at	£280.00
	Additional inscription	£260.00	at	£280.00
	Registration of Change of Ownership of Graves and Ashes Plots			£30.00

Testing of Memorials for stability. It was **noted** that one memorial, over 100 years old in St Mary's Churchyard, had recently fallen flat for no apparent reason. In informal discussions between a St Mary's Church Warden and the Clerks it had been agreed that Council should approach suitable local Memorial Masons for quotations for an inspection and remedy scheme. Finance Officer reported that he has approached 3 such organisations. Two had expressed an interest as they had qualified people to carry out this task; one had indicated that they did not wish to bid. **Action: Deputy Clerk** will invite the 2 interested contractors to site meetings so that we can select one or the other. Members were of the opinion that this is going to be expensive. Deputy Clerk indicated that it may be necessary to include the project in our 2022-23 expenditure budget.

Refund of an Exclusive Right of Burial. It was **agreed** that the Deputy Clerk should action the requested refund from Mrs Livermore for £160.00 and to cancel her Exclusive Right of Burial of the grave known as Row J, No 77. His payments will be within delegated expenditure limits.

Digitalisation of Burial Records. Deputy Clerk briefed Members. The St Mary's Burial Records kept in the Parish Council offices consist of a number of old ledgers with hand written records going back to c1880. Some of the plans of the plots are written on cloth. By Minute 365/20 of 11 January 2021 Council agreed expenditure to purchase appropriate digital software from Rialtas (who provide Council's Accounts software). The software has now been purchased. The Clerks believe the transfer of the records (approximately 3,000 of them), will need to be carried out by a part time person with the appropriate skills, patience and interest. **Action: Clerks** to bring forward a costed proposal for Council's approval.

Burial Board finances. Deputy Clerk and RFO presented the figures for the 2020-21 budget against the actual figures to 31 March 2021. There were no surprises. It was **noted** that the budgeted income of £11,000 was exceeded by £1,380.

Clean Up Day.

Clean Up Day at St Mary's. It was **agreed** that the date for this is Saturday 09 October 2021. **Action: Deputy Clerk** will alert Mr Ed Bates (for Mr Will Thompson's giant trailer), The Friends of St Mary's and Goudhurst Scouts. The event will be publicised in the Parish Council Newsletter and in the Parish Magazine.

Next Meeting.

Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 5.00 pm at St Mary's Church with a walk round of the Churchyard and Burial Grounds followed by a meeting probably in St Mary's Church.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

Anthony Farnfield, Deputy Clerk