

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL
CHURCHYARD AND BURIAL GROUND MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Burial Ground Management Sub-Committee was held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 4th July 2006. The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

Present: Mrs M Thomas (Chairman), Mr I Bone, Mrs J Leary, Mr E Broady and Mr C Clegg

1) Apologies for Absence

Mr R. Atterwill

2) Declarations of Interest

None

3) Election of Chairman of the Sub Committee

Mrs Leary proposed Mrs Thomas continue as Chairman, Mr Broady seconded. All in favour.

4) Election of Vice Chairman of the Sub Committee

Mr Clegg proposed Mr Bone, however Mr Bone declined due to other commitments. Mr Clegg then proposed Mrs Leary, Mr Broady seconded. All in favour.

5) Minutes of the Burial ground Sub Committee Meeting of 22nd May 2006 to be Accepted, Initialled and Signed

All in favour. Minutes were initialled and signed.

6) Tree Report from Adrian Slater

Mr Clegg reported that the only trees deemed a problem were those belonging to Mr Carrick. However, these were holding the church wall in place and Mr Slater believed their removal would de-stabilise the church wall. Mr Bone advised that an independent arboriculturalist had viewed the trees and advised that they should be removed. There was general concern over the contradicting opinions of two specialists.

7) Matters Arising

a) Report of dangerous memorial – James Plant – It was reported in the Parish Council meeting of 12th June that the memorial of James Plant was leaning dangerously. Mr Broady also provided a report of the following graves requiring attention:

M. Pummell – Overgrown roses

E. Peachment – General poor condition

Lt Colonel D. C. Mallam – Grave falling in

Coxon – Memorial leaning to the right

Kenndle – Requires attending

Where possible, the clerk is to contact the next of kin to try to resolve these matters.

The grave of E. Inns is currently being monitored as the plot tends to spread. It is assumed that the family periodically bring the plot back into line with the others.

b) Additional inscription to Sands memorial and response to stonemason - It was reported that Abbey Memorials had added an inscription to a stone without authorisation and then replaced the stone only 6 months following the interment, not 12 as specified in the council's regulations. Mrs Thomas advised that she had contacted Abbey about their errors and the clerk is to write to them enclosing a copy of the Council's Regulations to ensure that a similar mistake is not made in the future.

c) Report of pot holes on exit to burial ground – This was reported in the Parish Council meeting of 12th June. Mrs Thomas advised that May Gurney have since completed the Burial Ground pathway and this leads straight to the road with no potholes remaining.

Mrs Thomas was of the opinion that May Gurney have not used the correct coating for the Burial Ground pathways and that they should not be paid. Mrs Leary pointed out that the Parish Council should have checked May Gurney's measurements so as to ensure that no mistake had been made. She also reported that she and her husband had inspected the paths and there are already tyre marks. Mr Broady advised that these are motorcycle tyre marks and the Burial Ground already faces a problem with motorcycles using the pathways. Mrs Thomas raised concerns that the surface will not take the weight of a hearse and was also concerned that the surface was not true Fibredec.

It was agreed to report to the full Parish Council the poor state of the paths.

Mrs Thomas then provided the sub-committee with a copy of a letter from Miss B. Hemmant showing damage to the shoes caused by tar on the pathways. It was agreed that the sub-committee were not in the position to make a decision about the £15 reimbursement Miss Hemmant was requesting and that this should go before the full Parish Council.

d) Response from Parish Council on Dusk 'til Dawn opening of Burial Ground – It was reported that the Parish Council felt that the locking of the Burial Ground gates between dusk and dawn was unnecessary at present but the situation should be monitored.

8. Churchyard Maintenance

a) Response from DAC re Repairs to Wall – Mr Bone was of the opinion that Mr Atterwill was to request a site visit from the DAC. He was also concerned about the number of points in the letter that required a response. Mrs Leary was concerned that in order to provide a response a lot of professional preparation work was to be done which would come at a great expense.

Mr Clegg suggested that the surveyor currently providing a report on the Disabled Access Project in the church may be able to look at the wall and provide a quote.

Mr Broady questioned whether NCC Highways should be involved. Mrs Thomas advised that they have been approached in the past but have shown little interest.

Mr Bone stated that repairing the existing wall and railings would be expensive and only serve to be worn down by traffic again leaving a recurring problem.

Mrs Thomas suggested providing a special service to re-inter any remains found should the wall be removed.

Mrs Thomas reported that Mrs Northall had suggested repairing individual holes. However, this would only cause weaknesses around these repairs.

The clerk is to write to Breckland Council to find out if the church wall is a listed structure. The clerk is also to find any previous correspondence with NCC Highways in reference to this matter and then consider re-opening the issue with Norfolk County Council, perhaps enlisting the assistance of Councillor Floering-Blackman.

It was also raised that Shipdham church had had a similar problem and could assist us with information with sources of funding from grants.

9. Burial Ground Maintenance

a) Paths

i) Effect of hot weather on newly laid path – As discussed under item 7c.

b) Memorial garden

Mrs Thomas proposed this be started in the autumn. The ground could then be turned over and the frost be allowed to break down the soil. Planting could then begin in the spring.

Mrs Thomas reported that Mrs Littleton has been persistently ignoring the 'No Dogs' sign and been taking a dog into the Burial Ground. This is setting a bad precedent. Mrs Leary advised that she has been questioning the No Dogs Policy in the churchyard because it contradicts the church's message of welcome. Mrs Thomas questioned whether the 'No Dogs' signage could be a little more friendly. Mrs Leary suggested the erection of a hitching post by the gates to the Burial Ground so that dogs can be tied up securely while the owners visit the Burial Ground. This is to be put to full Parish Council.

Mrs Thomas reported that a car was seen backed in to the Burial Ground so that the owners could have a picnic. The problem with cars in the Burial Ground is to be monitored.

10. Report from results of working party on 1st July 2006

A walk round the church occurred on 1st July and potential areas for upkeep and maintenance were identified. Mr Bone provided a report detailing relevant aspects of the church and areas that require repair and maintenance.

11. Action points to be agreed from management plan for the Churchyard

Persons responsible for each point of the management plan were appointed as follows. In particular it was important to identify what could be done by volunteers and what could be done professionally.

1. Paint Gates

a) North (immediately) – requires sandblasting

b) South (on completion of disabled access project)

c) West (only to be done if it is to be retained following DAC consultation)

2. Poison ivy on south church wall – This would have to be done by a contractor as the weedkiller would prove too expensive and too dangerous to use by volunteers. Mrs Thomas suggested speaking to her husband who has an account with a contractor through the bowls club.

3. Prune box by porch – Can be done by a volunteer group.

4. Table tomb to south of porch. Top and brickwork requires repairing – This must be repaired professionally. Mr Bone is to take photographs and liaise with Bretts.

5. Laid memorials to be reset – The clerk is to write to Tom Garland to arrange for the inscriptions to be recorded. Mr Bone is to consult the church authorities about resetting.

6. War memorial – Clean and repaint lettering – Mr Bone is to liaise with the stonemason.

7. Tree suckers and ivy on trees to be removed at ground level – Mr Clegg is to ask the opinion of Adrian Slater as to the best way to remove these, however it cannot be done until spring.

8. Control rabbit population – The clerk is to speak with the mole catcher to recommend a solution.

9. Table tomb north side – Mr Bone is to liaise with the stone mason.

10. North gate pillars – repoint and replace missing coping brick – Mr Clegg is to investigate.

11. Tombs adjacent to wall by north gate – clear of vegetation - Can be done by a volunteer group.

12. Beech hedge – prune annually to shape - Can be done by a volunteer group.

13. Self seeded trees in two grave plots – cut and poison stumps - Can be done by a volunteer group.

14. Holly trees and all yew trees – prune to restrict spread - Can be done by a volunteer group.

15. Metal surrounds to four monuments – requires sandblasting and painting

16. Grassed over kerbs – clear vegetation or remove kerbs - Can be done by a volunteer group. Kerbs to be left in situ.

17. Paint or varnish wooden bench - Can be done by a volunteer group.

18. Cut vegetation on east bank to expose lost memorials - Can be done by a volunteer group.

19. Remove sycamore and hawthorn growing around grave (Group 1 Arboriculturalist report) – This is to be put before full Parish Council as an application has to be made for a Faculty to have trees removed.

20. Fell thorn, ash and sycamore in field adjacent to wall (Trees 3,4,5,6 Arboricultural Report) NB: not PC/PCC responsibility but causing heave and cracking wall – Trees belong to Mr Carrick. Adrian Slater is to advise.

21. Repair extreme SE section of wall – To request advice of Adrian Slater.

22. Fell trees No 14, 15 – Arboricultural report (NB: 14 not PC/PCC responsibility) – Tree 14 belongs to Mr Carrick.

12. Report on why topple tester is not suitable for testing memorial stability

Further to the request of the Parish Council that the clerk should investigate the leasing of a topple tester from Dereham Town Council, Mr Bone provided a report from the National Association of Memorial Masons that states that the use of a topple tester is not recommended. Mr Bone focused on the conclusion of the report that stated the use of a topple tester may:

- Result in over testing ie: causing safe structures to fail.
- Inevitably result in some damage ie: cracked joints which will have to be made good at the expense of the testing authority.
- Weaken the structure causing it to be less safe than before the test and consequently fail earlier than it might otherwise have done.

13. Any items to be considered and approved by full Parish Council

Mr Bone advised Mr Clegg that he would raise Mr Clegg's request to replace a commemorative plaque with a headstone at the next PCC meeting.

To be raised at the next Parish Council meeting:

- Poor state of paths
- Reimbursement of Miss Hemmant's money for her shoes.
- To advise the Parish Council of progress with Breckland and Highways with reference to the church wall repairs.
- The second lock on the Burial Ground gate does not line up in its hole thus requires funding to fix.

- Funding for the faculty for tree felling
- Funding for a hitching post for the dogs at the Burial Ground

14. Any item to be reported for next meeting

- Progress on management plan
- Report from Adrian Slater

15. Date & time of next meeting

Monday 21st August at 7.30pm

The meeting concluded at 9.30pm

_____ (Mrs Marilyn Thomas, Chairman) _____ Date