

**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 Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2006. The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

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

**1) Apologies for Absence**

None

**2) Declarations of Interest**

- Mr Atterwill – Prejudicial interest in the grass cutting contract.

**3) Minutes of the Burial ground Sub Committee Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to be Accepted, Initialled and Signed**

All in favour. Minutes were initialled and signed.

**4) Matters Arising**

**a) Memorial repairs – Churchyard** – Mrs Thomas reported that two memorials found to be unstable had been repaired at no cost to the Council. This had been reported in the annual parish meeting. Mr Clegg reported that he had spoken with Mr Carrick with regards to trees causing problems in the churchyard. An independent tree feller had advised against removal as this would cause destabilisation of the church wall. Mr Clegg agreed to seek a second opinion from a further tree feller, Mr Adrian Slater.

It was reported that a cast iron railing remained broken. The clerk agreed to follow this up.

**b) Update on the work to remove ivy etc. from the Churchyard** – The Parish Council were unhappy with the timing of this maintenance work as it coincided with bird nesting season. It was agreed that work be postponed until later in the year. It was advised that the method of ivy removal was to poison the plants at ground level. Mrs Leary questioned the environmental impact of this method and was advised that the poison would be used sparingly and accurately on the ivy. This would be the only method that would guarantee no re-growth of the plant.

**5) Churchyard Maintenance**

**a) Repairs to the wall** – An informal enquiry had been sent to the Diocese regarding removing the church wall and grading the bank. The Diocese responded that it required a more detailed map and photographs to assist them in their decision, which is to be taken on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006.

Mrs Leary agreed to ask the views of the PCC and the DAC. Mr Clegg advised that lime mortar should not be used again in any wall as this will cause similar instability issues for future generations.

**7) Burial Ground Maintenance**

**a) Paths** – It was agreed at the Parish Council Meeting that May Gurney should be instructed to proceed with the contract for the Burial Ground pathways.

Mr Broady reported that it was of his opinion that the grass cutting had not been successful, in that there were patches of grass missed, insufficient strimming and edging. Mrs Thomas advised that she had also received complaints. Mr Atterwill agreed to make an informal request to the contractor to review the situation.

Mr Broady questioned as to whether May Gurney could guarantee that the pathway would last for at least 5-7 years. The clerk advised that this agreement was simply verbal and the standard written contract stated that the pathway would be guaranteed for 12 months.

Mr Atterwill suggested that a concrete surface between the gate posts at the entrance of the Burial Ground should help to prolong the life of the new surface as it would protect against damage from vehicles entering and leaving the Burial Ground.

**b) Memorial Garden** – Mrs Thomas advised that work on the memorial garden should start in the autumn, thus allowing the winter to naturally break up the soil. Posters would then be placed in the village in the spring advising parishioners on the procedure to plant commemorative roses.

Mr Broady raised concerns that the gate nearest the school was generally left open, which may lead to the temptation of children playing in the Burial Ground. Mr Atterwill suggested that the gates be locked at dusk and unlocked at dawn by a member of the sub committee on a rota system. Whilst Mr Clegg raised concerns that this was an onerous task, Mr Broady agreed to take responsibility for this, however, a gap in the hedge would have to be addressed first.

Mr Atterwill advised that this would have to be agreed by full council and then notices put up in the village advising parishioners of this new procedure. Mrs Thomas stated that she would also ensure that a notice is placed on the village's website.

Mr Broady advised that he would speak to Mr Carrick with regards to the removal of rubble in the cemetery.

#### **8) Resolution to Produce a Management Plan for the Churchyard.**

Mr Bone felt that whilst good work had occurred within the churchyard he felt that the group was rather reactive to problems. He felt that that the following areas should be addressed,

- i) A written report should be available as to when tombstones were inspected and trees cut so that a reference can be made in the event of an accident. Mr Clegg advised that this is currently part of his churchyard inspection checklist and is to bring this to the next meeting.
- ii) A management plan should be created for the three conservation areas. The clerk advised that the grass cutting of these conservation areas needs to be reviewed.
- iii) Around the perimeter of the churchyard memorials were being lost to vegetation.
- iv) The preservation of metalwork. Currently the iron railings on two tombs are rotting and need to be addressed.
- v) The grassing over of plots causing lack of visibility is not only a health and safety issue for visitors to the churchyard but is also a problem for the grass cutter as he does not know they are there. Mr Clegg advised that he has a plan of all the plots and will check that they are all visible.
- vi) The tops of table tombs are getting chipped and the bottoms are becoming fragile and require building up.
- vii) The lettering on the War Memorial has become faded. Mr Bone suggested that a group of volunteers should come together to clean and repaint the lettering before Remembrance Sunday. Mrs Leary suggested that this should be done professionally.
- viii) There is an excess of abandoned flower containers. Mr Bone and Mrs Leary to clear these.
- ix) The control of rabbits. Mrs Thomas advised that she had received complaints about their destructive nature and burrow digging. The resolution of either shooting or snaring was contentious and no agreement was reached.
- x) The yew trees were spreading and required trimming.
- xi) One gravestone at the north side of the churchyard had a tree growing out of it. Mr Clegg advised that this is the responsibility of the relatives to maintain the plot.

Mrs Thomas suggested that the sub committee meet at the churchyard to discuss each issue and prioritise them. Mr Atterwill agreed and suggested a working party be drawn up to implement each task. A date of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 was set.

#### **9) Any Item to be Considered and Approved by the Full Parish Council**

- i) The future locking of the gates between dusk and dawn at the Burial Ground.

#### **10) Any Item to be Reported for the Next Meeting**

- i) Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- ii) Volunteers for the Churchyard Maintenance Working Party.
- iii) Tree Report from Adrian Slater.
- iv) Mr Bone to report on inadequacy of using a topple tester for memorial stability.

#### **11) Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006 at 7.30pm

\_\_\_\_\_ (Mrs Marilyn Thomas, Chairman) \_\_\_\_\_ Date