

Houghton Regis Town Council

New Cemetery Sub-Committee

23rd April 2019 at 6.30pm

Present:	Cllrs:	J Carroll M Kennedy Mrs T McMahon A Swain Ms S Thorne	Chair Substitute
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Louise Senior	Corporate Services Manager Head of Democratic Services
Apologies:	Cllrs:	D Abbott Ms J Hillyard	

NC94 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor D Abbott and Councillor Ms J Hillyard (Councillor Mrs T McMahon substituted)

NC95 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

NC96 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC97 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting held on the 11th March 2019.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the New Cemetery Working Group meeting held on the 11th March 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

NC98 RAILWAY TRIANGLE (DOG KENNEL DOWN)

In accordance with Minute NC92 the land known as the Railway Triangle had been explored with the council's cemetery consultants. They had provided the following advice:

‘Further to our telephone conversation, all of the sites are situated on the same geological sequence and therefore carry similar risks with regards to groundwater contamination from cemeteries. If a sufficient thickness of head soils was encountered on site, the risk may be reduced.

Our report on Orchard Close in 2014, contained an investigation and flux model which

highlighted that the risk of contamination into the underlying groundwater table could be mitigated, but that the EA may require the installation of groundwater monitoring wells. This report was never submitted to the EA at the time and therefore the nature of their response is not known.

Since 2014 the EA have tightened their regulations with regards to the protection of groundwater, especially in areas where Chalk bedrock was encountered due to the sensitive nature of the aquifer and its importance with regards to supplying drinking water.

This year the EA were due to bring out permitting for cemeteries, on a site such as this, if burial numbers were in excess of 30 per year the site would fall under permitting and would require a risk assessment to be allowed to operate.'

In summary it suggested that the geology was similar across Dog Kennel Down, the Railway Triangle and Orchard Close and that the Environment Agency (EA) had tightened their regulations. Other considerations of this site were access (including funeral car access, pedestrian access and vehicular access and car parking) and services provision, most notably water. Confirmation of land ownership and any attached covenants also needed to be completed. However, given the known issues it was suggested that this site was unlikely to be suitable.

Resolved: Not to proceed with further consideration the land formerly known as the Railway Triangle, given that the preliminary assessment suggests that the Environment Agency, with their tightened regulations, would consider this to be a high risk site.

NC99 LAND AT GRENDALL LANE

Members were advised that the land at Grendall Lane was within the ownership of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). Preliminary contact with CBC was made to explore whether there was any opportunity for a new cemetery in this location. Members were advised that the feedback from Central Bedfordshire Council was that this land had been allocated for potential development therefore was not available for cemetery use, members were also advised that there was no alternative land available. It was queried that an earlier plan for HRN1 had stipulated that cemetery provision was an essential part of the infrastructure, however, having the matter brought up since at a subsequent meeting, it was advised that this was only an ambition.

Members suggested that it was a waste of resources to continually look at land when more accurate data was required to assess the exact amount of land needed.

Councillor Kennedy proposed a change to the recommendation to read: No further speculative enquiries will be undertaken until officers have determined the likely size and type of facility required, using data regarding expected mortality rates for the town and types of funerals expected for a period of up to 50 years. Members requested that this data information be reported at the July meeting.

Proposed by: Councillor M Kennedy

Members for: 5 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Resolved: That no further speculative enquiries were to be undertaken until officers have determined the likely size and type of facility required, using data regarding expected mortality rates for the town and types of funerals expected for a period of up to 50 years. And that this data information be reported at the July meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.52pm

Dated this day of 2019

Chairman

DRAFT