

Rogerstone & Bassaleg Joint Burial Board

Minutes of the Burial Board Meeting

Tuesday 3rd December 2024

**Held at Tydu Community Hall, Welfare Ground, Tregwilym Road, Rogerstone NP10
9EQ**

Present: Cllr A Hobbs (R), Cllr R Lloyd (R), Cllr N Tarr (G), Cllr S Bowen (R), Cllr D Mlewa (R), C Atyeo (Clerk RCC),

Apologies: Cllr S Jones, Cllr N Upham (R), Cllr K Sayer (G),

Absent: Cllr P Appleton (G), Cllr J Harris (G)

1: Apologies for Absence

Absences and apologies were confirmed It was confirmed. No members had chosen to join by Zoom and no further apologies had been received. The Board requested that the Chairperson followed up on Graig CC attendance to ensure that both Councils were sufficiently represented.

2: To Confirm the Minutes of the meeting 17 September 2024

No amendment requests were received, and the minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

3: Matters Arising from the Minutes

It was confirmed that there were no matters arising from the minutes.

4: Clerks Report.

4.1: Burials

To give Members an indication of demand, the following has been taken from 1st September 2024 – 30 November 2024

- 2 full new burial
- 1 existing plot full burials (pre-purchased)
- 2 new cremated remains
- 0 cremated remain placed into existing Grave plot

5 memorials have also been approved.

4.2: Operational

4.2.1

The outcome of the complaint lodged by the Clerk (and discussed during previous Board meetings), regarding the performance and invoicing of the Wales Audit team had been received. Colin Atyeo was present at the meeting to provide further details. It remained the case that to date, no audit invoices had been paid so a decision on next steps was required from the Board during the December meeting.

4.2.2

Further enhancements had been made to the cemetery which included a general tidy up and the staining of the wooden posts / fencing alongside the entrance road area. The Clerk was able to source a supplier for the fence staining and get the work completed at a reduced rate compared to the original quote. A general tidy up of the hedges and trees was commissioned at a cost of £1250 to support cemetery maintenance throughout the Winter period. It was confirmed that this had further improved the appearance of the cemetery. Grass cutting had been placed on hold until early Spring, or when instructed. Weekly visits to the cemetery had continued to take place to ensure that the situation is carefully monitored, and the Cemetery remained well cared for. The improvements to the cemetery drainage had been put to the test with the recent adverse weather and it was encouraging to see that the enhancements had been extremely effective.

4.2.3

We received a concern around the condition of a grave plot following the opening of a nearby grave. The issues had already been identified by our team and restorative action had taken on the same day that the concern was raised. The Clerk liaised promptly with the customer and the matter was resolved to their satisfaction.

4.2.4

After attempts were made to trace the owners of the memorial bench in need of repair, no responses were received. The bench was subsequently removed, and the remembrance plaque was retained in case someone was to get in touch.

4.2.5

The Clerk shared concerns around the upkeep of one of the graves within the cemetery, whereby the memorials by far exceeded the permitted areas. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial requesting that these items would be removed by our maintenance team after a 2 week grace period.

4.3: Financial

4.3.1: Accounts:

The income & expenditure transactions of the day-to-day revenue account for the period 1st September 2024 – 30 November 2024 were:

September

Income: £2,423.00

Expenditure: £2,533.84

October

Income: £1,934.22

Expenditure: £800.00

November

Income: £1,498.64

Expenditure: £1620.94

Account Balances at 30 November 2024

Current Account: £28,917.36

Reserve Account: £78.86

Fixed Rate Savings Account*: £76,250

*Off the back of the AGM £76,250 was moved into a fixed interest rate account, paying 4.37% interest. This account will mature on 22 October 2025, and it's estimated that the gross interest for the term of the deposit will be £4,108,10

A question was raised regarding the £78.86 being held in the Reserve account, and it was confirmed that this sum had been left in the account in order to keep it open, should fund transfers need to be made into it at a later date. The Board was happy with the explanation and no further questions were raised.

4.3.2: Precept

The Clerk proposed that the precept for 2024/25 was increased in line with Newport City Council increases and details were shared with Board members:

2023/24 precept was £1830.18, and Rogerstone Community Council were responsible for 60% of this total with Graig Community Council picking up the remaining 40% of the cost.

It was proposed that a 4% (£73.21) uplift would be added for the 2024/25 period and would be:

Total Precept for 2024/25	= £1903.39
RCC contribution @ 60%	= £1142.03
GCC contribution @ 40%	= £ 761.36

The Board approved the precept proposals and it was agreed that the Clerk would invoice the respective Community Councils.

5: Update on Complaint made to Wales Audit

CA talked through the key points of the letter received from the Complaint raised to Wales Audit regarding the quality of services received (as discussed in previous Board meetings). An overview of the comments made within the letter by the Executive Director of Wales Audit Corporate Services was also provided. Comments included admission that the delays experienced by the Burial Board were unacceptable.

The Board considered the findings of the report provided by Wales Audit and confirmed that they will reluctantly accept the findings so as not to incur even more unnecessary expenses and would await further instruction from Wales Audit regarding specific requirements / next steps regarding this matter.

6. Any Other Urgent Business.

No matters were raised.

Meeting Closed.