

FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes Burial Board

Held at the Church Centre, Fenstanton on Wednesday 2nd September 2026 at 19.00.

MINUTES

Present: -: Cllr M Hewitt, Cllr S King, Cllr K Mitchell, Cllr A Mustill (Chair), Cllr A Puntambekar, Cllr R McGee.
In Attendance: - Sarah Barber (Clerk). One member of public.

1. **To receive any apologies of absence and any declarations of interest.**
   Apologies- Rosie Tallowin.
   No Declarations.
   Comments and observations from members of the public (NB comments should be relevant to items on this agenda only)
   One member of public observing.
2. **Elect vice chair for the Burial Board.**
   Decided not necessary as the Chair of Council would normally take the chair if the chair is not available.
3. **approve the minutes of the Burial Board meeting held on Thursday 12th December 2024.**
   Cllr A Mustill Proposed the minutes were a true record of the meeting held on the 12th December 2024
   Cllr R McGee 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED minutes approved.
4. **Discuss and decide on any actions required following the latest inspection of headstones in the FPC cemetery, and also in the closed churchyard.**
   David Reed of GD Services had carried out an inspection of both areas on 23 July 2026. His inspection had identified capacity for 8 – 10 additional graves alongside the new fence in the cemetery, however this area is not recommended for the interment of ashes. No safety issues were identified in the closed churchyard, but a fair number of headstones had been found to have safety issues in the cemetery. Cllr McGee reported that as the matter was urgent, he had asked Naturespace (contracted to cut the grass but currently not cutting any grass due to the drought) to lay down the unsafe headstones of untended graves and to place notices on headstones of tended graves about the safety issues. One heavy cross requires further assessment, and a newer memorial was left in place with a notice to allow the family to contact the memorial mason. The Council reaffirmed that responsibility for memorial repairs rests with the memorial owner or family, not the Council.
   Actions – Clerk to reply to query from a parishioner re memorial repair, create a list and contact families where possible to advise about unsafe headstones. Investigate moving the cross.

   Cllr A Puntambekar joined the meeting.
5. **Discuss the removal of kerbstones from graves which are no longer tended in the FPC cemetery, for ease of cutting the grass and to improve the appearance of the cemetery.**
   The Board considered a proposal to remove kerbstones from untended graves to improve maintenance and appearance. Members expressed concerns about ownership, the difficulty of contacting families, and the potential implications of altering grave boundaries. It was agreed that the cemetery remains tidy and retains its traditional character, and that kerbstones should remain in place. Instead, support was given to undertaking additional seasonal tidying of untended graves and considering an allocation of contractor time in next year's budget for cemetery upkeep. **Cllr K Mitchell Proposed** to not remove kerbstones. **Cllr M Hewitt 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED to not remove kerbstones.**
   Action: GP Committee to consider allocation of contractor time in next year's budget for cemetery upkeep. Add to GP meeting.

6. **Discuss and decide on improvements to the Memorial Garden in the FPC cemetery.**
The Board considered a quotation of £1,062 from Naturespace to refurbish the memorial garden in the Cemetery, including new paving, planting and first-year aftercare. Members agreed that improvements should be carried out in time for Remembrance events in November and noted that the contractor could undertake the work with six weeks' notice. Concerns regarding the condition of the adjacent path were also discussed, with any remedial works to be considered separately as part of future maintenance planning. **Cllr R McGee Proposed** that Naturespace is instructed to carry out the work on the memorial garden. **Cllr K Mitchell 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED Naturespace are employed to carry out the work quoted for.**
Action – contact Naturespace to carry out work agreed. Ali to arrange permission for work on lime trees in cemetery and church yard. Pathway repair quotes add to GP meeting.

7. **Discuss options for providing interment plots for cremated remains within the FPC cemetery.**
The Board discussed the provision of cremated remains plots within the cemetery and noted uncertainty regarding the consecration status of the land. Given the need to establish which areas could lawfully be used and the limited space currently available, several potential locations were considered. It was agreed to defer a decision pending clarification of the cemetery's consecration status, with John Deeks to be consulted regarding any relevant records. Members also noted the increasing demand for cremated remains plots as burial space becomes more limited. Increased demand for cremated remains plots on un-consecrated ground also noted.
Action – Defer to next meeting after Cllr A Mustill has contacted John Deeks.

8. **Discuss the production of a leaflet, shared with the parish church, for parishioners to understand better the different burial options in the FPC cemetery and the closed churchyard.**
The Board reviewed the draft burial and cremation information leaflet and agreed it could be used in its current form pending clarification of future burial and interment options. Rosie Tallowin was authorised to arrange printing as required, and the leaflet will also be submitted to the PCC for comment. Members noted that the word "parishioners" in the title of Agenda Item 8 should be amended to ensure it reflects current policy and does not unintentionally exclude those with relevant parish connections. **Cllr A Mustill Proposed** the leaflet should be approved for present use after approval from the PCC, with Rosie allowed to print it as and when needed until the land-use questions are settled. **Cllr R McGee 2nd. ALL in favour. RESOLVED leaflet can be printed by Rosie Tallowin until land use is settled.**

9. **Discuss results of the GPR survey carried out in February 2025 and decide on next actions to determine any unused plots in the cemetery, bearing in mind current numbers of known vacant plots.**
The Board reviewed the results of the DPR survey undertaken on 25 February and discussed whether further investigations should be carried out to identify additional usable burial plots. Members agreed that available cemetery space should be maximised where lawful and practical, but considered some plots identified on the survey map to be uncertain. The constraints of the cemetery's location within a drinking water protection area were also noted. Should no further burial land be identified, members considered that additional memorial plots for cremated remains may need to be provided on Council-owned land, potentially within the old orchard.

10. **Discuss next steps for an additional burial ground for Fenstanton.**
Cllr M Hewitt Proposed that we write to HDC requesting an additional burial ground for Fenstanton is written into the Local Plan**.** Six-week appraisal window from 16 September 2026 for comments on Local Plan was noted. **Cllr A Puntambekar 2nd . All in favour. RESOLVED to write to HDC.**
Cllr R McGee Proposed the Burial Board contacts the bishop direct to request that land near the flyover previously identified as a possible additional burial ground be reconsidered. **Cllr K Mitchell 2nd.**
All in favour. RESOLVED. Contact the bishop.
Action: Clerk to write directly to the Bishop of Ely re the possibility of using land near the flyover for an additional burial ground, this being land which the diocese land agent previously refused.
Action: Clerk to write to HDC for advice about the suitability of both the Diocese land and the Old Orchard for a Burial Ground and/or a Memorial Garden.
Action: Clerk to write to the Environment Agency for advice regarding groundwater and the Source Protection Zone for both the Diocese land and the Old Orchard.
Action: Clerk to write to HDC to include an additional burial ground for Fenstanton in the Local Plan.

11. **Discuss Ex Parishioners request re possibility of reserving a burial plot within the Parish council cemetery.**
This was discussed and decided that the request was rejected. In accordance with Cemetery Regulations, since March 2020 burial plots may not be reserved or pre-purchased.

12. **Discuss request to Pre Purchase Burial Plot.**
    This was discussed and decided that the request was rejected. In accordance with Cemetery Regulations, since March 2020 burial plots may not be reserved or pre-purchased.
13. **Discuss parishioners query re plot 546 they purchased but was used for another family.**
    Cllr A Puntambekar Proposed that the family was offered an alternative plot. **Cllr K Mitchel 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED to offer family alterative plot.**
    Action – Contact the family once the grave digger has been to inspect the suggested graves.
14. **Discuss and decide on burial fees.**
    Cllr A Puntambekar Proposed the fees remain the same. **Cllr K Mitchell 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED Fees remain the same now but to review fees if/when a new burial ground is established.**
15. **Discuss possibility of memorial garden at the old orchard.**
    The Clerk reported that there is an increasing demand nationally for more eco-friendly burial areas and memorial gardens. She outlined ideas for both an ash tree memorial garden and a memorial garden for babies. Grant funding could be sought for the babies' garden. There would be little cost involved in setting up an ashes garden. Both types of memorial gardens could be considered for both the Old Orchard and any future additional burial ground.
    Cllr K Mitchell Proposed we investigate the possibility of using the old orchard as a memorial garden.
    Cllr A Mustill 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED to investigate further.

Meeting closed 20.20

Signed Cllr A Mustill (Chair)…….