

Agenda Item 3

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MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD

22 JUNE 2021

(2.00 pm - 3.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair) David Williams MBE,
Councillor Drew Heffernan, Councillor David Williams,
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Councillor Hina Bokhari,
Councillor Steve Cook, Councillor Nick Draper and
Councillor Annie Moral

ALSO
PRESENT John Bosley (Assistant Direct Public Space), Zoe Church (Head
of Business Planning), Mark Robinson (Cemeteries Manager)
and Amy Dumitrescu (Interim Democracy Services Manager)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR 2021/22 (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Nick Draper nominated Councillor David Williams as Chair for 2021/22.
This was seconded by Councillor Agatha Akyigyina and therefore RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Williams be elected as Chair for 2021/22.

It was then proposed, seconded and agreed that Councillor Steve Cook be
nominated as vice-chair for 2021/22.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Alambritis.

3 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were agreed
as an accurate record.

5 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21 (Agenda Item 5)

The Treasurer presented the Annual Governance Statement which Merton is
required to compile each year. As far as possible this was compiled with the solace
framework and measured how the board had performed against the key principles.
The report also outlined work that would be carried out during the upcoming year.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Governance statement was noted and agreed.

6 ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21 (Agenda Item 6)

The Treasurer presented the report, an annual report to the board. The Treasurer gave an overview of the recommendations which were to approve the set of accounts and approve the annual audit return which required signing off. The report also included revising estimates for activity set back in February 2021 for the financial year 2021-22 and asking the board to reconsider whether to increase the possible draw down from reserves. Finally the Board were asked to agree the risk register.

It was noted that in regards to this year's activity there had been a large underspend compared to the budget. This was mainly due to delivery of the special projects programme and additional income being achieved. The cause of this additional income had been linked to the impact of Covid-19.

The Treasurer gave an overview of the debtors and creditors.

In response to questions from members, the Assistant Director Public Space advised that future pandemics would be included within the risk register and this would be reviewed for the next stage as well as looking at any future impacts on the risk register.

RESOLVED that the board:

- A. Received and approved the Draft Abstract of Accounts for 2020-21
- B. Approved the Annual Audit Return for 2020-21 (Appendix E)
- C. Approved the revised revenue estimates for 2021/22 in Appendix I
- D. That the Board decided not to increase the possible repayment of reserves from £800k to £1m (paragraph 2.5) in light of the outturn position
- E. Reviewed and Agreed the Risk Register as at June 2021 in Appendix J.

7 CONTRACTOR REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The Cemeteries Manager presented the report advising that the recent IT issues had not affected the efficient running of the cemetery as the majority of the work was paper based and that the server was now up and running again.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director of Public Space advised that this incident had happened nationwide across the whole infrastructure and whilst it had not happened locally it had affected local services. A risk based approach had been taken and the service had been restored.

In response to further questions, the Cemeteries Manager responded that maintenance of the graveyard did come under IdVerde, noting that when there is heavy rain soil does have to be topped up however this was part of the maintenance programme.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the Committee reviewed the information and noted the content of the report.

8 CLIENT UPDATE REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The Assistant Director Public Space presented the report noting in particular within the 2021/22 programme the work outlined within the report on the installation of new beams to allow effective replacement of failed beams, noting this was recommended that those were supported to ensure the integrity of the site. A schedule for these works was also included within the report.

In response to questions from members, the Assistant Director Public Space assured members that officers would be writing to grave owners, would rectify at the contractor's cost to make them safe and would engage with grave owners during that time with any unsafe memorials.

The Board noted that it had been a very difficult time for the burial service in particular, praised the work of all within the service and put on record the boards thanks to all those who had worked so hard during this recent time.

RESOLVED:

A. That the Committee noted the positive work undertaken by both the service provider's (idverde) cemeteries management team and the client officer team for the continued delivery of sustained services throughout the current pandemic recovery period.

B. That the Committee noted and provided feedback on the proposed programme of works for 2021/2022.

C. That the committee noted the separate programme of works to remedy the headstones made safe by being laid down in Section M

The public meeting was closed at 14.46. Members then debated within private session and the meeting was closed at 15.00.

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