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MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD 27 FEBRUARY 2015

(14.00 - 15.35)

PRESENT Councillor Richard Marston (in the Chair) (LB Sutton),
Councillor Nick Emmerson (LB Sutton), Councillor Stan Anderson
(LB Merton), Councillor Geraldine Stanford (LB Merton),
Councillor David Williams (LB Merton), Councillor Joan Henry (LB
Merton) and Councillor Jill West (LB Merton)

Zoe Church (Treasurer to the Board), Howard Joy (Surveyor to the
Board), Doug Napier (Leisure and Culture Greenspaces Manager -
LB Merton), Mark Robinson (Cemeteries Manager and Registrar),
Mark Waldron (Cemetery Supervisor), and Chris Pedlow (Clerk to
the Board)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Trish Fivey, Patrick McManus and Holly Ramsey.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No pecuniary declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 20 June 2014 were approved as a correct record.

4 BUDGET MONITORING 2014/2015 AND REVENUE ESTIMATES 2015/2016 (Agenda Item 4)

Following a request in advance of the meeting the Chair of the board invited Terry Downes, (Unison Branch Chair) to address the Board on a number of issue of concerns raised with him by his union members. Those included: limiting one booking only on Saturdays, the Merton's TOMs (target operating model) report and implications for the staff of the cemetery board.

The Board's Treasurer presented the report which detailed the projected outturn for 2014/15 based on the budget monitoring to 31 December 2014 and the revenue estimates for 2015/16. The report also contained the risk register, proposed fees and charges along with a breakdown of employees' costs. It was noted that there was an expected overspend in the budget of over £26,000 for 2014/15 and there would also be an expected ongoing shortfall of £11,600 per year from 2015/16.

The Board discussed the report and the appendices in detail, and raised a number of actions included:

- The board felt that they were missing a trick of additional income in turning away business for Saturday's burials and agreed to rescind the rule of only one burial on Saturdays.
- The Board requested to have a breakdown of the use of the cemetery by faith be provided for the next meeting, both current usage and future allocation of land.
- On the risk register the board ask that the change requested made at the last meeting of the word 'swine' being removed from risk no MSJCB2.
- The board requested the Treasurer look into and bring back a note as to why in Appendix A on page 10 'Running Expenses' there is a category of 'Members Allowances' with a £6000 allocation for this purpose.
- Members in relation to Appendix D on page 15 'Management and Administration Expenses' questioned how the time estimates had been calculated. The Treasurer confirmed that a couple of years ago a survey of Merton's officers' time were taken (to calculate the time) and therefore cost had been spend on the Cemetery Boards work. Members then debated the value of requesting a further survey, but felt that such a survey would cause officers extra work and thus decided against a further survey.

RESOLVED

- 1). That the actions and issues identified within the Minute be actioned included rescinding the rule of only one burial on Saturday.
- 2). That the current budgetary position for 2014/15 based on the third quarters monitoring be noted.
- 3). That the Revenue Estimates for 2015/16 as submitted be accepted in the short term but that officers are tasked with re-presenting estimates to the June 2015 meeting that break even.
- 4). That the precepts for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 be set at zero.
- 5). That the scale of fees and charges detailed within Appendix E are approved effective from 1 April 2015.
- 6). That the Board establishes it's next meeting in June 2013 to ensure that information is despatched to Merton's External Auditors by 30th June 2015.
- 7). That the Board review and approve the Risk Register attached as Appendix I of the report.

5 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 5)

That the public are excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following reports on the grounds that they are exempt from disclosure for the reasons stated in the reports.

6 SERVICE DELIVERY, CEMETERY BOUNDARIES AND PARKING (CONFIDENTIAL REPORT) (Agenda Item 6)

The board considered the report on Services delivery, Cemetery boundaries and parking. Members were guided through the report which was spilt into two separate aspects. The first half of the report related to future service delivery of the cemetery.

In debating the report, Members understood the logic of the proposals, relating to recommendations A and B, and acknowledged that further work and information was required before they could make definitive decisions and confirmed that they would require a further report on those issues. Councillors David Williams and Jill West did not support the principles contained within recommendation B, of the report, and asked that it be recorded they voted against the recommendation.

In examining the second half of the report in relation to the cemetery boundaries and staff parking. Members felt that the proposed boundary were fair and were in fully supported the proposal as presented by the officers and contained within the report. Members were also supportive of utilising the cemetery yard as the clearly designated area for staff parking.

NB a more detailed exempt minute has been produced for this item.

RESOLVED

That the Board

- 1). supports in principle recommendations A and B (as set out within the report), to allow further exploratory work to occur and requests that a further report be brought back to the Board on those issues.
- 2). agrees to set the boundary of the Cemetery Lodge and its grounds, and the installation of a drive for the parking of three cars, within the new boundary (as shown in the appendix A to the exempt minute) which is to be the designated parking area for the tenant.
- 3). agrees that an area designated for staff parking is to be set within the cemetery's yard and that this only area set aside for staff parking.

7 GREEN LANE STABLES. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE USE (Agenda Item 7)

The Board considered the requested report by the Surveyor to the Board on Green Lane Stables – Options for the Future Use. The report provided the findings of the requested consultants' surveyor which was to evaluate the ways of maximising the land's rental value.

In considering the report the Board were slightly disappointed with the lack of potential ideas or 'blue sky thinking' suggested, but were pleased that it did recognise that the current rental was below the levels expected for such pieces of land. Members felt that further dialogue was needed between the Board and Ms Goodman over the levels of rent, and empowered officers to speak and negotiate with her and bring back an update, hopefully for their agreement to the next meeting.

Members also noted that there still issues of flooding and further exploration would be required to find out the underlining cause. The Board agreed to fund the investigative flood works, but requested that the findings be provided to them at their next meeting for consideration.

RESOLVED

That the Broad

1. agrees to the expenditure (approximately £200) on the exploratory flooding works and request the findings be brought back to their next meeting.
2. requests that the Surveyor to the Board to go and speak to Ms Goodman over the rental issues and bring back an update report to their next meeting.