

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
WEDNESDAY, 27 JULY 2005 AT 3.30 P.M.

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Beddows, J. (Chairman)
Molineux, G.N. (Vice-Chairman)

Alcott, G.	Jones, R.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Mitchell, C.
Hewitt, S.M.	Stretton, M.C.

By Invitation: Allen, F.W.C.
Bernard, Mrs. A.F. - Cabinet Leader for Health

Also Invited: Martin, Mrs. J. - Patient and Public Involvement Forum

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Williams and Staffordshire County Council, Councillor Mrs. S. Woodward).

20. **Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**

Member	Nature of Interest	Type
Allen, F.W.C.	Parents have staked headstone	Personal
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Grandparents have headstone laid down	Personal

21. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2005 were approved as a correct record.

22. **Testing of Headstones and Memorials**

The Head of Leisure, Miss K. Bradford explained that the issue of Headstones had always been dealt with under the Cabinet Portfolio for Health, however, due to the unfortunate death of former Councillor, R.C. Cooper, Councillor Mrs Bernard took over the Cabinet responsibility.

The Head of Leisure provided Members of the Committee with a presentation on the Testing of Memorials and Headstones, and the following information was received.

- Background
- Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB)
- Raising Awareness
- Appointed Contractor
- Options Available
- Testing Results
- Stonemasons Meeting
- Lessons Learnt
- Current Issues
- Proposed Recommendations

The following points were noted arising from the presentation: -

Background

The Council applied for a faculty from the Church Diocese (Lichfield) and it was approved. There is no other permission required, as the Church of England is the main church body.

Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB)

It was reported that there are no burial records from 1974 onwards for St Augustine's Church, Rugeley.

The Head of Leisure explained that legal advice was sought regarding contacting holders of the ERB prior to testing, but was advised that this should not happen.

Raising Awareness

It was reported that information relating to memorials and headstones was a standing item on all Community Forum Agendas in January 2005.

It was also reported that press releases and public notices were issued from the Council. Councillor Alcott requested that copies of the press articles be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Health Select Committee.

Options Available

It was noted that the Council adopted the option of staking and banding memorials should they fail the test.

Testing Results

It was noted that of all the sites tested to date, overall 34 percent failed the testing.

Stonemasons Meeting

It was noted that approximately 10 companies attended the Stonemasons meeting on 21 July 2005.

The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) established a Code of Practice in 1999 for Stonemasons and was formally adopted by the Council in December 2002.

It was noted that if it was found that a Stonemason had not fitted a memorial correctly, the customer could contact Trading Standards and under the Consumer Act make a complaint that the memorial was not 'Fit for Purpose'.

It was reported that a number of Stonemasons now belong to the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM), however a number of Stonemasons are not members of (NAMM). The pressure topple testing weight first used was 50kg and has now been reduced to 35kg.

It was noted that the Council recommend a period of 12 months between a burial and an application for a permit with regard to land settling.

Mr. Walsh explained that a licensing system for Stonemasons was in the process of being prepared in conjunction with the Institute of Cemeteries and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

Concern was raised in relation to the costs associated with the fixing of headstones that have failed and a turnaround of between 3-4 months ranging to 12 months expected for repairs.

The ICCM have suggested that a reasonable figure for fitting a ground bar ranged between £70 - £75.

The Head of Leisure advised the Committee that she had requested information from Stonemasons at the meeting relating to charges for repairing a memorial; she had received one response and a further response from a Stonemason that did not attend the meeting.

The Head of Leisure advised that she would incorporate select lists into the proposed recommendations for Cabinet.

Councillor Alcott suggested that a Trust Fund be established to help those that may not be able to afford the cost of repairing a memorial.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were agreed for formulation to the Cabinet: -

- Grave deed holder to have 36 months in which to effect repair
- Under the Consumer Act, what is purchased is 'fit for purpose'
- Public notices required at Wolseley and Rugeley Stile Cop Cemetery stating when completion of the testing will take place

- Residents group – meeting required
- Introduction of registration scheme for Stonemasons
- Press release required giving advice from ICCM
- Trust fund to be set up

Councillor Allen extended his thanks to Members of the Committee for convening the meeting at short notice and inviting him to the meeting.

Councillor Allen asked the Health Select Committee to recommend to the Cabinet that they are compassionate in response to this matter and consider offering financial support to refix the memorials.

CHAIRMAN