

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday 10th September 2025

PRESENT: Lynn Hezlett, Debbie Hooper, Duncan Barclay, Cathy Martyn, Valerie Barren,

APOLOGIES: Mike Mason, Nick Orman, Emma Freemantle, Fran Twohey

1. Matters arising from the meeting held on 14 May 2025

Actions from these minutes were reviewed as follows:-

- 2.1 Action carried forward (see notes under 3.1 below)
- 2.2 Phill taking matter to next level
- 2.3 Still to be resolved?
- 3.4 Signs still to be replaced. **Action Carolyn** take this forward
- 4. Lynn Hezlett is the new chair of this committee and the liaison with SBC.
- 6. Carolyn Kirk is now taking minutes and organising working parties for the Upper Churchyard.

2. Noted from Churchyard inspection

Due to very inclement weather the inspection was brief!

- 2.1 There's a low hanging branch over the memorial garden. This can be cut back by the one of the Upper Churchyard working party. **Action Carolyn**
- 2.2 The wildlife area near the lower churchyard path is being taken care of by the LCVG
- 2.3 The gully around the church building has become very weedy. **Action Andrew to clear within the next few weeks.**
- 2.4 A blocked drain was noticed that Lynn will report to the Buildings Committee
- 2.5 **Bins** - Cathy reported that WPC are emptying 9 bins but the amount of soil and mud that goes in them is creating too much heavy waste. Currently the excess soil is being distributed around the churchyard in appropriate places. Duncan reported that the compost bins in the Lower churchyard will soon be in place which should reduce the amount of waste going into the bins leaving only the inorganic material. He confirmed that going forward the LCVG will use the compost bins instead and he will put up appropriate notices. The waste from the Upper Churchyard is currently being deposited behind Legge House. Carolyn will liaise with Bryan about a suitable area for a compost bin. We also discussed the use of a shredder to reduce the amount of waste and the possibility of hiring or borrowing one. Andrew will look into this. **Action Duncan, Andrew and Carolyn.**

3. Churchyard Maintenance and Management

3.1 Lower Churchyard Volunteer Group (LCVG)

Duncan reported that there are 6-12 volunteers working every 2 weeks. The slow rate of grass growth in the dry summer weather had reduced the amount of cuts required. A new shed will be erected in the next few weeks. Matters being raised by the LCVG were as follows:

Insurance- The insurance policy that covers the churchyard doesn't currently cover people working there over the age of 80. Could this be raised to the age of 85 so that all

of the current volunteers could be covered? Also there appears to be insufficient cover for injury and equipment. **Action Lynn to speak to Nick about possible changes to insurance.**

Christmas Wreath Collection- Last year SBC collected the wreaths and indicated to the LCVG that that would probably be the last time. Cathy said that she would put in a request to WPC to ask that they collect and dispose of them this coming Christmas. It was agreed the LCVG will collect wreaths from the graves, removing non compostable material for WPC to collect. **Action Duncan to organise with LCVG and Cathy to put in request with SBC. Carolyn to ask for help from volunteers from the Upper Churchyard working party.**

Overhanging trees Last year trees were cut by SBC but as that was a limited cut, there are still some branches overhanging graves and further cutting is required.

Bank by path to lower churchyard This is currently overgrown and needs clearing to improve visibility to improve safety for visitors and volunteers.

Handrail on lower churchyard path There is a large gap between the top and bottom rail and a midrail is required to improve safety for wheelchair users in particular.

Action Lynn to speak to Nick about if a faculty is needed for the above 3 items.

Loose headstones Duncan will email a list of headstones that are loose. Some are tilting after the very dry weather - the LCVG have been filling in gaps as was the previous practice

Footpath Repair Although the top of the lower path can be patched, the rest of the path is in poor condition. If repaired by SBC approved contractors the cost of repairs as quoted a few years ago was between £20,000 and £40,000 mainly due to access difficulties. We discussed the possibility of a contribution from WPC and also of fundraising or applying for grants to contribute towards the cost. Cathy said that she would ask if a SBC highways officer could come and advise on the state of the path.

Action Lynn to speak to Nick about grants that could be applied for for this purpose.

3.2 Upper churchyard volunteer group- Carolyn has now taken over organising the working parties and one more will be arranged before the winter. With Bryan mowing the grass we seem to be keeping on top of the weeding and other smaller jobs.

3.3 Rewilding and managing of land for biodiversity- SBC has recently cut most of the wild areas as intended although the area behind the church has been left. We assume that they will be back in due course to cut the rest.

3.4 Equipment and workstore- Now that the racking is in place the workstore is organised and tidy.

4. **SBC and WPC** There will be a full council meeting on 22 September and Cathy will respond to Lynn and Carolyn about the matters raised.
5. **Treasurers Report** Nick had circulated the report prior to the meeting. The current balance in the fund is £5,304. There will be a transfer of funds from churchyard fees at the end of the year (estimated £3000) Reinstating the subsidence is expected to cost around £5000.
6. **A.O.B** None
7. **Date of next meeting-** Wednesday 29th April 2026. Inspection at 6.30pm followed by a meeting in church.

