



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE** HELD AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY 21st JULY AT 2.30PM

PRESENT: Kay Montandon David Anderson
 Julie Boyd Kevin Cunnane
 Mary Evans Mathew Martin
 Wendy Sadler

Also in Attendance: Faye LeBon, Clerk to Aylsham Town Council and Andy Bell, Groundsman.

1. Election of Chairman

It was agreed after a proposal from Mary Evans and a second from Kevin Cunnane, that Kay Montandon should Chair this committee.

2. To Agree Co-opted Members of the Committee

It was agreed that Rev. Julie Boyd, Mathew Martin and Wendy Sadler should be co-opted onto the committee.

3. To Receive Apologies for Absence

None received.

4. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Request for Dispensation

None raised.

5. To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting of 12th August 2024

The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 12th August 2024 had been circulated. These were **agreed** by the committee as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting, not forming part of the agenda

Mary Evans queried whether there had been an update from the surveyor, as detailed in item 7 of the previous minutes. Kay Montandon advised that there was nothing accessible.

Julie Boyd reported that the lifting of the gatepost and making safe the resulting hole, as detailed in item 6 of the previous minutes, had been successful and has been well received by funeral directors. Andy Bell advised that the gate is being safely stored by the Town Council.

Mary Evans advised that the meeting originally planned for 21st October 2024 did not take place.

7. To Adjourn the Meeting to Allow Members of the Public and Councillors with Prejudicial Interests to Speak

No matters raised.

8. Church Wall

a) To Receive Update on the Church Wall

It was reported that, with the planning application for the church wall in its present form unlikely to progress, a step back has been taken to restart the project beginning with professional advice from a Diocese recommended structural engineer. The Diocese has also provided the Town Council with a list of building contractors which are on their approved list, from which quotes can be sought at the appropriate time.

Originally the planning application was for both the green waste area and the church wall. As the church wall was holding up the whole application, the two projects have been separated to allow progression of the green waste area.

The church wall application remains live in case any aspect of the proposed new plans require planning permission. An amendment to the existing application can then be made, rather than withdrawing the existing application and losing the fees, and risk putting in a new planning application at additional cost.

b) To Agree Expenditure for Structural Engineer and Date of Onsite Meeting

The Clerk reported that, a quote has been received for £650 for the Diocese recommended structural engineer to attend site, look at the wall and report back with initial observations and advice, which may include options or recommendations for further investigation, or an outline of repairs or replacement and what that may involve. This would not be a full working specification or information in its own right that would form the Faculty or Listed Building Application, but rather initial assistance to provide a starting point. Subject to committee approval a proposed date of 26th August 2025 at 2pm has been pencilled into the diary for a site visit. It was **agreed** after a proposal from Kevin Cunnane and a second from Mary Evans, that Stuart Armitage of the Morton Partnership be appointed to attend site on 26th August at a cost of £650.

Attendees to the meeting would be Kay Montandon, Mary Evans, Julie Boyd and Mathew Martin. Also in attendance on behalf of the Town Council would be the Clerk, Groundsman and Maintenance Manager.

9. Ground Maintenance

a) To Receive Notification of Planning Permission for Green Waste Area.

It was reported that now that the works for the green waste area has been separated from church wall planning application, this plan has been approved. Andy Bell clarified that the works to be done required clearance to ground level and there

would be no digging. The green waste can be taken to a different site and the fencing removed.

Discussions occurred as to making this area less attractive for opportunists to dump green waste on the site.

Andy suggested the placing of separate bins for green waste and non-recyclables such as cellophane and artificial flowers. Julie and Mathew can look into whether a faculty is required for bins, if Andy is able to forward details of recommended bins. The Clerk can look into the funding.

Other suggestions, such as a planting area, wild flowers and benches can also be considered in due course.

b) To Consider Completion of Memorial Garden

Mary reported that in 2018 it was agreed to create a memorial garden for women's suffrage. Subsequently, as result of the pandemic, it was agreed to install plaques for both women's suffrage and those lost to Covid-19.

Two lilac trees were planted, courtesy of Aylsham in Bloom, which also cleared the area. A membrane was also laid close to the wall to stop plants growing in this area. A faculty has been granted for the plaques.

Mary advised that all women received the right to vote in 1928, therefore the memorial garden could reflect this date, as well as the date when a limited amount of women were granted the right to vote.

The following actions are required:

The Clerk will forward on details of the proposed bench and Julie will apply for the faculty.

Slabs would need to be sourced for the bench to be installed upon.

The planting would need to be revisited.

The Clerk will cost the project and find out what the Clean Up and Bloom grant was spent on.

The Clerk will arrange a site meeting to discuss further.

c) To Consider Additional Requirements for Maintenance of the Repton Grave

It was reported that the box hedging around the Repton grave had been killed off by the box moth caterpillar. It was thought that box hedging was specifically requested by Humphrey Repton, although there was no reference found to this. Mathew will speak to the previous church warden who may be able to assist with this reference. Andy reported that there are evergreen hedges which are very similar to box hedging but are more resistant.

It was **agreed** that the box hedging should be removed.

10. Receive Update on Night Silencer for the Church Clock

It was reported that the night silencer system for the church clock was not working as it should. The Clerk will circulate a report of what is had gone wrong and what is required to fix it.

11. To Consider Resident Offer to Improve Drainage at School House Lane Entrance

It was reported that a local resident had offered to pay for remedial works to

improve the drainage at the School House Lane entrance to the church. A specification and quote had been received from a local builder. Andy clarified the works required and that the result would aesthetically look the same.

12. To Consider Repairs Required to Fencing at the Paupers' Graveyard

It was reported that the Maintenance Manager had attended to repairs at the Paupers' Graveyard, however the wooden fence and gate were in a poor state. It was **agreed** that quotes would be sought for metal fencing and gates, the latter with an arch with 'Paupers' written across. A more open appearance would make the area more welcoming to visitors and would discourage those wishing to exercise dogs in a consecrated area. If the quotes were acceptable to the council, this could form part of the 2026/2027 budget.

It was reported that there had been a complaint about a tree in the area impacting on a property in Sapwell Close. Andy and the Clerk had been looking at the land registry documents to ascertain whether this tree is within the boundary of the graveyard. It was noted that this tree has a preservation order.

13. To Note Items for Information or for Inclusion on a Future Agenda

To carry forwards items from this meeting.

Julie thanked all in attendance for their work on the churchyard.

A list of weddings had been forwarded to Andy to programme grounds work around.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Monday 1st September at midday, at St Michael's Church.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 3.45pm

Meeting of the Aylsham Town Council Churchyard Committee

1st September 2025

Further Information

Item 6 - Church Wall

a) To Receive Report from Onsite Meeting on 26th August 2025

The Diocese Structural Engineer and the Broadland District Council Heritage Officer attended site on 26th August 2025 to consider options for the church wall. The meeting was very productive with the Structural Engineer agreeing to send the Clerk possible options to take forwards. It is hoped that these will be received in time for the meeting.

Item 7 - To Receive Update to Improve Drainage at School House Lane Entrance

The donation for these works has been received. The quote for the project totalled £1,590.45, however a donation has been received for £2,000. The donor has requested to remain anonymous. The Clerk has verbally thanked the donor but a letter will be sent from the Town Council thanking them for their generosity.

Item 8 - Grounds Maintenance

a) To Receive Update on Completion of Memorial Garden Project

£300 was received from Broadland District Council for the Clean Up and Bloom Grant and this was signed off as all funds spent (sign off form appended). However, thanks to the donation as detailed above there is a potential £409.60 to be spent within the churchyard which, with the permission of the committee, can be spent completing this project. This requires costing.

b) To Receive Update on Maintenance of the Repton Grave

A local volunteer has completed the removal of the diseased box hedging. Andy will provide recommendations and costs of replacement. Subject to committee agreement and costs to complete the memorial garden, the remainder of the donation could be utilised.

Item 9 - To Receive Update on Night Silencer for the Church Clock

The night silencer is now operational, however this has resulted in the clock not chiming on the quarter and half hours. The horologist is to attend site again.

Item 10 - To Receive update on Repairs / Replacement of Fencing at the Paupers' Graveyard

The Maintenance Manager has attended site to make repairs to the fencing and has installed signage to request that all dogs be kept on leads.

He has also met with a contractor to price for improved fencing in this area. Once received, this will be presented to the Town Council as part of the 2026/2027 budget.

Pride in Place Community Grant – Clean Up & Bloom

Project Closedown Report

Project Details

Parish/Town Council: Aylsham Town Council

Lead Contact: Sue Lake (Previous Town Clerk)

Closedown Report Prepared By: Phil Chapman (Locum Clerk) on **Thursday, 13 March 2025**

District Council Area: Broadland

Total Project Cost: £300.00

Grant Awarded: £300.00

Project Description

This project focused on the **creation of a memorial garden** within **St Michael's Churchyard, Aylsham**, enhancing accessibility and improving the appearance of the space.

The work involved:

- Clearing a **one-metre-wide strip** of overgrown vegetation along the churchyard wall.
- Removing **ivy and other growth** from the historic wall between the Heritage Centre and the rear of the Co-op car park.
- Installing a **weed membrane and bark chippings** to suppress future weed growth.
- Planting a **tree, shrubs, and bulbs** to improve biodiversity and visual appeal.

Outcomes and Impact

1. Community Involvement

- A total of **16 people** participated in the project:
 - **Parochial Church Council (PCC) working party** – 6 volunteers
 - **Aylsham in Bloom** – 6 volunteers
 - **Town Council staff** – 4 members
- The project increased **community engagement**, strengthening cooperation between different local groups.

2. Environmental and Visual Improvements

- The removal of ivy has helped **preserve the churchyard wall** and enhance the space.
- New **tree, shrub, and bulb plantings** have improved **biodiversity** and created a more attractive setting.
- The **clearway and path** allow for easier future maintenance.

3. Public Use and Accessibility

- The **improved pathway** provides a **safer and more accessible** route for visitors.
- Visitors have responded **positively**, appreciating the **tidier and more welcoming** environment.

4. Sustainability and Long-Term Benefits

- The use of a **weed membrane and bark chippings** has reduced the need for **ongoing maintenance**.
- The new plantings will continue to develop, ensuring **long-term benefits** for the community.
- Maintenance will be carried out by **local volunteers and town council staff**, ensuring the space remains well-kept.

Project Completion Summary

- **Was the project completed as planned?** Yes
- **Were the grant funds used as intended?** Yes
- **How many people were involved?** 16 volunteers (PCC, Aylsham in Bloom, Town Council)
- **Are there any outstanding works?** No further work related to this grant.





