

DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL

27th January 2026

At a meeting of the **Social & Welfare Committee** held at the Memorial Hall on **Tuesday 27th January 2026** upon the rising of the Markets & Buildings Committee meeting.

Present: Councillors H King (Chairman), S Green, A Keats, and L King.

Also present: Councillors P Duigan, Z Flint, P Morton and R Jamieson, Town Clerk A Needham and Deputy Town Clerk J Barron.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Coleman and R O'Callaghan.

2. **Declaration of Interest.**

There were no declaration of interest.

3. **To consider and make recommendations relating to burial responsibilities.**

The committee were advised that since reorganising the burials from the Town Council digging graves to undertakers arranging the digging of graves, it has become clear that while this was a more cost effective arrangement, issues have arisen where some graves have not been left in a manner which is as decent as some would expect and the Town Council is seen to be responsible.

The committee recommended that a letter to all undertaker giving a guide of the Town Councils expectations of how a grave should be left after a burial making it clear that the Council expects high standards.

The committee recommended that the Town Council adopt a policy of making undertakers responsible for topping-the-graves-up for the first 12 months following a burial. If the Council receives reports of dropped graves within this period, then the appropriate undertaker can be notified.

4. **To consider and make recommendations relating to grave depths.**

The Town Council rules are that a double grave must be dug to 6ft 6 inches. This was not an issue when Council staff were digging the graves, but with undertakers arranging grave digging it has been a struggle to enforce the 6ft 6-inch policy.

The guidance on grave depth is that 6ft is an absolute minimum based on an average coffin depth (there should be 6 inches between each coffin and a minimum of 2ft of soil covering the later coffin).

The committee recommended that the Town Council policy is amended to stipulate that the depth of a double grave must be an absolute minimum of 6 ft. It must be made very clear to undertakers that 6ft is the absolute minimum and that if the grave diggers are digging less than 6ft

then some sort of penalty will need to be introduced.

5. **To consider and make recommendations relating to setting out ashes plots at New Cemetery.**

The committee recommended that the Town Council commission the fabrication of a series of rails made of stainless-steel angle sections, which would be fixed in the ground. The rails would be fabricated so that standard 600 x 900 slabs locate exactly within the rails.

The reason for the recommendation is that this would be, easier and cheaper to install as well as being much tidier. It would also provide places for memorabilia to be arranged either side of the memorial stone rather than in a central slab.

6. **To consider and make recommendations regarding the time between a burial and the erection of a headstone.**

The committee recommended that the Town Council advise the next of kin, undertakers and stonemasons, that it is recommended that headstones are not erected until 12 months following a burial to allow time for the ground to settle. Communications should explain the reason 12 months is being recommended.

Chairman