

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF ARMTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN ARMTHORPE COMMUNITY CENTRE, WELFARE PARK, CHURCH STREET, ARMTHORPE, ON THURSDAY, 01 OCTOBER 2026

PRESENT:

Chairperson: Councillor C Brodhurst Brown.

Councillors: A Barrington, C Head, L Monks, M Jackson, T Needham, A Nicholas, C Parry, and M Phillips.

City Councillor: C Marriott

Clerk to the Council: S Youngman.

Sixty members of the public

NOT PRESENT: Councillors A Bradley, L Bradley and C Trewick.

EX06 ITEMS TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM

RESOLVED: None

EX07 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

RESOLVED: None

EX08 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors E North, S Rose, M Walton and City Councillor N Pritchard.

RESOLVED: To approve the reasons for absence.

EX09 RANDS LANE BURIAL GROUND MEMORIAL SAFETY INSPECTION UPDATE

Councillor C Brodhurst Brown thanked members of the public for attending the meeting and summarised the report provided by the Clerk which contained an overview of the work carried out to date to check the stability of the memorials within the burial ground.

A discussion took place about who removed the safety notices from the affected memorials, when the reports will be available to members of the public, communication more effectively with members of the public, how upset members of the public have been, how the tests were carried out (by machine or manually), visits by staff to check the work of the appointed contractor, the quality of the work carried out, the provision of a Risk Assessment and Method Statement.

Council members were asked to consider the recommendations made by the Clerk to enable the Council to move forward and resolve the concerns raised by members of the public.

RESOLVED: To carry out a full review of policies and procedures before any further work takes place and to appoint an independent qualified stonemason to assess the work carried out by the contractor.

PUBLIC SESSION

A member of the public advised that she had requested a copy of the tender report. The Clerk agreed to check the email system for the email requesting the information.

A member of the public questioned whether the contractor applied a physical test or used a mechanical topmer to test the memorials. The Clerk agreed to query this with the contractor.

A member of the public expressed how the matter had affected his mental health and expressed how upset he was by the work being carried out.

A member of the public asked for clarification on the risks and degrees of risks identified by the stonemason. The Clerk agreed to request the information.

A member of the public questioned the technique used by the contractor to check the memorial and asked why they weren't informed about the work. Members of the public were advised that records hadn't been kept up to date, the majority of registered owners are either deceased or are no longer living at the recorded address.

A member of the public questioned why S P Davis had been used for the work and why is the work taking place now. The member of the public was advised that S P Davis provided a quote for the work and hold the qualifications required to carry out the safety checks.

A member of the public raised concerns with the process of checking the memorials and advised that the burial ground has been made more dangerous to visitors.

A member of the public advised that the contractor used to carry out the safety checks is quoting £291.00 to reinstate memorials plus an additional £200.00 to refurbish the lettering. Members of the public were advised that they can appoint any qualified stonemason to reinstate memorials.

A member of the public reported that the contractor had told them that the Council has handled the communication of the planned works poorly. The Clerk advised that the staff had followed the advice of the contractor.

A member of the public advised that she visits the burial ground on a weekly basis but does not read the notices in the information board. She had spoken with the contractor and had been shown the method used to check the stability of the memorials.

A member of the public complained that the parish council can advertise a bingo event but can't advertise a project like this on Facebook, in the post office or library.

Concerns were raised that memorials with rods had been laid down.

A member of the public advised that they had spoken with the contractor and questioned why families weren't informed. The Clerk advised that records had not been updated since the original Exclusive Rights of Burial had been purchased, members of the public need to contact the office staff to check who is registered as the owner of the grave/memorial.

A member of the public accused the Council of vandalism.

A member of the public referred to a fifteen-page Health and Safety document that should have been followed.

A member of the public questioned the safety of Rands Lane to members of the public.

A member of the public advised that she attends the burial ground weekly and insisted that the grave she visits was not loose and questioned who is going to pay for the work required to reinstate it.

A member of the public pointed out that all Councillors had been provided with the minutes of the meeting where Council members had agreed for the work to take place. The Council had sought quotes from four stonemasons but only one had been able to provide a quote, a recommendation was made to contact The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM). The member of the public referred to the shocking statement made by a Councillor regarding the death of a child.

A member of the public questioned why Councillors weren't on site whilst the work was being carried out.

A member of the public asked when further testing will take place and requested to be notified to enable them to be on site to witness the work.

A member of the public advised that a full review is needed and reported an issue with berries on the ground which are a health and safety concern.

A member of the public questioned what will happen to the memorials where there are no living relatives. Councillor C Brodhurst Brown advised that Council members will have to make a decision on how to deal with those memorials.

A member of the Council made a request for the administration fee to be waived for families that need to transfer the ownership of plots. Councillor C Brodhurst Brown advised that the matter would be discussed by members of the Community Centre and General-Purpose committee.

A member of the public expressed that they had no confidence in the work carried out by the contractor; any further work should be carried out by an alternative company.

A member of the public questioned who made the decision. Councillor C Brodhurst advised that the Parish Council voted to carry out the inspections.

Councillor C Brodhurst Brown advised that the Council recognises that additional steps need to be implemented and suggested members of the public to submit complaints via the Clerk.

A member of the public raised the matter of how the work had impacted families and their grief.

A member of the public asked if the Council manage the Churchyard. Councillor C Brodhurst Brown advised that the Parish Council are not responsible for the Churchyard.

A member of the public questioned if the entire burial ground will be checked, the Clerk confirmed that the entire site needs to be checked.

Councillor C Head reiterated that the memorials in the burial ground had never been checked.

A member of the public suggested that the Council consider appointing a contractor who uses a mechanical topper to carry out the work.

There being no further business the meeting closed.