



COMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery committee meeting November 16th 2023

We had apologies from Sarah.

We had a very good discussion about the cemetery. First, we praised and thanked Chris, his team of volunteers and his colleagues for really transforming the cemetery. It is looking so much better than before the lockdown.

The following points were made

1. Could there be a better link between the Council, Watts Gallery and the Rector about when funerals take place at the chapel/cemetery? Joanna, would you be able to form a link here? A benefit would be that if Watts Gallery is aware that a service/burial is to take place, it can make sure they stop work in the area. When you have time, and when you are well enough, could you have a word with Sally about this? **Yes, I will. I will need to find out who at the Gallery will act on this information**

2. Lich gate. The work is a little behind. Final costings will soon go to insurers. They will need 3 estimates before appointing someone to carry out the work. There seem to be fewer permissions necessary to obtain than had originally been thought. The work will take 6 weeks. The stone mason will cut a gap in the wall to the east of the lich gate to provide short term access. The wall will then be fully restored. Parking in the lay-by will be reduced while the works are carried out. It won't be completed until 2024.. **Noted, thank you.**

3. There are 2 abandoned cars in the lay-by - an untaxed Peugeot and an Audi which was taxed and MOTd in mid 2023. Could we contact the fire brigade to take the Peugeot away? Might the cars belong to the garage on the roundabout? The garage could be approached and told that if they do belong to them, they should be removed before the works begin. **Will do, to both.** *I believe the cars have now gone*

4. Maybe some of the branches which closely overhang the lich gate could be cut down at the same time as the work is being done. **Who should action this?**
Watts

5. Irish yew trees up the path. They no longer have bright sunlight to grow in, and are large. It would be good to develop a plan substantially to reduce some of them in size, though this will be costly.

6. Chapel. Watts Gallery believes it needs to commission conservation cleaning and repair work to some of internal decorations. The current estimate for performing the work is £120k. The Gallery doesn't have the budget for this at present, but does not believe that the work is urgent.

7. Donor bench. The Gallery would like to offer a donor the opportunity to have a named bench to the right of the path in the bed area just above the chapel. Those present made no objection.

8. Given that a number of recent grave stones do not conform to our regulations It was decided that we need to circulate the rules and regs of the cemetery to the local undertakers, saying that while some of the rules have been breached in the past, we are now tightening up. Before doing so, we should review the rules. For example should we ban curves on the ground around graves in the new, lower section? Other cemeteries do this, and it would make mowing easier. **The regulations are attached for review.** *This should be a topic for the next meeting. Joanna, please could you suggest a way forward?*

9. Should we ask the Bishop to consecrate the land at the bottom far end of the cemetery? **The church office is helping me with this, we did think that perhaps the whole cemetery should be re-consecrated as we are not sure what has been and what has not.** *Useful to have an update at the next meeting*

10. If we are going to offer more burial spaces in the bottom area, we thought we should remove a couple of trees to free up more space, eg , the fat Irish yew

11. It would be good to have a file/book, perhaps located within the chapel, setting out the graves of famous /interesting individuals within the graveyard, eg the Watts, the Huxleys, Ellen Brown, (nanny to G Jekyll' s nephews and

nieces) and other interesting graves, eg that of Mary, the more recent Compton potter. **A lovely idea. Who is best placed to action this?** *Open to ideas*

12. The gallery reported that these are tough times for the Arts Sector, and it has limited resources.

13 The next meetings are to take place on Thursdays in May and September 2024, exact dates to be fixed.