



**Bass Coast Shire Council
Minutes for Special Meeting
Wednesday, 19 August 2020
Virtual Meeting
12.15pm**

- 1. These minutes are due to be confirmed on 18 November 2020**
- 2. Any decision included in these minutes is subject to change resulting from a rescission motion passed by Council.**

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Meeting commenced

The meeting commenced at 12.22pm

Cr Brett Tessari read the Livestreaming Statement.

Livestreaming Statement

As the Meeting Chair, I give my consent for this Open Council Meeting to be streamed live, recorded and published online, in accordance with Council's Livestreaming Policy and Meeting Procedure Local Law 2018.

The Chair and/or the CEO have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of livestreaming.

Such direction will only be given in exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

Attendees are advised that they may be subject to legal action if their actions result in inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviour and/or comments. Thank you.

Cr Brett Tessari read the Virtual Meeting Statement.

Virtual Meeting Statement

The COVID-19 Omnibus Bill 2020 provision allows Council meeting attendance by electronic means.

The requirement of the meeting being open to the public is satisfied by the meeting being streamed live to Councils internet.

In the event of technical issues with the livestream the meeting will be adjourned.

Councillors are deemed as being in attendance if:

- They can hear proceedings
- They can see other members in attendance and can be seen by other members
- They can be heard (to speak)

Cr Brett Tessari read the Mobile Telephone Reminder.

Mobile Telephone Reminder

Please turn off all mobile telephones or in the case of an emergency, please advise the Chair and switch to silent mode.

Cr Geoff Ellis read the acknowledgement.

Statement of Acknowledgement

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first Australians and recognises that they have a unique relationship with the land and water.

Council further recognises that we are situated on the lands of the traditional owners, the Bunurong, Boon wurrung members of the Kulin Nation who have lived here for thousands of years.

We offer our respect to their elders past and present and through them, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where ever they are.

Cr Pamela Rothfield read the Councillor Statement.

Councillor Statement

All members of this Council pledge to the Bass Coast Shire community to consider every item listed on this evening's agenda:

- Based on the individual merits of each item;
- Without bias or prejudice by maintaining an open mind; and
- Disregarding Councillors' personal interests so as to avoid any conflict with our public duty.

Any Councillor having a conflict of interest in an item will make a proper, prior disclosure to the meeting and will not participate in the debate or vote on the issue.

A Present and Apologies

Councillors:

- Cr Brett Tessari, Bunurong Ward (Mayor)
- Cr Bruce Kent, Western Port Ward (Deputy Mayor)
- Cr Les Larke, Bunurong Ward
- Cr Stephen Fullarton, Island Ward
- Cr Pamela Rothfield, Island Ward
- Cr Michael Whelan, Island Ward
- Cr Geoff Ellis, Western Port Ward
- Cr Clare Le Serve, Western Port Ward

Officers in Attendance:

- Ms Ali Wastie, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Allison Jones, General Manager Business Transformation
- Ms Jodi Kennedy, General Manager Resilient Communities
- Mr James Stirton, General Manager Place Making
- Mr David Filmalter, Chief Financial Officer
- Mr Christian Stefani, Executive Manager Partnerships, Advocacy & Economy
- Ms Robyn Borley, Manager Governance and Property

Apologies: Cr Julian Brown, Bunurong Ward

B Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

C Public Question Time

There were no Public Questions.

D Petitions, Joint Letters, Deputations and Correspondence

There were no Petitions, Joint Letters, Deputations and Correspondence.

Notices of Motion

E Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

Reports Requiring Council Decision

F Reports Requiring Council Decision

F.1 Wonthaggi Cemetery Report

File No:	CM20/461
Division:	Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective:	Governance

We are responsive, open, transparent and financially sustainable

Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The Trust are responsible for the governance of the cemetery including the key roles of setting strategic direction, approving the annual budget, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance, developing policy, high level stakeholder management and ensuring that a risk management framework is in place. The Trust delegate day-to-day management of the cemeteries within its control to Council Officers.

The purpose of this report is to;

- Note the Cemetery Operations Update
- Note the Cemetery Master Plan Update
- Note the Cemetery Finance Update

I. Cemetery Operations Update

I.1. Grave Digging

The weather conditions over the last few months have made it difficult to reduce impact on cemetery grounds from machinery. The cemetery grounds are extremely wet and muddy due to the lack of wind over the last couple of months. Track mats are being utilised around grave areas to reduce impact and is an additional operational cost to the Cemetery Trust per burial. Council are currently looking into the possibility of additional track mats to further reduce impact where the grader is entering each burial area. Damaged areas are filled with turf sand once the grave has been filled.

In May heavy rain caused multiple new graves to sink considerably. This was due to the moisture held in the top soil grave fill, causing an increased rate of settlement on these particular graves. Top soil will no longer be utilised as a grave fill. A turf sand replacement was trialed on many graves over the last year and proved to be the superior product for our cemetery grounds. The turf sand allows for moisture to disperse evenly and assists the regrowth of grass. Turf sand is now utilised as our standard grave fill to prevent these environmental and safety issues along with the undue distress that it causes grieving families.

Weather conditions at times are also impacting grave digging and funeral services. Grave shoring is standard practice to ensure the safety of all involved. Council are currently reviewing our shoring practices with our contractor and networking with other cemeteries to further reduce risks for all involved.

Contractors continue to be efficient with grave requests, plaque installations and the confirmation of new burials, working closely with funeral directors and maintaining cemetery graves and roads.

1.2. Ground Maintenance

The weather conditions over the past few months has made it difficult to mow sections of the cemetery and will continue for the months ahead. Contractors will monitor conditions and address these areas as the grounds dry enough to allow mowing.

Continued effort is ongoing to clear old debris, maintaining garden beds and clearing/spraying of weeds, remove broken glass and ceramics, deteriorated tin and metal from graves and scattered artificial flowers throughout the cemetery. It is important not to place memorials on grass areas as this hinders ongoing ground maintenance. To ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and our environment, fresh flowers are most suitable as a memento for loved ones. Cemetery Trust rules are located at the cemetery, we appreciate the consideration.

You may notice kangaroo hind leg divots throughout the cemetery grounds due to the wet conditions. This will be monitored and addressed with turf sand to prevent trip hazards where required. We urge the community to take care walking through the cemetery at this time.

Council officers received positive feedback from the community as the memorial garden had a facelift with new rock and rose bushes pruned for winter. More work is planned for the area to make safe and accessible for visitors and staff.

Grounds maintenance service providers continue to be assessed as per our contractual and operational requirements and services adjusted as required.

1.3. Cemetery operations

The Covid-19 Pandemic has affected the cemetery sector with additional operational requirements and the limitation of attendees for funeral services. During this time, families were advised of funeral attendance limits by funeral directors arranging the graveside services and has been adhered throughout the last 5 months. Council appreciate the understanding shown by grieving families on restricted numbers and note the devastating affect it has had on families and friends grieving the loss of a loved one.

Council continues to receive positive feedback on the cemetery grounds from families and visitors and are working closely with cemetery contractors to ensure expectations are being met.

Councils cemetery operations and legislative knowledge is recognised by industry leaders and Council officers are regularly asked to assist other Victorian B class cemetery trusts. We have also built an effective network in the cemetery sector to share knowledge and seek advice from leading industry experts. This assists Council in our operational reviews and continuous improvement of our cemetery services.

Council has received multiple enquiries this past year regarding unmarked graves and have been assisting families to locate graves, update records and arrange plaques. This service not only allows families to mark their loved ones graves but also assists to map previously unmarked locations.

Wonthaggi Cemetery Trust							
Financial Year	Interment Ashes		Interment Burials		Right of Interment (Pre-Need & At Need)		Memorial Permits
	Wall	Grave	1st	2nd / 3rd	Wall	Grave	
2012/13	5		43				
2013/14	5		42				
2014/15	7		47				
2015/16	10		43				
2016/17	8		43				
2017/18	4	8	30	22	14	31	1
2018/19	7	4	24	26	10	25	3
2019/20	5	3	23	22	2	16	5

Burial interments are down from previous years but remain steady on average.

Right of interment figures remained low due to a high number of second interments and the restriction of pre-need reservations through the pandemic. We have seen an increase in At Need plots required this year and couples choosing individual single depth side by side plots instead of double depth interment into one plot.

Memorials permits issued have exceeded those from previous years due to monument restoration and second interments requiring monument inscriptions.

2. Cemetery Master Plan Update

The Wonthaggi Master Plan sets the strategic direction of the cemetery. AT-1 Wonthaggi Master Plan Stage Report is a progress snapshot of the master plan recommendations.

2.1. Granite Niche Wall – Recommendation 8

The new granite niche wall is now installed. Additional cost were incurred with shipping delays, storage, delivery and environmental conditions for this project due to the pandemic. Cemetery fees, plaques and an area policy for this new interment area are currently being developed. DHHS approval and publishing in the government gazette is required prior to arranging pending interments. It is expected that this will be completed over the coming months.

2.2. Infrastructure Development Strategy – Recommendation 12

The Infrastructure Development Strategy project is still in progress. The pandemic caused delays in this project being completed in the 2019/20 financial year. We anticipate completion in coming months.

3. Cemetery Finance Update

Attachment AT-2 – Draft 2019/20 Wonthaggi Cemetery Abstract of Accounts.

The abstract of accounts is in draft and will be confirmed final once auditing of Council's accounts is completed in September.

- Fees received show a 20% decrease from that of last year, due to second interments and restriction of pre-need right of interment reservations.
- Transfer to perpetual maintenance is consistent with that of last year.
- 30% of the profit will be directed to perpetual maintenance.
- \$25,000.00 DHHS grant received and acquitted.

Due to the pandemic crisis, resources and suppliers delayed increases, the July fee increase has been delayed until September, which will assist grieving families at this difficult time. Commencement of the new fees are subject to DHHS approval and gazette publication.

The DHHS fee structure assists cemeteries to build their fees to cover cemetery maintenance and materials, administration, contractor and supplier costs with a percentage of these fees contributed to perpetual maintenance. Profit is then utilised towards general cemetery operations, capital maintenance projects and future development of the cemetery.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Notes the Cemetery Operations Update**
2. **Notes the Cemetery Master Plan Update**
3. **Notes the Cemetery Finance Update**

Attachments

AT-1 Wonthaggi Master Plan Stage Report	2 Pages
AT-2 Draft 2019-20 Wonthaggi Cemetery Abstract of Accounts	1 Page

Decision

Moved: Cr. Pamela Rothfield / Seconded: Cr. Geoff Ellis

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

F.2 San Remo Cemetery Report

File No: CM20/465
Division: Business Transformation
Council Plan Strategic Objective: Governance

We are responsive, open, transparent
and financially sustainable

Declaration

The author has no direct or indirect interests in relation to this report.

Summary

The Trusts are responsible for the governance of the cemeteries including the key roles of setting strategic direction, approving the annual budget, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance, developing policy, high level stakeholder management and ensuring that a risk management framework is in place. The Trust delegate day-to-day management of the cemeteries within its control to Council Officers.

The purpose of this report is to;

- Note the Cemetery Operations Update
- Note the Cemetery Master Plan Update
- Note the Cemetery Finance Update

I. Cemetery Operations Update**I.1. Grave Digging**

Interments remain low at San Remo Cemetery, with an increase of monument installations and inspections due to more interments in the monument area other than the lawn beam area.

Contractors continue to be efficient with grave requests, plaque installations and the confirmation of new burials, working closely with Funeral Directors and maintaining cemetery graves and roads.

I.2. Ground Maintenance

Contractors have been working on addressing weeds throughout the cemetery grounds with weed spraying and removal. They are also chipping away at the boundaries, clearing dead vegetation and branches then spreading mulch to also assist with weed management in these areas.

Maintenance on our memorial garden is continuing and plants planted by the Cemetery Friends Group earlier in the year, have taken really well with all the sun and rain over the last few months.

Continued effort is ongoing with removal of broken glass and ceramics, deteriorated tin and metal from graves and scattered artificial flowers throughout the cemetery. It is important not to place memorials on grass areas as this hinders ongoing ground maintenance. To ensure the safety of visitors, contractors and our environment, fresh

flowers are most suitable as a memento for loved ones. Cemetery Trust rules are located at the cemetery, we appreciate the consideration.

Grounds maintenance service providers continue to be assessed as per our contractual and operational requirements and services adjusted as required.

1.3. Cemetery Operations

The Covid-19 Pandemic has affected the cemetery sector with additional operational requirements and the limitation of attendees for funeral services. During this time, families were advised of funeral attendance limits by funeral directors arranging the graveside services and has been adhered throughout the last 5 months. Council appreciate the understanding shown by grieving families on restricted numbers and note the devastating affect it has had on families and friends grieving the loss of a loved one.

Council thank the San Remo Cemetery Friends for their dedication and hard work put into the cemetery and particularly the memorial garden. We regularly receive positive feedback about this cemetery.

San Remo Cemetery Trust							
Financial Year	Interment Ashes		Interment Burials		Right of Interment (Pre-Need & At Need)		Memorial Permits
	Wall/ Garden	Grave	1 st	2 nd / 3 rd	Wall/ Garden	Grave	
2012/13	0		18				
2013/14	1		12				
2014/15	4		6				
2015/16	2		5				
2016/17	3		5				
2017/18	3	1	4	2	5	4	1
2018/19	6	0	6	4	7	8	1
2019/20	2	1	2	2	2	3	3

Interments this past financial year have remained low. Families have delayed cremated remains interments due to the pandemic restrictions and relatives living in the isolation areas of Melbourne.

Through the pandemic we have had multiple enquiries for Right of Interment pre-need reservations and interment of ashes. A number of Right of Interment reservation enquiries are pending at the time of this report due to our Covid-19 response and the restriction on pre-need Right of Interments at this time.

Memorial permits increased due to two bodily interments being in monumental grave locations.

2. Cemetery Master Plan Update

The San Remo Master Plan sets the strategic direction of the cemetery.

Initial review and staging of operational/administration recommendations presented in the Master Plan has been completed. AT-1 San Remo Master Plan Stage Report is a progress snapshot of the master plan recommendations.

Development of an Infrastructure Development Strategy for the San Remo Master Plan is required for strategic planning of future development, grants and review of works completed to date. A DHHS grant will be submitted in November 2020.

3. Cemetery Finance Update

Attachment AT-2 – Draft 2019/20 San Remo Cemetery Abstract of Accounts.

The abstract of accounts is in draft will be confirmed final once auditing of Council's accounts is completed in September.

- Fees received show a 57% decrease from that of last year due to limited burials and restriction of pre-need right of interment reservations.
- Transfer to perpetual maintenance down by 31% from last year due to low burials and income.
- Due to no profit this financial year we are unable to top up the perpetual maintenance.
- \$18,000.00 DHHS grant received and acquitted.

Due to the pandemic crisis, resources and suppliers delayed increases, the July fee increase has been delayed until September, which will assist grieving families at this difficult time. Commencement of the new fees are subject to DHHS approval and gazette publication.

The DHHS fee structure assists cemeteries to build their fees to cover cemetery maintenance and materials, administration, contractor and supplier costs with a percentage of these fees contributed to perpetual maintenance. Profit is then utilised towards general cemetery operations, capital maintenance projects and future development of the cemetery.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Notes the Cemetery Operations Update**
2. **Notes the Cemetery Master Plan Update**
3. **Notes the Cemetery Finance Update**

Attachments

AT-1 San Remo Master Plan Stage Report	2 Pages
AT-2 Draft 2019-20 San Remo Cemetery Abstract of Accounts	1 Page

Decision

Moved: Cr. Pamela Rothfield / Seconded: Cr. Geoff Ellis

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

G Urgent Business

There were Urgent Business items.

Mayoral Announcement Of Next Meeting Of Council

Council is monitoring and implementing the COVID-19 pandemic response and restrictions set out by the State and Federal Governments.

Council will be pausing Community Connection Sessions for the coming months.

The next Ordinary Council Meeting will be held virtually 19 August 2020 commencing at 1.00pm. It will be open to the public via livestream.

The following Ordinary Council Meeting will be held virtually 16 September 2020 commencing at 1.00pm. It will be open to the public via livestream.

Meeting closed

The meeting closed at 12.34pm