WOMERSLEY BURIAL (JOINT) AUTHORITY

Chairman: Mrs M Whittles
Parish Clerk: Ms S Coles
parishclerk@womersleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 10th August 2026 at 6pm to 6.45pm in the Fig and Olive Womersley.
(The previously advertised meeting of the 27th July 2026 had to be cancelled at short notice.)

PRESENT: Cllr M Whittles (Womersley PC) Cllr A Cooke (Stubbs Waldon Parish Meeting) and Cllr S Riley (Cridling Stubbs Parish Council).

WBJC 16/08/26 WELCOME AND MINUTES OF LAST MEETING.

1. Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.
2. It was **RESOLVED**: that the Minutes of previous meeting held on 20th April 2026 be signed as a true and correct record.

WBJC 17/08/26 REPORT FROM YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS
The Clerk checked the PC minutes from 1895 onwards and went to the Northallerton archives to view the WJBB old minute book. A Burial Board Minute dated 4th March 1925 states "The Clerk to write to Messrs Poppleton asking for the purchase of 40X27 yards belonging to Rev Hoy Vicar of Womersley" (Presumably Poppletons was a solicitor). In the accounts book there is two entries date November 1921 for a payment to be made to Poppletons for £53, 18s and 9d and again on December 2nd a payment of £23, 4s and 3d being the balance of the purchase of the land.

These are the only documents which the Clerk can find which support the purchase of what we now know as the Cemetery. There are no purchase documents/contract documents at Northallerton or in the three Parish Council's possession.
The Minute book states that Womersley, Criddling Stubbs and Stubbs Waldon made contributions to the purchase via a Precept served on the three parishes by the Womersley Joint Burial Board.

This information was sent to Yorkshire Local Council Association (YLCA) for further comment as to how to proceed to transfer the Cemetery to Womersley Parish Council. (Copies of the correspondence have been sent to all parishes for reference). They then referred this to the National Association of Local Council's solicitor who replied as follows:

I agree with the approach YLCA has taken thus far. I think this is a case of our advice being as good as our instructions. It would be remiss of me to give a definitive view on something as fundamental as land ownership based on the 1925 entries in the council's minute book and without sight of title documents. In my view, the entries alone would not satisfy Land Registry of the council's ownership. I think it would help for the council to speak with local solicitors dealing with property/ conveyancing who may have experience of dealing with such matters and where there is limited historical information. The council could also contact Land Registry for any advice they might be able to give.

We hope this information is useful in helping the council consider a way forward by contacting the land registry for guidance and a local solicitor.

It was **RESOLVED**: that all three Parishes agree that the Womersley Joint Burial Board be administered by Womersley Parish Council and accounted for in its annual AGAR

TO NOTE.
When the new Burial Board Clerk was appointed in 2025 it became apparent that the administration of the WJBB was not compliant as of 1st April 2015 with the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) the finances of WJBB has to be accounted for in a legal manner since and currently it falls outside the 2026 Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) for the administration of Burial Grounds and has not been audited for several years.
SAPPP states as follows:

5.139. Until 31.03.15 these committees (WJBB) submitted their own AGAR and all transactions relating to them were excluded from the holding or other controlling authorities.(namely Stubbs Waldon Parish Meeting, Cridling Stubbs Parish Council and Womersley Parish Council.)

5.140. This has changed and now each authority is required to include the share of both receipts or income (line 3) and payments or expenditure (line 6) applicable to them according to the joint agreement percentage. It is not acceptable to net the amounts and include only a share of surplus or deficit.

5.141. This percentage may not be equal but should ensure that committee balances are reported in full between the authorities without duplication or omission. It may be beneficial to annually minute the share to ensure that electors and external auditors are informed.

5.142. Authorities also need to account for their share of the bank balance (in line 8) and the reconciliation figure in either earmarked reserves (line 7) or for those using an I&E basis as a debtor or creditor in the line 7 to line 8 reconciliation.

5.143. Joint arrangements are not bodies corporate and may not own assets, hold bank accounts in their own name, have employees or enter into any form of contract.

5.144. Fixed Assets of joint arrangements and committees should be included in the register of the holding or managing authority as at 1st April 2015, or that of the authority that purchased them subsequently.

5.145. All authorities in a joint arrangement need to communicate with one another. If an original formation document cannot be found, the constituent bodies need to make and record proper decisions about how the arrangement is set up and how the income, expenditure, assets and liabilities are owned and accounted for in each participating body's AGAR.

WJBC 18/08/26 REPORT ON THE PROGRESS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CEMETERY.
Further to Minute 175/03/26 (d) whereby the Full Council discussed the land registration of the Cemetery and thought that it was an unnecessary process. The Clerk explained to the Committee that there could be a potential future problem with accessing the land which forms the proposed Cemetery should the goodwill of houses surrounding the site be withdrawn. The Cemetery land is not Land Registered nor is the land to the side of the Cemetery which is a designated footpath is not in the ownership of North Yorkshire Council and not maintained. **Risk**: should there be objectors to the designated footpath being used by burial contractors in the future it would be beneficial to the Council that this strip of land is Land Registered. **Cost implications**: Land Registry charge £740.00 to include a survey.

Plus there will be annual grass mowing and shrubs to maintain.

It is therefore a **RECOMMENDATION:** to the Full Council that the land is registered to the Parish Council.

WBJC 18/08/26 BURIALS SINCE LAST MEETING/MEMORIAL HEADSTONE REQUESTS.
No burials.
One memorial headstone to be engraved with a 2nd inscription in the name of Ellen Hinchliffe. Payment of £35.20 has been received.

WBJC 19/08/26 FINANCE REPORTS
Barclays Bank Statement dated 22.07.26 for balance of £18,067.08 was shown members. Two letters from the bank have been received demanding to ascertain where the WJBB derives its income and a signed statement requested. It was **RESOLVED**: that transfer to Womersley Parish Council's bankers should be arranged as soon as appropriate.

WBJC 20/08/26 INSURANCE AND HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS
1. Confirmation of insurance cover is attached.
2. The Parish Council signed its Health & Safety Policy at its meeting on 20th May 2026 which would be presumed to cover the Cemetery. MIN14/05/26. The Clerk is to check this matter.
3. Mr Curnow's latest public liability insurance certificate has been received and on file we have his Method Statement and Risk Assessment documents.
4. Mr Bramley grave digger has not supplied his public liability or Method Statement/Risk Assessment the Chair is to contact him.

To note: that this is a serious matter of a legal concern should anything happen to Mr Bramley or members of the public.

WBJC 21/08/26 ANNUAL INCREASE IN BURIAL FEES.
An attached comparison of burial fees with Wakefield Metropolitan District Council was attached to the agenda which showed that WBJA at a much-reduced cost. Consideration will be given and it will be discussed at the next meeting. The reservation of plots will currently be denied due to only 20/25 spaces available.

Date of the next meeting.
It is suggested that the next meeting is held at 6pm on 19th October 2026 or earlier if needed.

Closure of meeting.
The meeting closed at 6.55pm.