Meeting Report. ***21/11/2019***

NStC PCC (Brian Please + Clive Lawrence)
and
NStC PC (Cllr Roger Cashmore)

1. Continue to meet once a year, but available to each other at anytime. **Agreed**.
2. **Churchyard closure and the opening of the Parish Graveyard Extension**. The site of the extension has already been provided by the Quicke family to the PC. The site is already fenced (including the replacement of the fence previously removed that runs along the boundary with the current churchyard). Action is currently underway by the PC in collaboration with the Arboretum to remove fallen branches and for the barbed wire fence to be reinstated by the PC(see photo). Closure of the churchyard should result in the transfer of responsibility to the PC. It is the understanding of the PCC that the new Parish graveyard and the existing churchyard will have to remain discrete and separately fenced entities.

   As the rate of graveyard use is declining due to increases in cremation, it was agreed that there is no foreseeable need for action over the next few years. Therefore it was agreed to monitor and report the rate of take up on a yearly basis and to manage the handover by the PCC providing a minimum of one year's notice in writing to the PC of the need to hand over responsibility. This will allow time for any change of use applications and any precept modifications to be considered while the requirements for any new paths, access gates and fences to also be formalised.

3. **Churchyard walls and fencing**. Most of these are known and the responsibility of the PCC. A temporary fence has been reinstated between the churchyard and the new graveyard extension. The PCC has obtained authority to mend the wall near the Arboretum entrance, (See photo) for which contributions from the Arboretum and the PC would assist the PCC.

4. **Churchyard boundaries**. Greater clarity would help. There are a number of documents that assist us and are the basis for current working assumptions. The primary area of contention is the borders with A317 and Church Road. this may involve Devon County Council. A check on the Land Registry cadastre maps confirm that (along with other churches) due to no change of ownership(!) NStC Parish Church has no

boundaries logged with the Land Registry. PC has provided PCC with access to digital mapping capability as well as links to Graveyard Management software.

5. **Churchyard maintenance**. We have recently shifted from the use of the probationary service to using the same gardener as the PC use for the village green. This appears to functioning well and the budget and cost are managed by the PC. There is a marked off area for wildflowers. Any other maintenance (e.g. hedges, trees, etc.) are currently the responsibility of the PCC. The area behind the church wall and above the A317 cutting has risks, but the most urgent have been addressed by the Quicke family as part of the clearance down to Quicke Farm.
6. The area bordering Church Lane and containing the Wayside Cross is in need of pruning to expose the views and light. While the Arboretum provide support to trimming the hedges leading from the gate and around the east / north borders of the churchyard (representing the primary access to the Arboretum) the PCC may seek a contribution from the PC towards these works
7. **Churchyard trees.** A tree survey was carried out in 2017 to assess the health and safety of the trees and give recommendations for their management. Several trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. All were seen as low risk and in good condition.
8. **Churchyard external toilet.** There is a toilet in the churchyard. This is usually only open during church services. The PCC are exploring upgrades to this facility in terms disabled access, steps, handrails and lighting.
9. **Churchyard access**. Open access is available. The pathways (paved, cobbled, grass) are in reasonable condition. The PCC has placed signs to encourage control of children and dogs (and the mess left by dogs) when walking through the churchyard.
10. **Graves and Cremation Tablets**. The PCC still manage new burials in the churchyard and while there is a shift to cremations and away from full burials and hence more expected use of tablets. There is also a single Commonwealth War Grave in the churchyard. The PCC is also in the process of levelling a number of graves.