

Cemetery Extension Task & Finish Group

MS Teams Meeting

6 May 2026

6.00pm – 7.10pm

In attendance:

Councillors: Lee (Chair), Cleeve, I Fradgley and MacDonald

Officers: Town Clerk and Open Spaces Foreman

Apologies: None

Councillor Lee reminded Councillors of the long-term rationale behind acquiring the land. The Town Clerk then outlined the progress for the cemetery extension project. Key areas included land acquisition status, planning application progress, biodiversity requirements, funding constraints, and interim use of the land.

Councillor Cleeve advocated strongly for residents who had been cultivating the land, explaining that several individuals had continued to grow food and share produce within the community and requested continued use until development was imminent, if feasible.

Project Status Updates

- **Land Purchase**
 - Purchase price agreed at £40,000, with a £3,250 reduction negotiated to offset biodiversity-related costs.
 - Completion is delayed pending confirmation from the District Council regarding easements and access rights.

- **Current Land Use**
 - Parts of the land had continued to be cultivated by residents, despite prior notices.
 - Some areas were overgrown, while others had been maintained and had been used for food growing.
 - It was understood that there were issues around fencing blocking access routes and unauthorised use by individuals without rights to the land and further clarification was sought on this.

- **Planning Application**

- Submitted over six weeks ago and now assigned to a case officer.
- Includes consideration of loss of allotments versus gain of burial space.
- Potential discrepancy identified with the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).
- **Biodiversity Requirements**
 - Development must achieve a biodiversity net gain
 - This may be achieved on-site or through off-site credits.
 - Ecological appraisal completed; further requirements will be determined through the planning process.

Funding Position

- Total available funding includes:
 - £234,000 from District Council CIL funding had been secured but had a deadline.
 - Additional local CIL funds had been earmarked.

Following questions on the above, the options were then discussed.

- Proceed with cemetery development if planning was approved.
- Use a phased development approach, if feasible and not costly:
 - Develop the main area first.
 - Retain part of the land temporarily for garden/'allotment' use.
- Allow interim use under formal licences.
- If planning is refused, retain land and allow use.

AGREED

- Proceed with planning application and consider tendering for development.
- Structure tender to possibly include:
 - Core development (main site).
 - Optional additional development (second area).
- Aim to align planning outcome and tender results to inform a decision by July (or later if delayed).
- Seek legal assurance of vacant possession before completing purchase.
- Further consider the funding implications and the deadline
- Further consider the potential interim use of the land via licences.
- Consider site visit for councillors once land ownership / planning permission is confirmed.

Actions

- Town Clerk
 - Continue chasing District Council for easement clarification and purchase progress.
 - Seek guidance on CIL funding extension and conditions.
 - Investigate and prepare legally robust licence agreements for interim land use.
 - Share biodiversity reports and liaise with consultant.
- Councillor Lee
 - Update the overall project plan.

Date of Next meeting: TBC