

## Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 October 2016</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Priest End Allotments to Burial Space</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Graham Hunt, Town Clerk Janine Howells, Asset Manager</b>

### Purpose of this Report

1. To provide a verbal / written update on the plans to convert Priest End Allotments to Burial Space.

### Update

2. At the last Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee meeting it was recommended to Full Council that the land be transferred to the Church to extend the existing graveyard at St Mary's Church subject to relevant conditions and costs to be negotiated by the Town Clerk. This was Resolved at Council on 16 August 2016. The transfer will be subject to:
  - land transferred at nil consideration
  - normal land disposal process by the Town Council in line with statutory requirements
  - a condition that the burial space is only to be used in line with the granted Planning Permission
  - a condition that the burial space is available for burials for those of any faith or none
  - a condition that the one remaining allotment tenant can enjoy continued use in her lifetime
  - the church leading on the project to execute the conversion to burial space
 with the Town Council covering reasonable costs and providing reasonable support to the project.
3. A site meeting with members of the Church and Officers was held on 23 August 2016. Discussion took place regarding possible access into the site for burials, the required archaeological dig, the remaining allotment, existing site features, funding and the next steps in the transfer of the land into a burial space.
4. Following the meeting on the 23 August 2016 the Church spoke to SODC Planning Officers with regard to the feasibility of access into the new burial area and the various options that may be appropriate. The Church will now establish if any vaults are beneath the preferred pedestrian access. Officers will then discuss the preferred access with SODC Planning Officers to establish if any revision to the planning permission is required.
5. On 2 September 2016, the Council's solicitors, Wellers Hedleys were instructed to proceed with the order to execute a land transfer on behalf of the Council to The Diocese of Oxford. An initial response has been received seeking clarity on sharing of costs. A response is on hold until more is known on exact costs to be incurred, and the extent to which they may be covered by s106 monies. There may also be VAT implications of an early transfer date.
6. On 13 September 2016 a public notice was placed with the Thame Gazette to appear on 23 and 30 September 2016 giving notice that the Council intends to dispose of the land by transfer to The Diocese of Oxford. Any objections with respect of the proposed disposal have been requested to be received by 7 October 2016. The notice has also been placed on the Council's website. There have been no objections to the public notice regarding the land disposal.
7. A design brief for the required archaeological investigation has been supplied by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist. Confirmation has been received from the Officer

regarding the extent of the work required at the site. An archaeological investigation will be required for any areas that will be affected by the planning permission. If there are no other proposed impacts associated with the application the investigation would only need to cover the area of proposed burials. There would however need to be a further investigation on the rest of the site should this be proposed for burials at any stage in the future. Registered archaeological contractors will now be invited to quote for the work.

8. A member of the Church has spoken to the remaining allotment tenant regarding her intentions on cultivating her allotment and she has indicated that once her final crops have been harvested that she will vacate her allotment by Christmas. The tenant has advised that she is now cultivating a shared allotment at Stones Close.

**Legal Powers: LGA 1972 s127 and Localism Act 2011, ss1-8**

**Action Required:**

To note the report.