

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Date:	4 April 2017
Title:	Priest End Allotments to Burial Space
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk Janine Howells, Asset Manager

Purpose of this Report

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

Update

2. A Design Brief / Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the required archaeological investigation works was supplied by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist. This has been submitted to SODC to discharge Condition 3 of the Planning Permission.
3. Five registered archaeological contractors were invited to quote for the work, in line with the WSI. Three quotations for the works were received. Following evaluation of the quotations the work was awarded to Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) who quoted £6,225. TVAS executed the initial evaluation and trial pits in November 2015 for the planning application submission by the Council and are therefore knowledgeable of the site.
4. The WSI is open ended, depending on what is found, so there is potential for additional costs to be incurred.
5. Correspondence between the Council's solicitor and the Diocese solicitor has been ongoing. Clarification has been sought by the Diocese's solicitor regarding costs associated with the transfer of the land to burial space. The Town Clerk has confirmed that the costs associated will be met by the Town Council but only up to the total amount of allocated s106 monies. A review point will be needed if it becomes clear that the s106 monies will be insufficient.
6. Identified s106 monies of around £26,000 relate to various developments around Thame (The Elms (£3,341), Site F (£18,335), Thame Service Station (£1,806) and Angus House (£2630.33 received by SODC)). SODC has been informed that the Town Council is forward spending these s106 funds.
7. It has been agreed that for VAT purposes, there is no need to hasten the land transfer.
8. The remaining allotment tenant has now fully relocated to Stones Close Allotments. The Maintenance Team removed and replanted a number of fruit bushes for the tenant onto her new allotment in January.
9. The Maintenance Team have cleared all remaining allotment debris and structures in preparation of the archaeological investigation works.
10. Approval has now been granted by SODC for the discharge of Condition 3 of the Planning Permission following the submission of a further Written Scheme of Investigation / Project Specification provided by TVAS. The charge for the discharge was £48.50p
11. Permissions for access onto the land have been obtained from the business operating at the Tithe Barn and the landowner and a commencement date for the work is awaited from TVAS.

12. A contractor executing drainage works in the adjacent Tithe Barn land in January stated that there would be an impact on the burial space, but we have been assured by OCC that this will not be the case.
13. Thame Museum Archaeology Group have expressed interest in the investigations and have provided details of the possible archaeological significance of the site and suggested that Professor John Blair, Queens College, Oxford be invited to oversee the excavations. TVAS will be advised of this interest.
14. The following order has been issued by the Council in relation to the project:
 - 28 November 2016: Thames Valley Archaeological Services – Archaeological investigation as per planning condition. Cost £6,225.00 + VAT.

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

Action Required:

To note the report.