

## Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 February 2016</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Priest End Allotments to Burial Space</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Graham Hunt, Town Clerk</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 15 July 2015 meeting of the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee it was noted that following further discussions with the church, an action plan had been drawn up by officers to maximise the possibility of gaining the planning permission needed to extend the churchyard. Any costs would be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan Consultancy budget line. A separate action plan would be required to execute the extension, if planning permission is obtained, using s106 monies.
3. In late July 2015, SODC re-opened the planning application.
4. In late August 2015, the Environment Agency supplied a positive report relating to bore hole depth analysis at a cost of £252.
5. In November 2015, Thames Valley Archaeology Services executed an initial archaeological investigation, the results of which have been shared with the Historic Environment Team at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). OCC has stated "The evaluation has shown that archaeological deposits relating to the late Saxon and Early medieval period do survive on the site and these features will be disturbed by future burials. A formal archaeological excavation will be therefore be required in advance of any burials on the site. This can be undertaken as a condition on any planning permission granted for the site." Costs are being established of such further excavation, in the areas that are suitable for burials.
6. As at January 2016, only one allotment tenant remains, with an option to move to an alternative allotment site in Thame. The tenant is happy to stay or to move. The further investigations have now established that the small area of land that the tenant is using is not in an area that can be used for burials, and so there is no absolute requirement for the tenant to move.
7. The land was purchased by the Town Council for future use as Burial Space, and not for use as allotments. Legal advice is that the land is therefore not "statutory allotment land". A query has been submitted to the National Allotment Society, with appropriate background information, to establish whether further permissions will be needed from the Secretary of State.

8. An interim update has been provided to SODC planning and the church.
9. If the land is to be used as burial space, it is assumed that at some point the land will need to be transferred to the church and a separate project then implemented by the church to turn the space into burial space, possibly partially funded by forward spending of s106 monies allocated for the provision of future burial space.

**Action Required**

10. To note the report.