



Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES

Tel: (01225) 704187

Town Clerk Tracy Predeth BA(Hons), MPA, FLSCC

To: Councillor P Alford (MTC)
Councillor M Blackham (MWPC)
Councillor M Harris (MWPC)
Councillor J Glover (MWPC)
Councillor A Griffin (MTC)

25/6/2025

Dear Councillors

In accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) you are notified of the **Cemeteries Task & Finish Group** meeting of the Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council.

The meeting will be held in the council chamber at the Town Hall, Market Place, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES on Tuesday 8th July 2025 commencing at 5:30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Miss Hayley Bell

Acting CEO/Town Clerk

Melksham Town Council
Cemeteries Task & Finish Group

Tuesday 8th July 2025

At 17:30

In the exercise of Council functions. Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivery services under the public sector Equality and Diversity Act 2010.

AGENDA

1. Chair

To appoint a chair of the meeting and of the Working Group

2. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

3. Declaration of Interest

To receive any Declarations of Interest in respect of items on this agenda as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared on the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

4. Parameters

To define the issues and to agree Terms of Reference

5. Next Steps

To agree next steps.

Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council

Joint Cemetery Working Party – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Joint Cemetery Working Party is established by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council to explore the feasibility of creating a new cemetery to serve the local community **options for cemetery provision**, in response to the existing cemetery nearing capacity.

This is a preparatory and advisory group only **and will feed back to the relevant councils when sufficient information has been gathered to determine if any further steps are required to meet the needs of residents across the parish and town.** ~~The statutory responsibility for burial provision currently lies with Wiltshire Council, which acts as the Burial Authority under relevant legislation. Any proposals for a new cemetery would be subject to negotiation with Wiltshire Council, particularly if responsibility is to be devolved to the local councils.~~

2. Legislative and Planning Context

Under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 214, Wiltshire Council is currently the Burial Authority for the area. While parish and town councils may become burial authorities, **and if required** this would require formal devolution of the service by Wiltshire Council.

I would suggest no mention is made of the councils looking to provide further provision themselves at this stage. That would be a decision to be made after the working group has fed back to both councils and part of a joint discussion at a later stage. There is no expectation or obligation of the councils doing any more than assessing the current and future provision for residents.

~~Any site selection, land use, or development related to a new cemetery must comply with:~~

~~The Wiltshire Local Plan, which sets out the strategic planning policies and site allocations for Wiltshire, including infrastructure and land use.~~

~~The Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, developed collaboratively by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, which contains more localised planning policies reflecting community priorities, including environmental protection, land use constraints, and spatial development guidance.~~

~~Proposals must also adhere to relevant national planning policies and environmental regulations.~~

3. Status of the Working Party

This Working Party is a non-decision-making body and has no delegated authority.

All findings, discussions, and recommendations will be reported back to the respective full councils for consideration and approval.

4. Objectives

The Working Party shall:

Review the current and projected future burial capacity in the Melksham area

Identify potential options for future provision if necessary and report these back to the relevant councils.

Below is a set of tasks that may form part of a future group pending the report and decision by both councils.

~~Identify and assess potential sites for a new cemetery, considering location, access, land ownership, and environmental impact~~

~~Liaise with Wiltshire Council regarding current responsibilities and the potential for devolving burial services~~

~~Assess planning constraints and opportunities in line with the Wiltshire Local Plan and the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan~~

~~Consult with relevant stakeholders, including Wiltshire Council, planning officers, local residents, and environmental bodies~~

~~Estimate potential costs for land acquisition, infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance~~

~~Present a feasibility report and recommendations to both councils for formal decision-making~~

5. Membership

Up to three councillors from each council, appointed by their respective councils

Council officers may attend to provide administrative support and technical input

External advisors or professionals (e.g., planning consultants, environmental specialists) may be invited as needed

6. Chairing and Meetings

The Chair will be agreed at the first meeting and may rotate between the two councils

Meetings will be held as required and may take place in person or remotely

A council officer will record minutes and action points, which will be circulated to both councils

7. Reporting and Duration

The Working Party will provide regular updates and a final ~~feasibility~~ report to both councils

The Working Party will remain in place until a decision is taken by both councils to proceed, pause, or close the project

~~If the project progresses to implementation, a new structure (e.g., a Joint Committee with delegated authority) may be established with Council Resolution.~~