

REPORT OF NEW CEMETERY WORKING PARTY

PROPOSAL BY HANNICK HOMES: PART OF APPLICATION 2023/10331

Introduction

The existing cemetery on Bath Road is approaching capacity and is expected to be full within the next 10 years. A New Cemetery Working Party was established in 2019 and it has met several times since then. It was tasked with making enquiries about and identifying land that might be suitable for a new cemetery, liaison with relevant landowners, identifying likely costs, assessing the need for specialist advice and surveys, and reporting to FTC in due course.

Summary of Work to Date

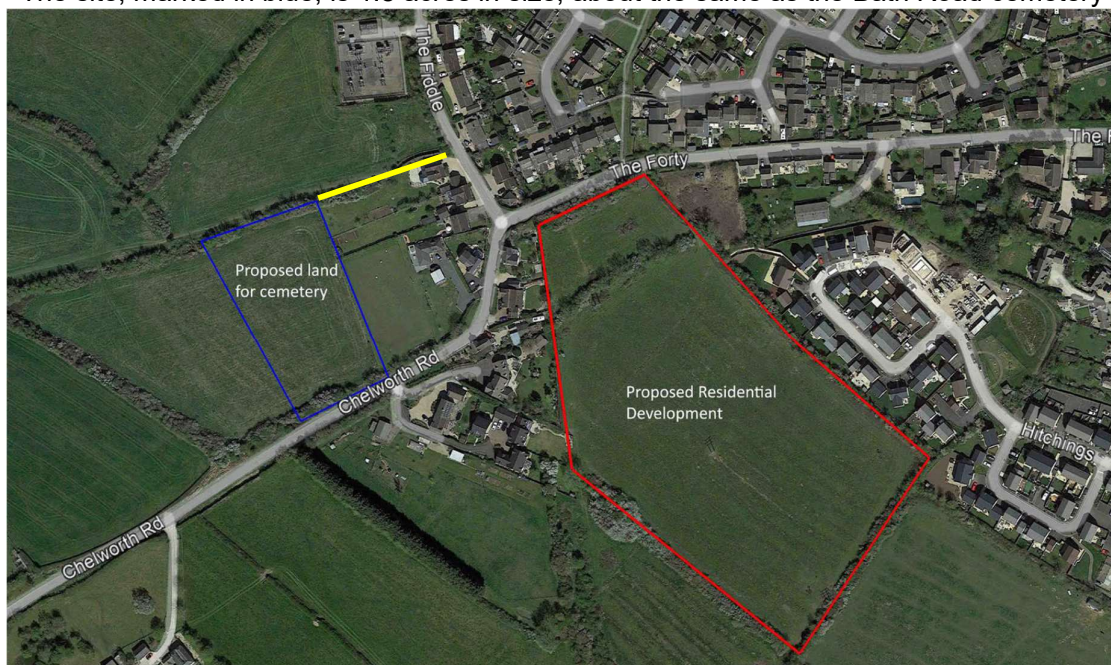
An appeal for sites has been included in the Cricklade Chronicle on five occasions and also mentioned at three of the recent Annual Town Meetings. In addition, the requirement is included in the CTC Infrastructure Plan.

A few suggestions have come forward and they have been investigated but were found to be unsuitable because of distance from the town, deliverability, and (most commonly) proximity to flood zones – the regulations regarding cemeteries and groundwater are restrictive.

Proposal from Hannick Homes Limited (HHL) for a cemetery off Chelworth Road

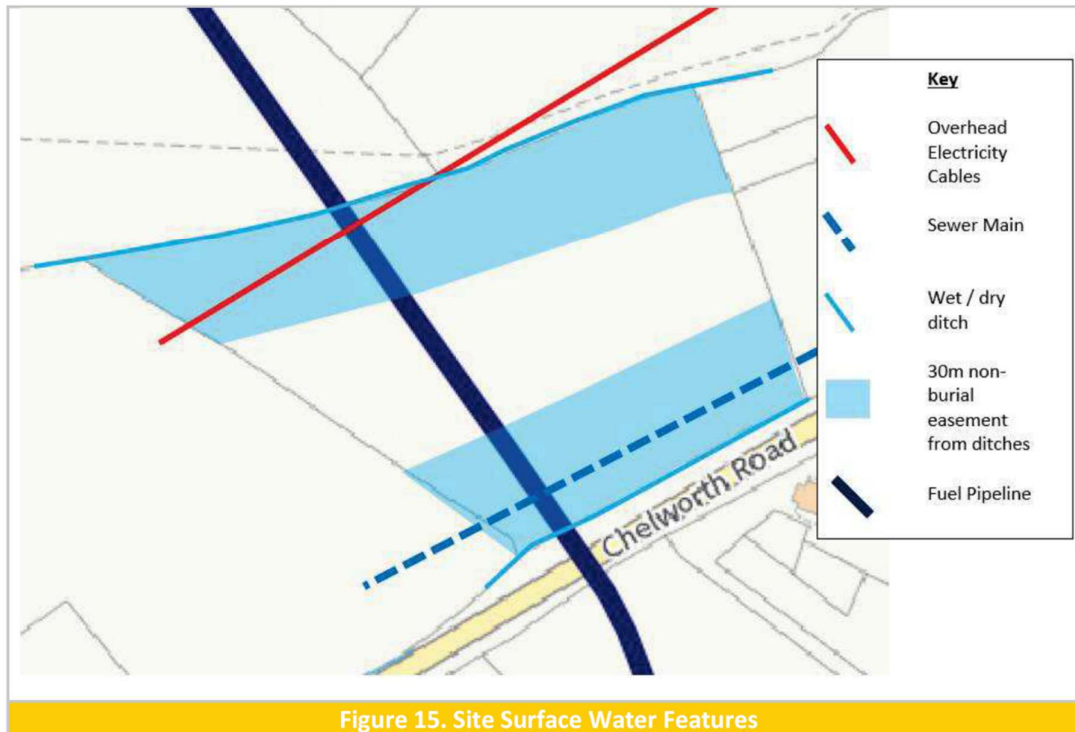
HHL have applied for outline planning permission on a site off The Forty for 49 dwellings. They have attended a number of Planning, Conservation & Transport Committee (PCT) meetings in recent years as the scheme has evolved. To provide community benefit a site under the same ownership that might be suitable for a new cemetery which is near (but not adjacent) to the development site has been put forward for us to consider.

The site, marked in blue, is 1.8 acres in size, about the same as the Bath Road cemetery



The proposed cemetery site - Constraints

HHL have commissioned a Tier 2 Groundwater Risk Assessment Report which provides a detailed assessment of the geology and hydrology of the site and entailed the sinking of a sample of five 3m deep boreholes. CTC have been provided with the report.



The field surveyed has a number of constraints which are shown on the above plan. However, it should be noted that the left section of the field (crossed by the fuel pipeline) does not form part of the area proposed for the cemetery.

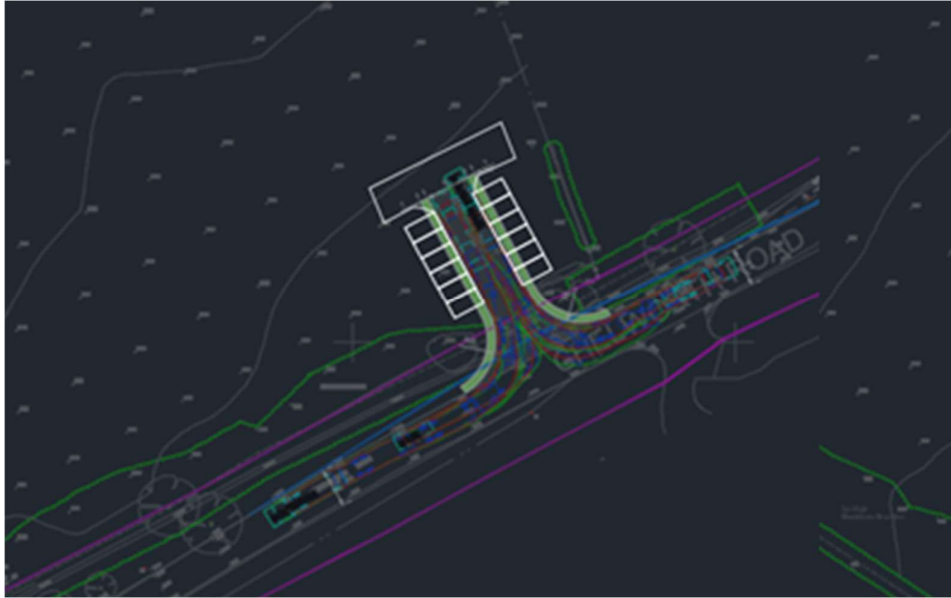
Environment Agency regulations require that burials should not take place close to ditches and there are ditches that run along the northern and southern boundaries. The exclusion zones (shaded in blue) can be used for ashes interment, landscaping, car parking etc.

We understand that in October 2023 the Environment Agency relaxed their regulations and that burials are now only prohibited within 10m of a ditch which would mean the capacity of the site for burials would increase considerably. We further understand that the Tier 2 Report is in the process of being updated to take account of these changes.

The proposed cemetery site – Vehicular access

Vehicular access would be from Chelworth Road and, because the road is narrow, on-site parking provision is essential. This would cater for the hearse and other cars for funerals and also provide space for a gravedigger with their equipment. HHL have provided an indicative drawing (below) showing access from the highway via the existing gateway in the bottom rights of the site with parking for twelve cars.

Based on statistics from the Bath Road Cemetery, there are an average of 10 coffin burials per annum. There are also an average of 7 ashes interments but these are customarily only attended by very close family.



The Proposed cemetery site – Pedestrian access

Safe pedestrian access is essential because many residents will wish to visit the cemetery on foot. There are no footways on Chelworth Road and so the only feasible option would be for the public right of way CRIC29 from The Fiddle (marked in yellow on the aerial photo on page 1 above) to be used to access the site from the northern end. We understand that this lies on land that is also in the ownership of the applicant. At the moment it is just a country path frequently muddy and so, to provide easy all-weather access, it will be necessary for this path to be laid to tarmac and the stiles replaced with gates etc.

The proposed cemetery site – Other matters

- A water supply will be required and we understand that this can be made available.
- Flexibility of the use of the site should be permitted because full use as a cemetery is a long term one. For example, partial use of the site as allotments may be a worthwhile interim.
- The layout of the site can be determined in due course and could, perhaps, incorporate a natural burial area in addition to the more traditional arrangements
- The ownership of the site should be transferred to CTC for future management and maintenance.