

Proposed New Cemetery Resident Update & Consultation

Resident Update & Consultation

Why are we here today?

- ▶ To update you on the proposed new cemetery
- ▶ To explain how circumstances have changed since the project began
- ▶ To present costs, risks, and demand evidence as they stand today
- ▶ To seek your views before making a final decision

Background: Why a New Cemetery Was Considered

The original rationale / reasoning

- ▶ Existing cemetery expected to reach capacity (based on data at that time)
- ▶ Burial rates were higher - Average of 7+ burials per year in previous years
- ▶ Desired but not obliged to provide:
 - ▶ Long-term burial provision for Bottisham residents
 - ▶ A peaceful woodland-style amenity space
- ▶ Planning application and process started and submitted on this basis

Planning & Land Status

Where we are now?

- ▶ Land owned by **National Trust**
 - ▶ Inalienable land – must be used **only as a cemetery**
 - ▶ No alternative use permitted if purchased by Bottisham Parish Council
- ▶ Planning consent expires **22 May 2026**
 - ▶ Two final conditions outstanding
 - ▶ Groundworks must begin before expiry
- ▶ Land purchase (£36k) and CPO legal costs covered by **ECDC grant**
 - ▶ Grant expires **March 2027**

What Has Changed Since Project Commencement

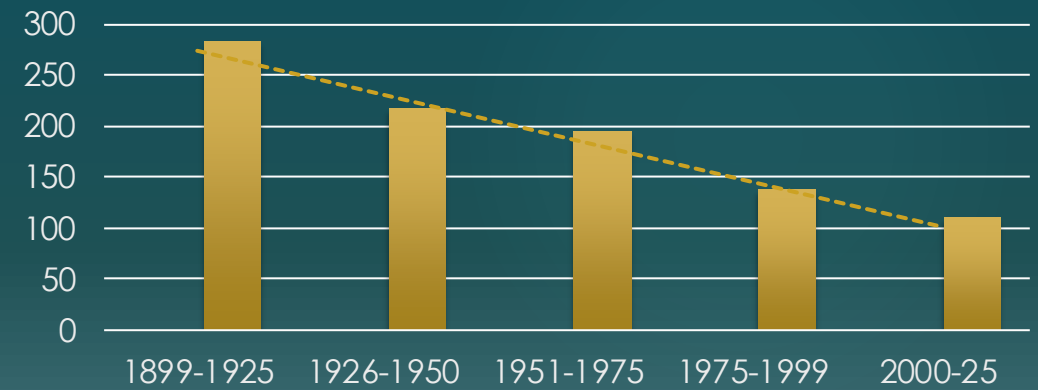
- ▶ Local burials have declined sharply
- ▶ National shift towards cremation
- ▶ Project costs have risen significantly
- ▶ Amenity plans for the land have changed

- ▶ Let us show you trends ...

Burial Trends: Bottisham Reality Check

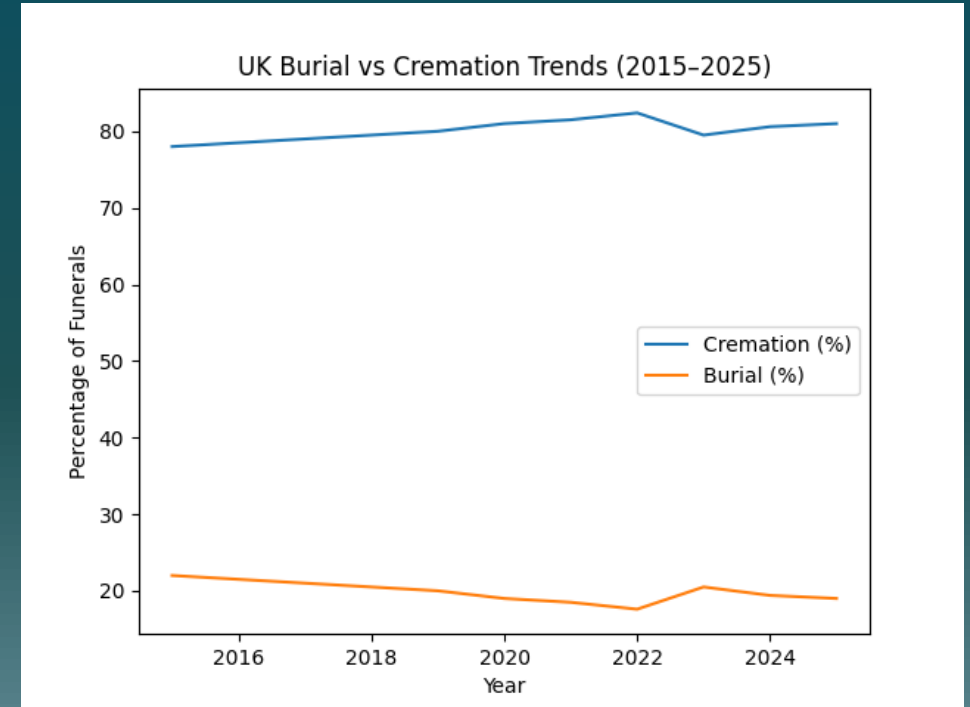
- ▶ Burials in Bottisham have fallen sharply:
 - ▶ 2024: 4 burials
 - ▶ 2025: 0 burials
 - ▶ 2025/26: 3 ashes interment
- ▶ Existing cemetery:
 - ▶ Can accommodate ashes interments indefinitely
- ▶ Nearby village cemeteries (radius 3mile):
 - ▶ Have capacity for Bottisham burials for many years but would have to seek agreement / guarantee

Bottisham Burials in 25 year Increments



National Trends: Burial vs Cremation

- ▶ Long-term demand uncertainty
- ▶ Over 80% of funerals in England are now cremation
- ▶ Direct cremations have risen rapidly:
 - ▶ ~3% (2019) → ~20% (2024)
- ▶ Costs strongly influence choice:
 - ▶ Burial: £5,000 - £5,200+
 - ▶ Cremation with service: £3,700 - £4,000
 - ▶ Direct cremation: £1,500
- ▶ **Implication:**
Long-term demand for burial plots is declining nationally and locally.



What the Cemetery Would Cost

- ▶ Revised estimated cost of project (construction, land purchase etc.) exceeding £1.1m
- ▶ Cost increases due to mix of:
 - ▶ Inflation
 - ▶ Design modifications due to Flood Authority requirements
 - ▶ Complexity of groundwork (raising land by ~2m)
- ▶ Ongoing cemetery maintenance - Circa £3000 per year (estimate)




Compulsory Purchase Order & Viability

- ▶ CPO must be approved by Secretary of State
 - ▶ Project must be fully funded and deliverable
 - ▶ Parish must prove it can finance the project
 - ▶ Land cannot be bought without full funding
-
- ▶ We cannot fully fund the project without additional borrowing or grant funding
 - ▶ Purchasing the land alone is not an option



Funding & Precept Impact – Approx Costings

- ▶ £200k parish reserves
- ▶ £360k proposed loan – Public Works Loan Board – HM Treasury determine interest rates
- ▶ £105k Growth and Infrastructure Fund
- ▶ £435k funding shortfall 
- ▶ Grants (e.g. CIL) not guaranteed – must be submitted now
- ▶ Potential precept increase – even with CIL
- ▶ Ongoing cemetery maintenance – Circa £3000 per year (estimate)

- ▶ The Parish must be able to fund the project if grants are not successful

Amenity Space: Possible Key Change

- ▶ Original benefit vs current reality
- ▶ Cemetery intended to provide woodland amenity
- ▶ National Trust now plans to:
 - ▶ Convert all Northfield Farm into woodland and walking trails
- ▶ If cemetery does not proceed:
 - ▶ Land still becomes woodland
 - ▶ Managed and funded by the National Trust



▶ Conclusion:

The amenity benefit largely exists **with or without** the cemetery

Governance & Strategic Risks

Key concerns for the Parish Council

- ▶ Risk of building a long-term asset with:
 - ▶ Declining demand
 - ▶ Uncertain future use
- ▶ Survey limitations:
 - ▶ Not fully representative of whole parish
 - ▶ Views often emerge *after* works begin
- ▶ A cemetery is a multi-generation commitment
 - ▶ Far beyond current council terms



What We Are Asking Residents to Consider

- ▶ Burial demand in Bottisham has fallen significantly
- ▶ National trends indicate long-term decline in burial use
- ▶ Project costs have been estimated to **exceed £1.1m**
- ▶ Full funding must be secured to satisfy CPO requirements
- ▶ Proceeding commits the parish to long-term borrowing
- ▶ Stopping avoids future financial risk but accepts sunk costs
- ▶ Amenity space will be delivered regardless via National Trust



Option A: Proceed With the New Cemetery

- ▶ Total estimated cost: **£1.1m**
- ▶ Funding currently identified:
 - ▶ Parish reserves: **£200k**
 - ▶ GIF: **£105k**
 - ▶ PWLB: **£360k**
- ▶ Funding shortfall: approx. **£435k**
- ▶ Possible mitigation:
 - ▶ CIL funding (up to ~30%) – **not guaranteed**
 - ▶ Potential precept increase
- ▶ Loan cost:
 - ▶ £24k per year for 50 years
 - ▶ Current 6.26% rate
 - ▶ Could rise to **£52k+ per year** if grants not secured
- ▶ Ongoing costs:
 - ▶ Cemetery administration and maintenance (circa £3000/year)
- ▶ Long-term commitment:
 - ▶ Multi-generation financial obligation
 - ▶ Costs are irreversible once construction begins

Option A: If the Community Wishes to Continue

- ▶ Additional funding would need to be explored, including:
 - ▶ Crowdfunding
 - ▶ Community fundraising
 - ▶ Volunteer support
 - ▶ Further grants and/or increase PWLB
- ▶ These options:
 - ▶ Are uncertain
 - ▶ Would take time
 - ▶ Would still not remove the need for secure core funding
- ▶ Council would need a clear mandate from residents to pursue this route



Option B: Stop New Cemetery Altogether

- ▶ Estimated sunk costs still payable:
 - ▶ Legal / National Trust / ECDC fees (£35k -£50k)
- ▶ Financial impact:
 - ▶ **£150k+** retained in parish reserves
 - ▶ Avoids **£24k - £52k per year** borrowing for 50 years
 - ▶ Total avoided cost: **£1.18m – £2.6.m**
- ▶ No ongoing cemetery maintenance costs
- ▶ Burial provision:
 - ▶ Ashes interments accommodated in existing cemetery
 - ▶ Nearby village cemeteries possible capacity for burials
- ▶ Amenity provision:
 - ▶ National Trust plans convert Northfield Farm into woodland
 - ▶ Amenity benefit still delivered without parish expenditure

Option B: If Stop New Cemetery Altogether



Residents Survey - 24th Nov 2025 – 16th Jan 2026

- ▶ Paper survey – 71 residents = 91% pro / 9% against
- ▶ Online – 36 residents = 70% pro / 30% against
- ▶ Bottisham resident response rate = 4.28% (disappointing)

- ▶ Information unavailable at the time:
 - ▶ Full cemetery costs (tender process ongoing)
 - ▶ Updated burial statistics

- ▶ Survey results matter – but it can't be the only thing we rely on when committing the Parish to a long-term financial obligation

The survey was important

It showed general support among respondents

Now that we have greater insight into more accurate costs, funding and burial data, the Council felt it was right to come back to residents before making a final decision

Your Views Matter

Given the updated facts

- ▶ Is proceeding still the right decision?
- ▶ Should the Parish take on this financial risk?

- ▶ So ...



The Big Question for Residents Tonight

Knowing what we know now namely burial trends, higher costs, funding risks, and the alternative provision of woodland amenity is proceeding with a new cemetery still the right decision for Bottisham?



What Happens After This Meeting

- ▶ Parish Council will:
 - ▶ Record all resident feedback from this meeting
 - ▶ Review input
 - ▶ Review funding options and deadlines
 - ▶ Decide whether to:
 - ▶ Proceed
 - or*
 - ▶ Formally withdraw from the project
 - ▶ Make a formal decision at Full Council meeting in March

Thank You



Bottisham



Bottisham
Parish
Council
Serving Residents
Supporting the Community