

St. Mary-the Virgin Wivenhoe

A response by the PCC following a request from the Neighbourhood Plan Committee

Over the last two years the PCC have become increasingly concerned that the current Wivenhoe cemetery will, in the near future, become full, and that there are currently no concrete plans to provide a new site within the town boundaries. We strongly believe that Wivenhoe residents should be given the option of burial in their home town thus providing them with a final resting place within their chosen and much loved community, and importantly, ease of access to their grave for their family and friends.

This concern has become a standing item on the agenda of our monthly meetings, resulting in the following actions:

- The PCC quickly entered into discussions with the Town Council. It immediately became apparent that members shared our concern and that they were very willing to work with us in looking at potential sites together with the issue of funding.
- A number of meetings have been held with local landowners and some positive discussions have taken place. The Town Council and the PCC have decided however, that it would be prudent to await the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and indeed to contribute to the latter, before attempting to take the matter to a conclusion.
- The PCC felt it important to gather the views of a larger group of interested people and to this end conducted a survey with the congregation of St Marys. Please refer to the attached document to view the questions that were asked.

61 replies were received. Of those, 64% considered it very important, and 27% important, to continue to offer the facility for burial here in Wivenhoe. It is highly relevant therefore, to note that 91% of respondents have a strong opinion in favour of maintaining an open cemetery in our town.

Similarly, 67% of respondents considered the option of burial in the Colchester Cemetery to be unacceptable. Of those that considered this

to be acceptable, a number did so with reluctance, maintaining a strong hope that Wivenhoe burial facilities would remain an option for them.

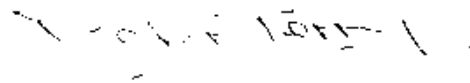
The PCC are heartened by the results of this survey, and have grown in confidence that their views are shared by a significant number of the present congregation of St Mary's.

The discussions at PCC meetings and with the wider St Mary's community, have concentrated on the need for a replacement cemetery that will offer burial facilities. We recognise however, that should a suitable site be identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, decisions would need to be made on a range of associated issues such as:

- The design of the cemetery – i.e. 'traditional' or 'woodland' or a combination of the two
- The overall size of the cemetery
- The facilities that should be provided – such as a chapel, parking, seating and toilets
- An area set aside for the burial of cremated ashes
- The provision of a columbarium and /or a memorial wall or garden

We would be very willing to be part of any discussions that are held in the future to decide on such issues as those mentioned above, and would particularly welcome membership of any working party that might be formed.

In conclusion we would strongly urge the Neighbourhood Plan committee to ensure that the provision of a new cemetery should feature prominently in the final document. Please be aware that we will do all that we can to support you and the Town Council in this, and that contact can be made with me via email or telephone as given below.



Peter Terry. Vice Chair, St Mary's PCC.

Tel: 01206826158

Email: peterdavidtherry@yahoo.co.uk

This is the attached document

St Mary's Church, Wivenhoe

Burial facilities in Wivenhoe – a PCC discussion item

You will appreciate that the provision of burial plots in our town is an important matter for the PCC to monitor. In recent months this item has been regularly discussed at our meetings with the primary reason being that the “new cemetery” in Belle Vue Road will, in the not too distant future, become full. PCC members are of the opinion that it is of crucial importance to continue to offer a burial facility here in Wivenhoe to both our residents and indeed anyone who wishes to be buried here; therefore a new site will need to be found.

Very positive and productive, informal discussions have been held with members of our town council. They are very aware of the limited number of plots in Belle Vue Road and are most anxious to ensure that a new site is identified as soon as possible.

At this early stage it would be helpful to know if our views are shared by members of our congregation. Would you please give a response to these five questions:

- Do you consider it important to continue to offer the facility for burial here in Wivenhoe once the “new cemetery” is full?
YES / NO
- How important is this issue to you?
Very important / important / doesn't matter / of no interest to me
- Should no new cemetery be provided, it is suggested that Wivenhoe residents should be buried in the Colchester cemetery. Would this be an acceptable alternative?
YES / NO

Please use the back of the sheet if you wish to answer the following:

- Do you have an opinion as to where a third cemetery should be sited?
- Do you have any further comments?

Would you please hand this paper to me, to Erwin or to either of our churchwardens at the end of the service. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Peter Terry. Vice Chair, St Mary's PCC.