



EYNSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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David Shetcliffe, Chess Engage

Sent via email – david.shetcliffe@chessengage.com

31 May 2023

Dear David

West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan Addendum – Burial Ground, adj Merton Court

Further to recent correspondence requesting that space is allocated within the SDA for a Burial Ground, I write to advise that agreement in principle has been obtained from Estates, Oxfordshire County Council for the site shown at Appendix A to be investigated for this purpose.

Eynsham Parish Council therefore formally request that the Masterplan Addendum is amended to include this site and/or alternative provision should the proposed site be found unsuitable for burials. The Council will make representations to this effect, at West Oxfordshire District Council's Scrutiny meeting on 8 June 2023.

As advised to you on 19 January 2023, the community now has burial space which will accommodate burials for approximately the forthcoming 12 months and thereafter, no space will be available.

The Council will now obtain updated information from The CDS Group for Tier 1 and 2 land assessments.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katherine Doughty
Clerk to the Council

CC:

Charles Maxlow-Tomlinson, for Oxfordshire County Council
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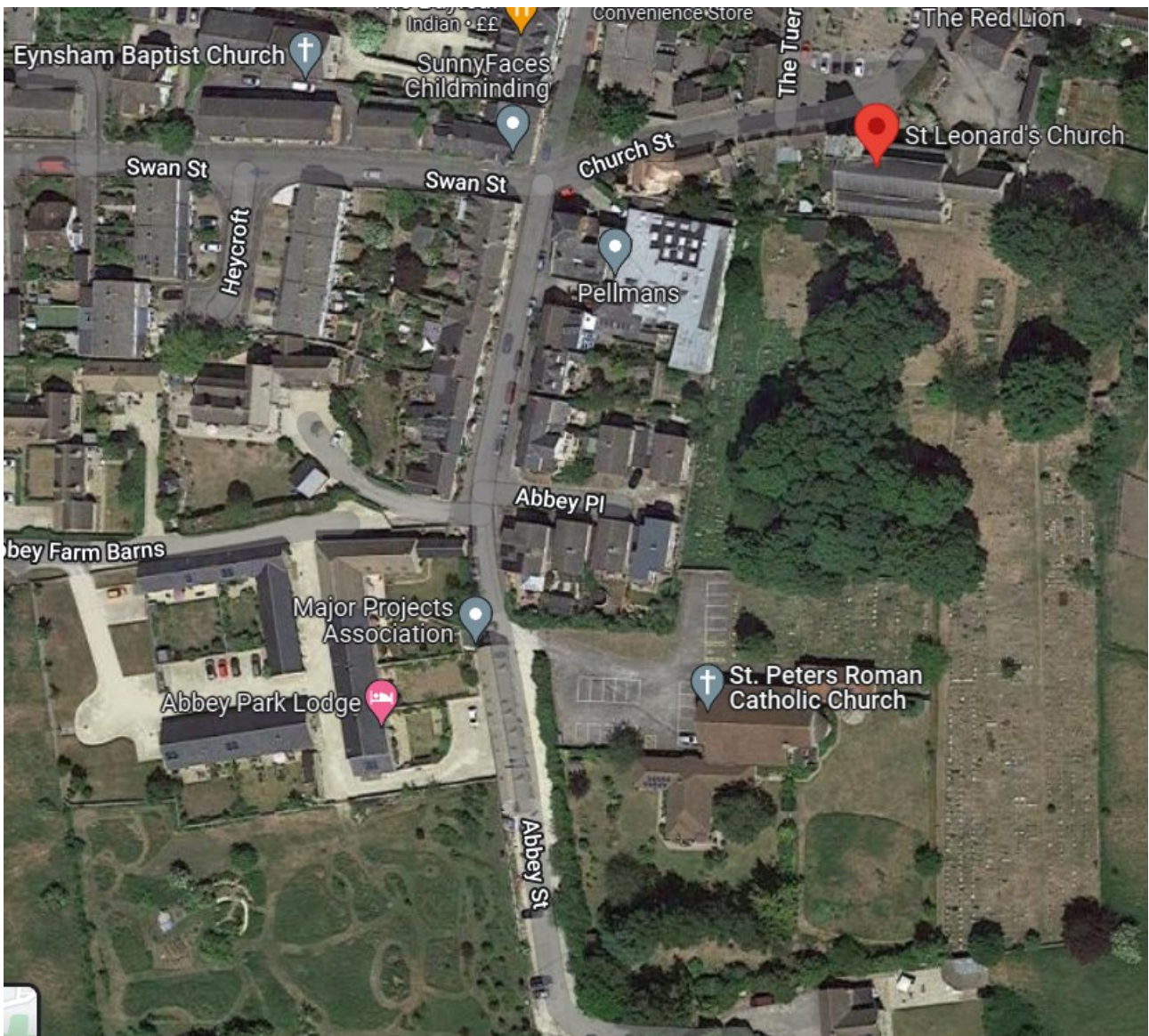
Democratic Services, West Oxfordshire District Council democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk



Eynsham Burial Ground Needs

Executive summary

This report summarises the current burial arrangements in Eynsham and recommends how future needs can be met.



(St Leonard's Church and St Peter's Church, Google, 2022)

Background

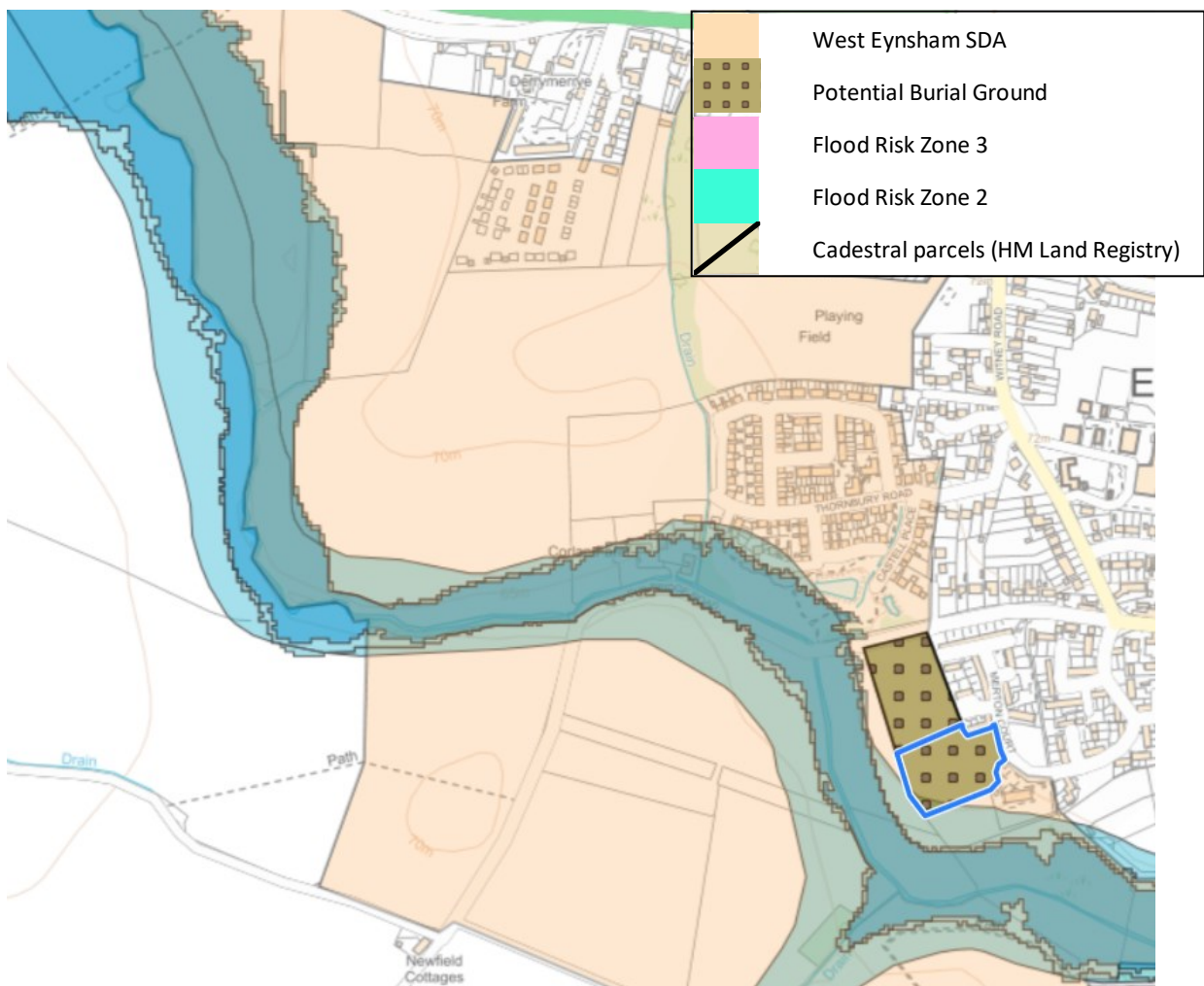
Eynsham Parish Council has been working with St Leonard's Church (Anglican) for many years to identify a suitable location for a burial ground.¹ The bottom right-hand section of the churchyard was legally closed to burials in 2017 and is maintained by West Oxfordshire District Council.

As at the date of this report (January 2023), St Leonard's Church has 17 burial plots and 10 cremation plots remaining. It may be possible to find additional spaces for cremation plots through the relocation of benches or shrubs, however there is no further space available for burials. The neighbouring St Peter's Church cemetery (Catholic) is also nearly full.

The aim is to provide new and existing residents of all faiths, the right to be buried in their Parish. At a current average burial rate of **1 per month**, time is critical to ensure parishioners continue to be buried in Eynsham. Based on the figures provided, Eynsham will be without burial space by **May 2024**.

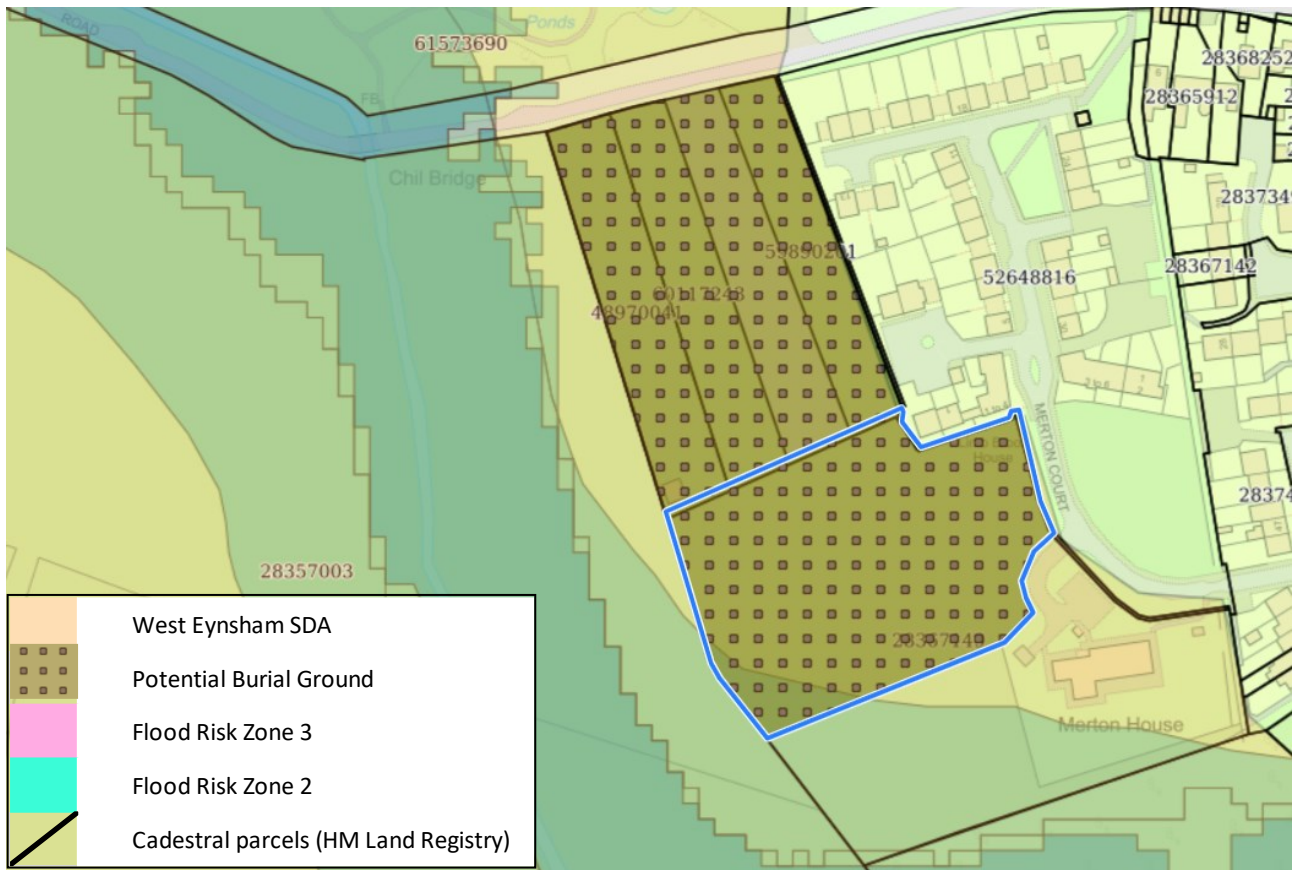
Land identified

The site shown below with a blue boundary, is off Merton Court and provides good opportunities for walking/cycling for both new and existing residents, being in a reasonably central location. We have also been exploring the adjacent land as an option although permission is doubtful.



Map 1 showing location within the West Eynsham SDA and ease of access off Chilbridge Road.

¹ https://eynsham.org.uk/variable/organisation/559/attachments/st_leonard_churchyard.pdf



Map 2 showing land ownership (cadastral parcels registered with HM Land Registry) and proximity to flood zones.

The site is 0.8456ha approx. At the current rate of burials, this equates to 104 years of use. However, the average burial rate will increase due to the West Eynsham population which will reduce this usage period.

I understand that some Burial Grounds have short term alternative uses such as recreation and biodiversity projects until the land is required for burials. This could be possible here which would provide additional other immediate benefits to the community.

Financial/Legal implications

The Masterplan (and it's proposed Addendum) shows the land is not in an area identified for housing. It is therefore unclear what the financial or legal impacts are, from the group of developer's perspective. It would be beneficial if the land could be provided to the Council via a S106 agreement for the benefit of the community and appropriate financial arrangements are made with Oxfordshire County Council.

The financial impacts on parishioners should no new Burial Ground be secured within a year or so, are considerable. Windrush Cemetery (owned by Witney Town Council) permits burials from outside its boundaries albeit at double the cost. Greens Funeral Directors, Eynsham report that a typical burial cost in Eynsham is currently £600, however burials in Witney (for non-parishioners) are between £1200 and £2000. The price is tripled for Oxford burials.

Site risk Assessment

CDS Group² will be asked to produce a desk-based assessment and quote (free of charge and without obligation) for appropriate assessments/reports which will be considered by the Parish Council and Environment Agency if the site is able to be secured. (The Environment Agency has recently updated its online guidance regarding new cemeteries.³)

Summary

Use of this land as a Burial Ground complies with Oxfordshire County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-25⁴ as follows:-

3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

² <https://www.thecdsgroup.co.uk/cemeteries-crematoria>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials>

⁴ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/our-vision-0>