

Statement of Community Involvement

252896 Brookfield Farm, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Wokingham, RG40 3BU - proposed change of use of land to a natural burial ground

The applicant is committed to ongoing community involvement that is:

- Tailored to its purpose – *i.e. it is based on a clear understanding of the needs of the community and reflects their requirements.*
- Accessible to the communities concerned – *i.e. the right methods of consultation are used.*
- A continuing process, with opportunities for on-going involvement.
- Transparent (no hidden agendas) and inclusive for all.
- Well thought out and planned, rather than 'ad hoc'.
- Followed by feedback on participation as decisions are made.
- Regarded as satisfactory by participants from all sections of the community.

To help inform the application the applicant has liaised with:

- Reverend Father Daniel McAvoy - The local Parish Priest and Co-ordinating Pastor for the South Berkshire area; copy of his letter of wholehearted support for the application at **APPENDIX 1**
- The Natural Death Centre, Registered Charity number. 1091396 in terms of best practice for:
 1. How to set up a natural burial ground
 2. Future Sustainability of natural burial grounds
- [REDACTED] – active Church parishioner – who has engaged with various church congregations to discuss their wish list and comments for a Natural Burial ground
- Reverend Father [REDACTED] runs Christian churches in Romania and works closely with Reverend Father Daniel McAvoy. Reverend Father [REDACTED] and his superior Bishop have taken an active involvement with the application as it has developed; **they are keen to build the pavilion chapel building with existing church funds.** They are in full

support of the application and employ skilled carpenters who would do bespoke wood carvings for the building – an example of their existing work below.



In addition, so far as relevant to the current proposal the applicant has been monitoring and taken on board any public responses with regards to the “[up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew’s Church for use as cemetery](#)” of the following pending application.

[252498](#)

Site Address:

**Hall Farm
Church
Lane
Arborfield
Reading
RG2 9HX**

[View Details](#)

[View Progress](#)

[Comment](#)

Description:

Hybrid planning application (part in full, part in outline) comprising outline application for: up to 2,800 residential units to include up to

100 custom and self-build plots; 2 primary schools (up to 3 forms of entry) to include early years provision and 1 secondary school (up to 12 forms of entry); one District Centre, to incorporate up to 11,000m² of Class E (Commercial, Business and Service, to include a food store of around 2,500m²), and Class F (Local Community and Learning); one Local Centre, to incorporate up to 2,400m² of Class E; a Sports Hub to include sports pitches and pavilion space; up to 4,250m² of further Class E, Class F, and sui generis development to include commercial, health care and public house; associated green infrastructure, landscaping, public open space, play areas, and ecological enhancement measures; 20 gypsy and traveller pitches; drainage and flood alleviation measures to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and engineering measures within Loddon Valley for the River Loddon; associated highway / transport / supporting infrastructure including spine road, pedestrian and cycle connections; associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works, including the undergrounding of overhead lines and an electricity substation; **up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew's Church for use as cemetery.** All matters reserved other than access, incorporating: access to highways, incorporating: a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Lower Earley Way via a new 4th arm to the Meldreth Way roundabout; a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the M4; a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the River Loddon; a new vehicular access to the A327 Reading Road, via a new arm to the Observer Way roundabout; a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Thames Valley Science Park; Phase 1 of internal roads including pedestrian / cycle routes, associated infrastructure, drainage and landscaping. Application includes full permission for the delivery of proposed 40.4 hectares of Suitable Natural Greenspace (SANG), 18.35 hectares of SANG link, and provision of Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the demolition and clearance of buildings and structures at the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) and at Hall Farm, the demolition of 3 existing dwellings, and the retention of specified buildings at Hall Farm as specified by the applications drawings.

Received
Date:

14/10/2025

Additional Need and support justification for the proposed development

Ai response in italics below to “*Is there a shortage of burial space in wokingham?*”

As of the most recent local reports and council records, Wokingham Borough (in Berkshire, UK) **has been facing pressure on burial space**, though it’s not yet described as a full-blown “shortage.” Here’s a summary of the situation:



Current Status of Burial Space in Wokingham

- **Existing cemeteries nearing capacity:**
Wokingham Town Council manages Wokingham Cemetery on Reading Road, which has been in use since the 1880s. **Available grave plots there have become increasingly limited, especially for traditional (full-body) burials.**
- **Cremation and ashes plots more common:**
Because of limited land, many local councils — Wokingham included — have **encouraged cremation and interment of ashes rather than traditional burials.**
- **New sites under review:**
The Wokingham Borough Council has periodically reviewed options for extending cemetery capacity or creating additional burial land. **However, finding suitable, affordable sites that meet environmental and planning requirements has proven difficult.**



Wider Context

This issue isn’t unique to Wokingham — many towns in southern England have been facing similar challenges due to:

- **Rising population and housing development pressures**
- **Limited available land within urban areas**
- **Increasing maintenance costs for older cemeteries**



What This Means for Residents

If you’re planning ahead or arranging a burial:

- Explore nearby alternatives, such as Henley Road Cemetery (Reading) or sites managed by surrounding parishes.
- **Consider cremation or woodland/natural burials, which have more sustainable options available.**

Wokingham has a lower proportion of males and females aged 20-34 and 55-74 when compared to the national average and a higher proportion of males and females aged 5-14 and 40-54. Additionally, there is **a higher proportion of males aged 75+ when compared to the national average.**

APPENDIX 1



South Berkshire
Pastoral Area
Diocese of Portsmouth
Reg. Charity No. 1199568

Bracknell Parish
St Joseph & St Margaret Clitherow

39 Braccan Walk
BRACKNELL
Berks
RG12 1HA
01344 425729

email: office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

website: www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr. Daniel McAvoy

To Whom it May concern,

This is to confirm that I met with Mr. Stuart Brooks and his colleague [REDACTED], who is an active member of our Parish.

Stuart has shown and given me details about the proposed burial site and the associated chapel they intend to build at Brookfield Farms, Old Wokingham Road, Rg403BU. If approved, we would collaborate with them to make the project worthwhile particularly the proposed chapel will be use as multi-purpose centre to support long term rough sleepers and unemployed individuals to provide them opportunities to turn their lives around.

Since 2017 Stuart had been very supportive to our Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) special projects by providing storage (container facilities) to enable households items to be stored and supply to members in both Wokingham and Bracknell Boroughs.

We hope to collaborate more with them on many initiatives that will bring substantial benefits to the community in many years to come.

Thank for your assistance in advance, however if you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Rev Fr Daniel McAvoy s.t.b. M.A, M.Sc.
(Parish Priest & Coordinating Pastor)