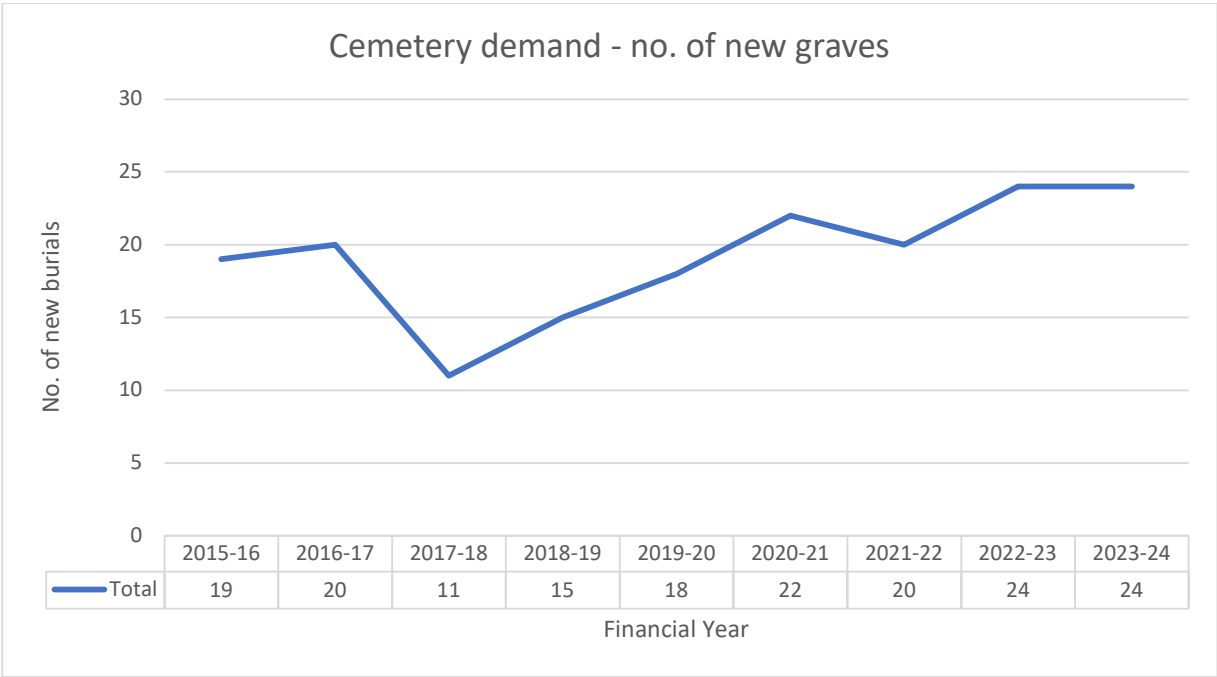


Indicative costings for Provision of a New Cemetery in Wokingham Borough

Background & Current Position

Wokingham Borough Council currently manages two open cemeteries for the provision of burial space as a designated burial authority.

Demand for our two cemeteries has continued to increase over the past five years, as outlined in the graph below. Demand has increased due to an increase in the size of population in Wokingham Borough (driven to a large extent by an increase in new developments) and an ageing population.



As of 5th January 2026, 179 new grave plots are available at the existing Wokingham Borough Cemeteries (98 at St. Sebastian’s Cemetery, 81 at Shinfield Cemetery) which also include new graves for cremated remains.

Within the overall number of 179 available grave plots, some plots are only suitable for certain communities (such as the Muslim and Bahai communities requiring un-consecrated ground in specific cemetery sections for their communities).

On the basis of considering all the requirements for our different communities and where the available grace spaces are located, we will need a new cemetery within the Borough over the next few years.

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan

The current policy in Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted – 29 January 2010) requires 24 burial plots per 1000 dwellings. The figures have been based on regional data contained within the Roger Tyms report - South East Counties – the Cost of & Funding of Growth in the South East England (June 2005) which assumed standard annual mortality rate of 9.9/1000 population. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Wokingham Unitary Authority Area (July 2009) produced by the Greater London Authority for Wokingham Borough which uses more up to date local data indicates that the appropriate annual mortality rate for Wokingham Borough is around 6/1000 population.

WBC has planned for an increase of 12,763 dwellings (2023-2040)¹ which equates to 30,631 new residents and using the mortality rate above we could expect 183.8 (30,631 x 6/1000) deaths per annum or 3,125 in the plan period 2023-2040 as result of new development. However 'South East Counties The Cost & Funding of Growth in South East England - Final Report June 2005' and the 'GLA Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Wokingham Unitary Authority Area' (July 2009) indicate that only 30% of these deaths will require burial and consequently WBC should be planning to accommodate an additional 938 burial spaces in the plan period from new development. This is equivalent to a provision rate of **31 burials/1000 population** (6 (annual mortality rate x 17 (Plan period in years) x 0.3 (the proportion of deaths requiring burial)).

Space for new graves is estimated at around 1,730 grave plots per hectare. The number of people per grave depends on individual Local Authorities, but Tym works on an estimate of 2.5 people per grave which means that 4,325 people can be buried per hectare overall.

We are currently exploring locations within Wokingham Borough Council for a new cemetery. We are not at the stage of having full costings on this until the land has been obtained, so have decided to base required contribution on an indicative costing at this stage.

Our estimates are based on 0.1 hectares being allocated for an ashes strewing area, pathways and a turning circle and 0.3 hectares being allocated to graves. Half the grave capacity will be single depth graves (260 graves) and half the cemetery being a combination of double depth graves, double depth plus ashes graves and cremation plots (259 graves with an average of 2.5 burials per grave providing 647 burials). **For the 0.4 hectare site, this estimate shows that the site will have capacity to provide 519 graves and 907 burials overall which is equivalent to 12,191 dwellings** (907/31 x (1000/2.4 = 416.7). This is slightly short of the 938 burials required but is the best option that we currently have.

This option is not at a stage where there is any certainty over the feasibility or costs of delivery and consequently the council has decided to base required contribution on an indicative costing at this stage.

¹ Based on 'Right Homes, Right Places: Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 Proposed Submission Plan'.

Table 1 Indicative budget for provision of new cemetery

Item	Cost
0.4 hectares of land which we are hoping to secure for nil value. ²	£0
Development of cemetery on the 0.4 hectare site. ³	£380,000
RIBA Stage 1 Planning and Design Services. ⁴	£11,300
Stage 1 - Site Investigation, Walkover Survey and Letter Report. ⁵	£2,670
Stage 2 – Production of a detailed T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment. ⁶	£2,080
Development Consultancy Costs ⁷	£35,000
RIBA Stage 4 project management post planning ⁸	£60,000
Sub total	£491,050
Project Contingency (10%)	£49,105
Total project costs (excluding borrowing)	£540,155
Cost of borrowing (interest) based on 50 year loan at fixed rate of 4.5% p.a.	£823,591
Total Project Costs including borrowing costs	£1,363,746

This would give per dwelling cost of £111.86 (£1,363,746/12191).

The (>>>>>>>) development proposes X new dwellings and consequently will require a contribution of **£xxx** (Number of proposed dwellings x £111.86) towards the provision of additional cemetery space.

² Land may incur cost at agricultural land value. For the purposes of this calculation, have assumed nil land value so that cost is underestimated rather than over-estimated.

³ Costs are based on Easthampstead Cemetery estimated construction costs for a new cemetery for 0.4 hectares. This new cemetery is in the neighbouring borough to Wokingham Borough and costs were obtained in 2020. The construction costs in Easthampstead are £1.9 million for 2 hectares. We have calculated the construction costs for Wokingham Borough as a pro rata cost. These costs were obtained in 2020 so are likely to be an underestimation of the Wokingham Borough construction costs. This cost will include providing a new access road, upgrading an existing byway, levelling and clearance of the land, fencing, pathways, turning circle, providing water supply, creating ashes strewing area, planting trees and shrubs.

⁴ Costs based on quotation from CDS (Quote No: CDS-CC-3159, dated 27.01.26).

⁵ Costs based on quotation from CDS (Quote No: CDS-CC-3146, dated 20.01.26).

⁶ Costs based on quotation from CDS (Quote No: CDS-CC-3146, dated 20.01.26).

⁷ Cost based on lower estimate from CDS (email dated 04.02.26).

⁸ Cost based on lower estimate from CDS (email dated 04.02.26).