

**Sevenoaks Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019**  
**In the Council Chamber commencing at 7.00 p.m.**

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**Committee Members present:**

Cllr Dr M Canet (Chairman)	Present		Cllr K Bonin	Apologies
Cllr A Eyre (Vice Chairman)	Present		Cllr S Camp	Present
Cllr N Busvine OBE	Present		Cllr R Hogarth	Apologies
Cllr V Granville- Baxter	Apologies		Cllr Raikes	Present
Cllr L Michaelides	Present		Cllr R Parry	Present
Cllr T Morris Brown	Present			

Substitutes	For
Cllr A Clayton	Cllr V Granville-Baxter
Cllr Mrs Parry	Cllr Bonin

**Attendance:** Two Members of Public, Cllr Waite, (7.30pm) Town Clerk, Open Spaces Manager and Committee Clerk.

**Note:** The meeting was not recorded.

**Public Question Time**

Two members of the public attended and addressed Councillors raising their concerns and distress at the current condition of the cemetery which has deteriorated from its previous maintenance programme.

**172. Apologies for Absence**

As noted above.

**173. Requests for Dispensation**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**174. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**175. Minutes of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**RESOLVED:** Noted were previously approved by the Town Council.

**176. Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager's report**

A report was received and discussed.

**i) Staff**

This spring we recruited two staff to fill vacancies.

**ii) The Vine**

On Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> of July we learnt that we were successful in retaining our Green Flag status for the Vine, as normal the results come with a list of

recommendations for future improvements which will be studied carefully. Copy of the judging assessment included. Appendix A

**iii) S.E.I.B.**

The 5<sup>th</sup> of July was also the day of Judging for South East in Bloom.

The day went well and have not received any adverse comments from the judges. Gratitude was expressed to all those who helped and took part, not only STC staff, and the District Council cleansing team lead by Mick Hood, but also volunteers who came to the working party days at the Stag, Upper High Street Gardens and Cemetery and also the Soroptimists and Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association. The community involvement was a major reason for the strong entry.

The results and presentation take place in September

Due to ongoing maintenance matters at the Cemetery (see below) the site was withdrawn from S.E.I.B.

**iv) Greatness Cemetery:**

Ground Water Pollution Assessment – We have now received the results of the trial digging and study of the geology at Greatness Cemetery. The results of the samples extracted and the fact that groundwater was not experienced whilst digging to twice the depth that we usually bury at means that our risk is low despite the fact that the soil is very permeable, the second part of the survey is a desk based flux modelling using the data gathered along with burial numbers and rainfall statistics to consider the rate and distance that potential pollutants will migrate from the site.

The report writers for this work are reasonably confident that when the Environment Agency do introduce a Permitting system later this year, STC will be able to continue burying and at a similar rate to what has been done in the past.

It must also be remembered that if there was any problem of pollution at present; South East Water would have contacted STC at some time in the recent past.

It has been made clear to STC by the surveyor that it was extremely unlikely that the Environment Agency would allow STC to extend the Cemetery at any time in the future.

The western half of the Cemetery is within a Special Protection Zone level 1 for protection of drinking water supplies and any increase in burials closer to bore holes would not be tolerated.

It is anticipated that STC proactive approach in carrying out a Tier 2 Risk Assessment will mean it is better placed to avoid any service disruption when the Environment Agency introduce permitting.

**NOTED:** 30-40 years of burial land should be available, full analysis to be carried out.

**RESOLVED: i)** To be part of the blue skies debate in September 2019.

ii) Open Spaces Manager to review anticipated timescale for burials.

### **Grass management**

A member of staff at the Cemetery exhibited symptoms of Vibration White finger which resulted in STC being investigated by the HSE as Vibration White Finger or Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome is a notifiable industrial disease.

Since the legislation came into effect, STC have sought to reduce exposure by modern equipment with quoted figures on vibration levels which are measured as metres per second i.e. 3.5 m/s

The HSE consider less than 2.5m/s multiplied by an 8 hour working day to be acceptable in preventing any damage, most modern mowers and strimmer's produce a figure around 5 m/s but this reduces the amount of time that the equipment can be used safely to around 2 hours before the Action value is met when we must be aware that damage is occurring and 5 hours to the Exposure limit for the day is reached.

The HSE have told STC to us their researched list of average values which allows for wear and damage, to equipment using this it was clear that with the staff available an adjustment to the way the site was maintained was necessary.

Rather than ideally cutting all the site twice a month and strimming the edges once a month, those areas with a high number of recent burials would receive this service, whilst older sections would be cut around the edge and along straight pathways between rows and only be strimmed once towards the end of the season. Appendix B

Even with this regime staff using their trigger time record sheet every day to record their exposure were still exceeding the Action limit most days and regularly getting near to the Exposure limit on other days.

Much of the grass is cut by tractor as possible to reduce hand mowing. However, there is a significant amount of grass to maintain. There have been some adverse comments about the areas not being strimmed, however we have done some hand pulling of weeds from these areas so that we have in effect a meadow but without pernicious species.

If we are to improve public confidence in the site,

we could consider some changes to the current system.

1) Employ an additional member of staff for the spring/ summer months, In the past we have employed a summer seasonal, this sometimes suits a University age student who can commit to the post in the winter with a clear start date in June.

Likely cost £5000 pa

2) Employ an additional member of staff full time

Cost £22,300 (including employer costs)

3) Purchase more Cordless electrical equipment, we have trialled electric strimmer's and they work well, but at present we have not had a success with mowers as they need up to 4 batteries a day to provide continuous use.

Likely cost £2000 pa for two years

4) Adjust the number of areas cut at a reduced amount, As the oldest least visited areas are around the Chapel most people drive around this area as they come into the site

Likely to require additional staff, but difficult to quantify.

5) Respond to individual requests to increase maintenance around a grave or those areas noted to be visited regularly, some regular visitors to a grave in an older section, are disadvantaged, by chance of position.

Once identified these areas could be kept on the higher mowing frequency

Use some of the Town wardens available time to target and deal with these specific requests, at present little of their time is spent using tools producing vibration.

**RESOLVED:** Unanimous to proceed with options 2 & 3.

v) **Sevenoaks Common**

A sketch was provided of the Mayors Charter Oak glade near Letter box lane It showed details of one existing Oak of poor shape and form to be removed One of good shape and form to be retain and rededicated and spacings for new oak saplings to be planted by the Mayor for the next 4 years.

**RESOLVED:** The Mayor would plant a new tree.

vi) **Hillingdon Rise Green:**

A request had been received by a member of the public concerned with the amount of vehicles parking on the pavement near The Green at Hillingdon. The cars were causing obstruction to other road users and were considered dangerous for children using the area as they cannot see past them when crossing the road. It had been requested that wooden bollards like those used on other areas such as Julian's Meadow be installed to make the site safer for all users. The estimated cost for the work was similar to Julian's Meadow at around

£4,000 That the situation is re-appraised now the gas works are finished, and reminders put on vehicle found to be parking on the grass unnecessarily.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the situation was re-appraised as the gas works was finished, and reminders put on vehicles found to be parking on the grass unnecessarily. Leafleting of local residents to be undertaken through letterboxes.
- ii) Await review of Sevenoaks District council parking review in autumn 2019. Review in a year.

**vii) Tree Planting**

Each year STC try to plant trees to replace those lost or enhance specific areas concentrating on trees that flourish under the main canopy in this silvian town, this always includes a good number of fruiting trees such as apple and Hazel that provide valuable food for humans or wildlife, This winter STC intend to carry out the following.

**Sevenoaks Common**

Beechmont Rd.

An area which previously had several over mature Birch trees close to a neighbour's fence, two of the birch fell last year and a further two have been remove on safety grounds this leaves around .05ha which will be planted with Apple, Cherry and Hazel as an understory.

**Letter box lane**

In 2018 we planted 50 Hazel and hornbeam under a large Veteran Beech tree, Parking was beginning to take place under the tree causing compaction to the root zone, unfortunately some of the saplings died in the drought last summer despite watering, and so replacements will be planted this autumn.

Greatness Recreation ground

Several years ago, STC planted three fruit trees to the West of the play area, the 2 surviving trees are now establishing, but a further 3 could be planted to help provide valuable shade.

**RESOLVED:** To note also being considered by Sevenoaks In Bloom and that Enovert had offered trees to the Town Council.

**viii) St Nicholas Churchyard**

STC had been contacted by Paul Williams of St Nicholas Church ,who was instrumental in starting the small wildflower meadow area to the immediate South west of the church, the church would like to extend the actions that they take to help wildlife and were considering enlarging the meadow, installing bug boxes and a closed compost bin for garden pruning's and kitchen waste.

The Open Spaces Manager met with the church representatives on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of July when a judge from Kent Wildlife Trust's, 'wild about gardens' competition will be on site with the hope that they can also offer advice, once the churches ideas have progressed a little further he would report back to committee.

**ix) GREEN FLAG**

**RESOLVED:** To note that Sevenoaks Town Council had been successful in reaccreditation of a Green Flag for the Vine and record the Committee's gratitude to everyone who helped make it happen. To note the feedback as per Appendix.

**177. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the accounts as distributed with the agenda.

**178. FRIENDS OF GREATNESS CEMETERY**

**RESOLVED:** To create a Friends of Greatness Cemetery as per following terms of reference to be launched in the autumn of 2019.

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Sevenoaks Town Council**  
Friends of Greatness Cemetery

1. Name

The Organisation will be called the 'Sevenoaks Town Council Friends of Greatness Cemetery (referred to as The Friends of Greatness Cemetery or FOGC).

2. Aim

The aim of the Friends of Greatness Cemetery is to promote the Cemetery as a place of quiet reflection and to enhance the aesthetics and information provided at the Cemetery site.

3. Objectives

- A. Improve signage and information boards
- B. Improve planting areas around the grounds and Chapel.
- C. Promote the Cemetery to a wider audience.
- D. Encourage integration with other community/business projects e.g. Sevenoaks In Bloom, Historical Talks, Nature Trails and Talks
- E. Protect and inform re Historical/Conservation importance.
- F. Provide information to the public.
- G. Provide further information regarding War Graves and Mausoleum via leaflets and talks and volunteering days

*It must be noted that some of these activities require a Faculty from the Diocese and must not be undertaken without this in place.*

4 Membership

4.1 Members to be welcomed from a wide range of different sectors to reflect the diverse aspirations of people in the town.

4.2 Governance.

Members who are appointed by organisations should be clear that they act to represent their own organisation and in doing so should obtain from their organisation the necessary consent or ratification for any commitment or decision to which they are party on behalf of. Members may also be known as an 'Individual Member' when they are not representing an organisation.

The Executive Board will consist of membership from:

- Chairman – Chairman/Vice Chairman of Open Spaces & Leisure Committee
- Sevenoaks Town Council
- Local Residents Associations
- Members of the public

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Local Historians

The Friends of Greatness Cemetery will ensure that it remains a fully representative body;

The Friends of Greatness Cemetery will seek to ensure the full participation of the community wherever possible and seek to inform the community of the progress of its work`;

4.3

The Friends of Greatness Cemetery will comply with the Sevenoaks Town Council Equal Opportunities statement and Health & Safety policies.

4.4

The Friends of Greatness Cemetery will operate in an environment which is fully accountable and transparent;

4.5

5.0 Any alterations to the terms of reference must be agreed by Sevenoaks Town Council.

Meetings and Decision Making

5.1

Sevenoaks Town Council Committee Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Friends of Greatness Cemetery, will timetable at least 4 full Friends of Greatness Cemetery meetings at regular intervals throughout the financial year.

5.2

5.3 Additional meetings may be called by 5 or more members indicating to the Chairman that a meeting is needed.

5.4 Agenda items for such a meeting should be agreed in consultation with the Chairman and notice given to the Clerk at least 10 days in advance.

5.5 Decisions will be made by consensus of those present on a majority vote

6 It is recognised that many members of the Friends of Greatness Cemetery will have a personal interest in promoting the best interests of the business of the partnership and that conflicts of interest are therefore difficult to identify. However partners should declare a personal interest that might represent a conflict with the best interests of the Friends of Greatness Cemetery.

6.1 Administration

Sevenoaks Town Council will undertake the administrative functions necessary for the co-ordination of the Friends of Greatness Cemetery.

**179. Sevenoaks In Bloom 2019**

Minutes of meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

**RESOLVED:** To note the minutes of the meeting.

**180. Management of Sevenoaks Town Council Open Spaces & Allocation of Councillors**

Two years ago, the Town Council undertook a comprehensive review of how it has managed its open spaces and produced updated management plans for each site.

It was agreed that in addition to the management plan a Councillor would be nominated for each site to review and provide additional feedback.

With a new Open Spaces & Leisure Committee membership, Councillors are asked if they wish to continue with the process and consider new allocation of Councillors.

<b>SITE</b>	<b>PREVIOUS CLLR.</b>	<b>NEW COUNCILLOR</b>
<b>Cemetery</b>	Cllr Andrew Eyre	Cllrs Eyre & Camp
<b>Vine (Inc. Fencing)</b>	Cllr Stephen Arnold	Cllr Granville Baxter
<b>Upper High St. Gardens</b>	Cllr Robert Piper	Cllr Michaelides
<b>St. Nicholas Church</b>	Cllr Robert Piper	Cllr Waite
<b>Kippington Meadow</b>	Cllr Richard Parry	Cllr Richard Parry
<b>Sevenoaks Common</b>	Cllr Richard Parry	Cllr Richard Parry
<b>Knole Paddock</b>	Cllr Simon Raikes	Cllr Raikes
<b>Greatness Rec. Grounds</b>	Cllr Roderick Hogarth	Cllr Canet
<b>Allotments</b>	(Not Allocated)	Cllr Brown
<b>Pointoise/Mount Close</b>		Cllr Shea
<b>Millpond Wood</b>		Cllr Camp

**181. Current Matters**

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
<b>366VI</b>	Vine & Cycle Racks	Work would start in the new year once work for the chair storage unit had commenced.
<b>372</b>	Vine Pavilion Ramp and restoration of sash windows	All works have been completed
<b>221</b>	Lamp post outside Lloyds Bank	Funding had now been received from KCC Cllr

		Margaret Crabtree and repainting would be completed in June.
<b>223</b>	Renovation of St Nicholas War Memorial	Initial conversations had taken place with St Nicholas Church. Grant pre application form submitted and successful at first round, next round of funding decisions in March 2019.
<b>226</b>	Anti-Litter Campaign	Several litter picking days had taken place and a new recycling bin would be installed at Greatness Recreation Ground shortly.
<b>314</b>	Greatness Cemetery – Environment Agency Groundwater Testing	Testing was carried out at the Cemetery in January 2019. A report had now been received as detailed in Open Spaces & Cemetery Manager’s report
<b>314</b>	Greatness Cemetery Faculty	A Faculty was applied for during January and currently awaiting feedback had been received.
<b>319</b>	Proposed outdoor gym at Julian’s Meadow	A grant had been obtained and the equipment would be installed during July.
<b>321</b>	9 Week Horticultural Course with West Kent Mind	The course had now completed with a new planting area behind the pavilion at the Vine

**RESOLVED:**

- i) Steps in Millpond Wood to be added to the current list.
- ii) To receive and accept the report.
- iii) Consider bike planters instead of cycle racks.

**182. Request for use of Upper High St Gardens by Neighbourhood Café**

**RESOLVED:** To review the provision of fixed tables and spaces available for general public use in Upper High Street Gardens without losing the character of the site and not provide a licence to Otto and review at next meeting.

**183. Press Release**

**RESOLVED:** To distribute a press release relating to the successful re-accreditation of the Green Flag Award to the Vine.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm

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**Chairman**

**Dated** .....



## Green Flag Award 2019

**Name of Site: The Vine**

**Managing Organisation: Sevenoaks Town Council**

### Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
<b>Presentation</b>	Easy to read, good layout and appropriate use of photographs with historical content	Some context missing. Legends by maps could be clearer. <a href="#">Recommend shouting more about achievements!</a> From the visit, it is clear this site has seen a renaissance in the last 5 years and is now a very popular town park. That should be in the introduction - that Council investment has instigated the change. And there are ongoing commitments to improve, with growing community support – as demonstrated in the 5yr plan.
<b>Health, Safety &amp; Security</b>	Clear narrative on Health and Safety regime. Security issues addressed with reference to anti-social behaviour and dog control	Unclear if fitness classes are licensed. This should be considered to protect site in case of any litigation.
<b>Maintenance of equipment, buildings &amp; landscape</b>	Works programme covered to building structures. In depth narrative to smaller structure works.	

<b>Litter, cleanliness, vandalism</b>	<p>Vandalism reporting system in place detailing working partnership with district community</p> <p>Litter picking is undertaken daily by Town Council Staff. A volunteer litter picker works on a Sunday</p>	<p>It would be interesting to know what happens to the litter once it is collected and what success to encourage recycling in future management plan.</p>
<b>Environmental Management</b>	<p>Clear narrative with reference to pesticides/herbicides, noting all staff are COSHH qualified. Good reference in looking to source locally grown plants and shrubs for bedding</p> <p>Recognise ambitions to source plants peat free where possible.</p> <p>Great eg of collaboration – coffee grounds from café collected and used by allotment users.</p>	<p>Need to identify measure of success with reference to recycling, e.g. percentage terms in how many pots and trays are returned to supplier</p>
<b>Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage</b>	<p>Tree survey audit as part of Management Plan included. Interesting narrative and use of photos of heritage features</p>	<p>Biodiversity records could be included- recordings of nesting birds <a href="#">Suggest exploring whether interested members of the community could become involved in recording biodiversity across the site. Could keep a record for people to update in the café and/or online?</a></p> <p><a href="#">Include a paragraph and photo of the woodland area – it's a great asset for biodiversity but hardly mentioned in the plan (nor were we shown it at the site visit)</a></p>
<b>Community Involvement</b>	<p>Development of educational visits in partnership with National Trust</p> <p>Good community involvement from the cricket club to the cafe on the Vine and the bandstand concerts</p> <p>Good community involvement from various local groups. Not clear from the plan whether a Friends of group is in place – a flyer at the back of the plan suggests a meeting was held to gauge interest – did this not materialise?</p>	<p>Recommendations from Neighbourhood Plan need to be included in future management plans</p> <p>Continue the good work of encouraging local people to visit the site. Continue to encourage local schools to use the site for outdoor education and play.</p>

	<p>Need to update plan and document and whether this is an aspiration for the future.</p>	<p>Update required to the establishment of the Friends of Vine Gardens</p> <p>Opportunities for the cricket club to engage more now that the park is a popular community asset and recognise the potential of the club house as a further asset, especially given recent Council investment</p>
<b>Marketing &amp; Communication</b>	<p>Examples of posters advertising events and site.</p> <p>Narrative of other ways of promoting site, through usual media channels, covered in depth.</p> <p>A strong aspect of the management plan, events are advertised locally and are effective</p>	<p>Could provide more weblinks in the management plan which would demonstrate the communication channels being used. Also a link to the relevant page(s) on the Council's website would be useful.</p>
<b>Overall management</b>	<p>Action plan as part of continuous assessment</p> <p>Overall a good management plan with scope for improvements</p>	<p>However, the Action Plan is confusing as it also includes work that has been completed. Suggest having two tables – one showing work completed and the other showing work to be achieved over the next 5 years.</p>

**Additional comments**

## Field Assessment Feedback

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
<b>A Welcoming Place</b>	Entrances were clean and tidy. Signage in formal Garden area to indicate site. Good access for all abilities. Many school children were at the site at the time of the visit.	Potential of further signage (as that in formal garden area) at the Park Lane entrance Some minor repairs to the barriers around the site needed.
<b>Healthy, Safe and Secure</b>	Despite being a very open area and off the main road the site is well used to negate major security issue (near to residential properties)	
<b>Well Maintained and Clean</b>	Very little in the way of litter on inspection. The buildings and facilities were generally well maintained. Recent works to the cricket pavilion were a good addition – window refurbishment and access ramp.	<a href="#">A few minor repairs required to the thatched storage building at the car park end of the cricket pitch.</a>
<b>Environmental Management</b>	Aware of no peat use where possible in horticulture process. Hoping to upgrade vehicles to electric in the near future.	Should now consider recycling bins or bin stations for visitors to appreciate litter issues. Cannot rely on visitors taking their litter home with them.
<b>Biodiversity Landscape and Heritage</b>	Good presentation of the cricket pavilion, with new disabled ramp access, tea-house and bandstand with no visible defects.  Planting regime to aid those with disabilities viewed.  Signage to explain historic features. Bandstand is well used and in good condition. The café is a great asset to the park and a key focus for the community.  The cricket pitch is central to the park and its history and is well kept and well used.	Habitat survey of woodland area, off Holly Bush Lane recommended.  The arbour feature beyond the bridge looks as though it needs some repairs and may need replacing soon.
<b>Community Involvement</b>	Clearly a hub for local community and schools for sports and explore green spaces	Need to change narrative in Management Plan. If no

	Good links with the community through organisations such as MIND and school groups visiting the site. Also successful programme of music events. The café is already embedded in the culture of the local community, which is great to see.	Friends Group is in the pipeline then mention those who volunteer for site  Keep up the good work!
<b>Marketing and Communication</b>	Established links with other local attractions to promote site. Marketing and communications tend to focus on putting up local posters – this seems to be working as the park used and its events well attended. Local knowledge of regular activities at the park is growing.	Maybe expand online presence?
<b>Management</b>	Evidence that the attraction is well managed by a small dedicated team who take pride in their work in and around the site and results are clearly visible for all to see	

**Additional Comments**

Disappointing that, again, no representative from the cricket club was present on the day of our visit to give their aspect to the site, and supporting the Green Flag application ,to perhaps view the inside of the pavilion, if we had so wished.

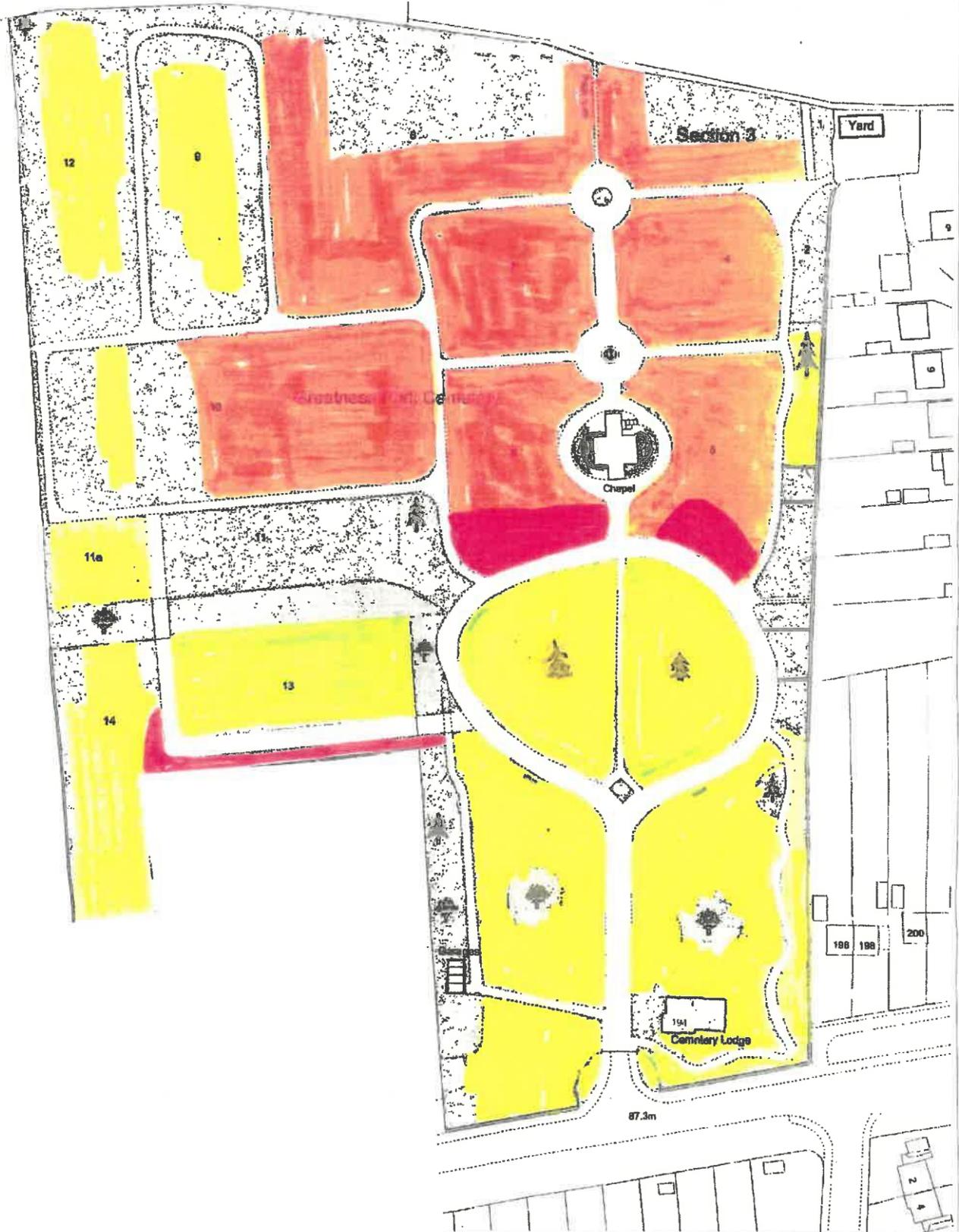
Continue the good work of promoting the site for the benefit of the local community

# Appendix B

NE 1

- TRACTOR MOWN
- PEDESTRIAN/POTENTIAL RIDE ON
- ACCESS PATHS & REDUCED DETAIL

- BANKS & GRADIENTS, REAR WHEEL DRIVE TORO
- PEDESTRIAN MOWERS, FINISH WITH STRIMMER
- TREE LINE, NO REGULAR MAINTENANCE



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