



Whitehill Burial Ground Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Background

Whitehill Burial Ground (WHBG) is managed on a not-for-profit basis by Goring-on-Thames Parish Council ("the Council") through the Deputy Clerk.

The Council wishes to ensure the WHBG remains a peaceful, respectful, and well-maintained location.

Several Earmarked Reserves (EMRs) have been setup by Council to hold funds to cover long term commitment, to bring a Natural Burial Ground into use, to allow (unspecified) general improvements to be made.

2. Remit

The Whitehill Burial Ground Committee is established to oversee the management, maintenance, development and long-term sustainability of Whitehill Burial Ground, ensuring it remains a peaceful, respectful, and well-maintained location.

It is tasked with:

- Developing and opening a Natural Burial Ground site within the funds earmarked in '441 EMR WHBG (OCC Cllr Priority fund 467)' and in '347 EMR WHBG Natural Burials setup'.
- Proposing to the Council and within a budget for each project approved by the Council, implementing suitable projects using the funds earmarked in '380 EMR WHBG improvements'
- Advising Finance Committee annually on a suitable funding level for '385 EMR WHBG Reserved Plots' for determining the annual Council budget.
- Advising Finance Committee annually on a suitable funding level for '410 EMR WHBG - 99Y Maintenance' for determining the annual Council budget.
- **Ensuring that all burial records for Whitehill Burial Ground are digitised as quickly as possible and transcribed onto Scribe Cemetery**

3. Membership

- The Committee shall consist of 3 Parish Councillors and up to 2 members of the public (i.e. registered electors of the Parish with relevant experience)
- A Chair shall be elected annually by the Committee.
- The quorum shall be 3 members.
- Members will be appointed by the Council at the Annual Council Meeting in May. A Chair will be elected by the committee at the first meeting of the year after this.

4. Scope

4.1 General Management

- Oversee the day-to-day condition and presentation of Whitehill Burial Ground.
- Ensure the site reflects its rural setting, maintaining a balance between neatness and natural character.
- Monitor burial capacity and plan for future provision, including potential extension or alternative arrangements if required.
- Advise Finance Committee annually on a suitable funding level for '385 EMR WHBG Reserved Plots' for determining the annual Council budget.
- Advise Finance Committee annually on a suitable funding level for '410 EMR WHBG - 99Y Maintenance' for determining the annual Council budget

4.2 Natural burial ground development

To develop and manage a designated natural burial area within Whitehill Burial Ground that:

- Promotes environmentally sustainable burial practices
- Enhances biodiversity and the rural landscape
- Provides a simple, dignified alternative to traditional burial
- Encourages biodiversity where appropriate (e.g., wildflower areas):
- Is managed to retain a natural, informal appearance consistent with the surrounding countryside
- Avoids formal cemetery features such as kerbs, railings, and artificial materials
- May include meadow, woodland, or orchard-style planting, as appropriate
- Allows for the long-term evolution of the area (e.g., meadow maturation or woodland growth)
- Reflects seasonal and ecological needs rather than traditional cemetery practices

4.3 Other improvements

To develop projects to improve the infrastructure of the Burial Ground (e.g. replacement of the garage, etc).

Source quotes and make recommendations to Full Council for appropriate expenditure from 380 EMR WHBG improvements

Implement Council approved projects within the budgets approved.

5. Delegated Authority

- The Committee has delegated powers to progress Invitations to Tender and Planning Permissions for each Council approved WHBG project.
- The Committee has delegated powers to design and conduct community engagement and consultation exercises on matters within its remit
- The Committee has delegated powers to identify, develop, and submit grant applications in support of council-approved projects.
- **The Committee has delegated authority to spend from the two EMRs linked to the WHBG Natural Burial ground project, namely 347, and 441 as well as any budgeted expenditure.**

6. Meetings

- Meetings shall be held as required, with additional site visits as needed.
- Minutes shall be recorded by the Deputy Clerk and reported to the next Parish Council meeting.

7. Reporting

- The Committee shall report to each Council meeting.

8. Review

- These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed periodically and at least once every Council term.