

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**27 November 2018**

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## **Questions**

**Cllr Jon Hubbard**

### **Comments and Questions on the Expansion of Melksham Cemetery**

**To Councillor Bridget Wayman – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste**

#### Statement

In July 2015 Wiltshire Council submitted a planning application (15/06652/FUL), which was subsequently approved on 7 September 2015, for the expansion of Melksham Cemetery. In September 2017 Melksham Area Board voted to support the allocation of some of the grave space for the Muslim community.

To date there is little evidence of any work having been undertaken to commence the works as promised and the Muslim community in Melksham and surrounding area is still without provision of a local burial space where they are able to properly respect their traditions and requirements of their faith.

#### Questions

1. As more than three years has passed since the awarding of planning permission, is the permission originally awarded still valid?
2. What is the timeline for the completion of the works and making the new grave space available?
3. What is the status of the repairs to the “historically significant” wall that appears to be the cause of these delays?

#### Response

The extension at Melksham Cemetery was granted planning permission in 2015 and work commenced in 2016. In the interim additional land has been made available for a further extension to Melksham Cemetery. This additional land would require its own change of use planning application. To expedite the use of the first extension the council will clear the site and replace the heras fencing with post and rail. This will allow the first extension to be used by the Muslim community and the wider

public, whilst the new planning application is submitted. The first cemetery extension will be available for use in the new year.

The 2015 planning permission has been partially implemented, so will not expire whilst the additional planning approval is sought.

The cemetery boundary wall, which has been partly demolished, is of no historical significance; however it does run along the boundary of the conservation area. The new boundary wall will be located in the conservation area and must be constructed of a different material to the existing blocks. The council submitted a second discharge of condition application to allow the wall to be constructed in a faced stone rather than the heritage bath stone initially approved. This will make a major saving to the project.

The originally approved extension should provide burial space for ten years, hence the decision to seek planning permission to provide a larger extension to accommodate burials for another ten years (twenty years in total), without incurring the expense of building the cemetery wall twice.

