

# Sherfield on Loddon cemetery

History and Status - report to the Council August 2015

## Brief History

The story of the Sherfield on Loddon cemetery appears to have started in 2005, when the Parochial Church Council (PCC) informed the Parish Council (PC) that their Burial ground would soon be full, and they would be looking to pass on the responsibility for burials to the Parish Council, and so the Parish Council would have to find land which it could allocate for use as a new burial ground.

Of several options considered, the favoured solution was to try to purchase a strip of land adjoining the existing burial ground, and in October 2005, the Parish Council approached the landowners. Their positive response in December 2005 led to the establishment of a working party (under the chairmanship of Bruce Batting), which first met in February 2006. The District Valuer Service at Southampton was approached to value the land and an agreement to purchase the land for £25,000 was reached in November 2006. A “change of use” planning application was made, and following an Environmental Agency survey in March, was granted in April 2007. An application for a PWLB loan was made and this was granted in July 2007, enabling the purchase was to be eventually completed in January 2008. At this stage, the field boundary was not fenced, as provided for in the conveyance, in order to make it possible for the former owners to maintain the land until such time as it was required for burials, which they have done free of charge for some 7 years.

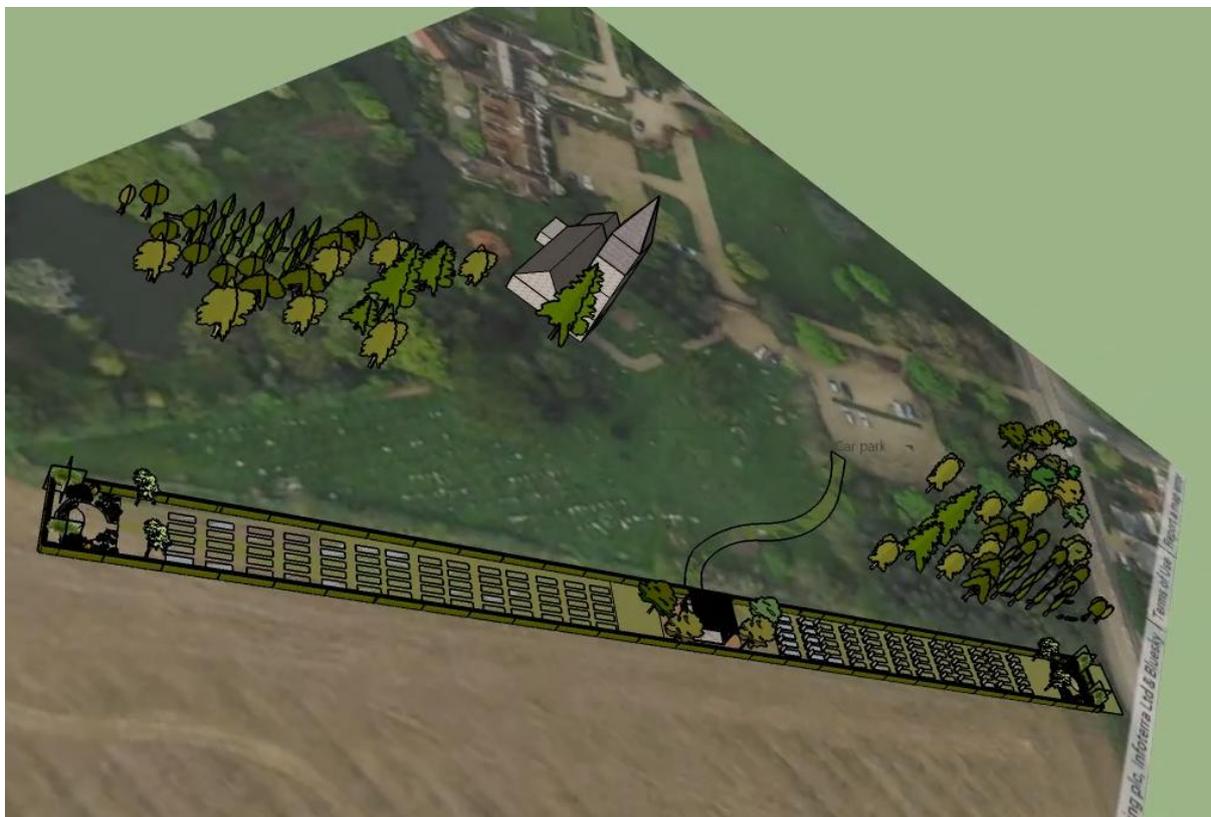
Following this was a long gap while we were waiting for the closure decision from the PCC, notice of which eventually arrived in February 2010. A burial ground committee was setup, with Ken Clark as chairman, the clerk attended an SLCC/ICCM training course, the various legal documents were organised and are now in place on the PC web-site, the regulations concerning burials, erection of memorials and behaviour were discussed and agreed upon (also on the web-site) and the charges were set (also on the web-site). Plans were discussed regarding how to layout the new cemetery, including various areas, e.g. “natural” burials, but not actioned owing to a shortage of funds. The cemetery was now effectively available to accept burials (June 2010). At this stage we were still awaiting formal notification of closure from the PCC, so it was decided to disband the committee and wrap its business in to the Leisure committee.

There followed another long pause, until we were finally given notice in mid-2014 that the church graveyard was to be closed to new burials, and we would therefore have to take over the role of Burial Authority. The Burial ground committee was then re-formed and met

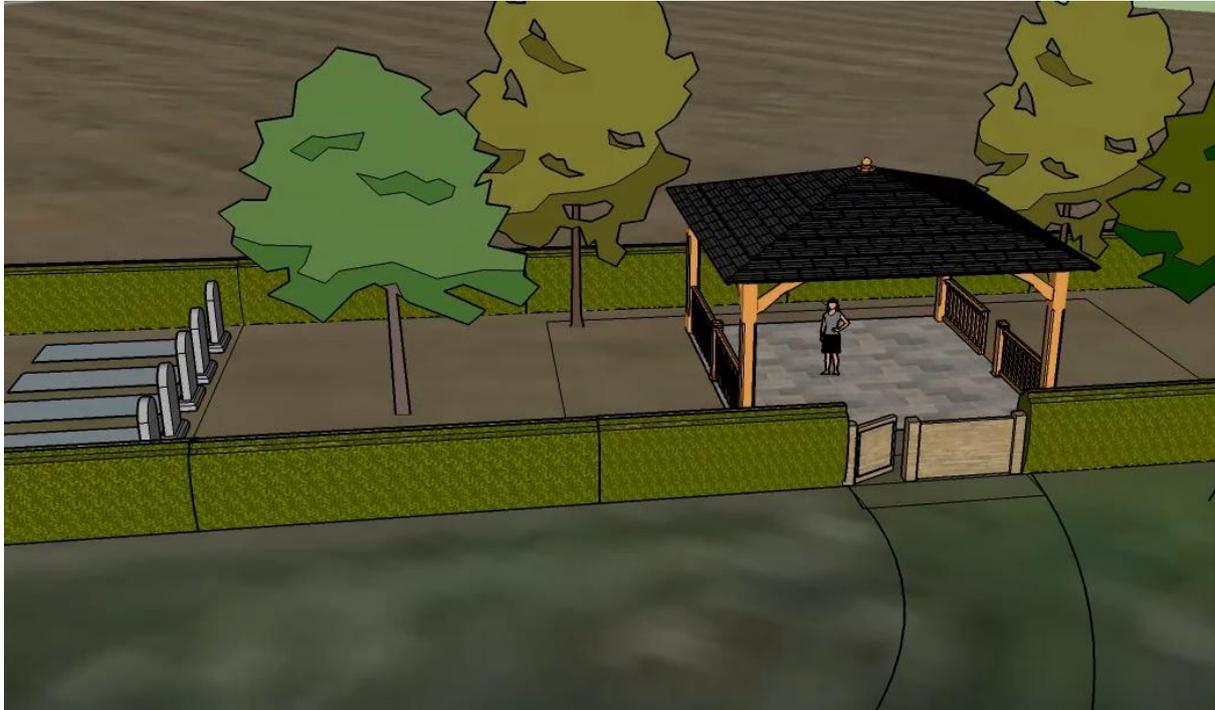
in November 2014, when Alan Ball was elected as chairman. At approximately the same time, we became aware of the availability of Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF) grants, and it was decided that the cemetery would be eligible to apply, so we filled out the necessary paperwork, and were duly awarded a grant of £50,000 to enhance the cemetery, and by the provision of hard landscaping features to turn it into a suitable environment for its new purpose. However this offer was subject to a constraint that members of the new Sherfield Park Parish would be considered as in-parish for burial purposes for evermore, thereby earning a substantial reduction in costs (in addition to the previous 5-year residency rule existing), and hence a considerable reduction in revenue to the council. We objected to this clause in view of the fact that the new cemetery is wholly contained within the new Parish boundary for Sherfield on Loddon, and we have now come to an equitable arrangement regarding this clause. We are now in a good position to go forward and prepare the cemetery properly in a fitting manner...

## Virtual images of how we could proceed...

In order to secure the grant, we had to submit plans for the LIF grant from the council, here is a virtual picture of a potential layout



A suggestion is to have a larger version of the lychgate as the entrance. This covered area could also be used for non-Anglican burials – as the new cemetery is not consecrated ground, all faiths (or even no faith) can be buried in the cemetery – and a Church service may not be suitable...



And a sound barrier/screen at the A33 end

