

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Cemetery and Burial Strategy

2026 to 2035

Introduction



Cemeteries are important spaces. In developing this strategy Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (the Council) are keen to ensure that we share the aims and ambitions for Cemeteries and Burials for the next ten years. We also want to ensure that policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent.

Our vision is to ensure that all cemeteries in the Borough are maintained to a standard that reflects the respect due to those buried there. That the valuable green space created by burial grounds are pleasant quiet environments that can be used for remembrance, relaxation and reflection. It is also important that the Council's burial grounds reflect and support the diversity of the Borough, creating spaces for all faiths.

The Council manages 2 cemeteries and 3 closed church yards. In addition to ensuring the beauty of the sites, burials in Oadby and Wigston need to be sustainable. We need to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to accommodate the needs of residents.

Aims and Ambitions

The following are the key aims of the service. These are focused on ensuring clarity of process, quality of environment and inclusivity.

1. To provide cemeteries for Oadby and Wigston residents that are beautiful, peaceful and well used
2. To offer burial spaces that support a diverse range of cultural and individual needs
3. To ensure that our policies relating to burials and memorials are clear, well communicated, and consistent
4. To ensure that procedures for the purchase and use of burial sites and memorials are clear, efficient, and compassionate



Future ambitions for the Council are:

- To improve levels of accessibility for all cemeteries and the closed church yards managed by the Council
- To assess the use and condition of the chapels that are located within our burial sites and ensure that they are maintained appropriately.

Consultation

Engagement with and feedback from stakeholders including residents and communities is important in ensuring that the Cemeteries and burials grounds in Oadby and Wigston meet the needs of communities. To this end a public consultation will be undertaken commencing in Winter 2025 for 8 weeks before the Strategy is adopted.

In addition to engagement with residents, we will consult with Undertakers and memorial masons within the Borough. The close communication with those organisations helps to ensure that burials proceed as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

Legislative Framework

Whilst the views and requirements of communities and those using the burial grounds is very important. The policies and procedures that are in place relating to burials and memorials are required to be compliant with legislation.

There is currently no statutory duty for Local Authorities to provide burial spaces for residents, however, it is a requirement that existing burial grounds are well maintained.

The key legislation that applies to Burials and Burial grounds includes:

- The Local Government Act (1972)
- The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (1977)
- The Public Health Act (1857)
- Ecclesiastical Laws
- The Burial Act (1857)
- National Planning Policy



Included in the legislation is a requirement that the Council provide Public Health Burials for those deceased who do not have relatives or where relatives have not been able to be traced.

The legislation also requires that headstones within burials grounds are assessed for safety through routine inspections. Those memorial stones found to be unsafe are required to be laid down to avoid risk of injury or damage.

Capacity

Wigston Cemetery has capacity to accept the current level of burials for approximately 10 years should demand remain stable. This is based on the current trend that shows a reduction in interments as more people prefer cremation.

Currently the Council offers a provision for burials & Interments to all faiths, community groups and the public.

In the longer term if the Council wishes to continue to provide burial provision within the Borough it will need to review how it operates the cemeteries and consider whether the re-use of graves would be a matter that it would consider (Subject to the Secretary Of State's approval) or identify additional land to either extend the cemeteries or create new cemeteries.



Policies

To ensure compliance with the legal framework as well as to ensure that Oadby and Wigston Cemeteries are maintained to a high standard and accessible for all, specific policies relating to Burials and Memorials have been developed. The table below provides a summary of those policies with the full documents included as appendices to this strategy.

The Burials and Memorials policies will be reviewed once the review of the current operation of the cemeteries has been concluded.

Policy Reviews

Potential Future Re-use of Graves/ Cemetery Extensions / New cemeteries	1	Review the current operation of the cemeteries and the impact arising from the provision of plots for all faiths.
Oadby and Wigston Cemetery Regulations	2	<p>Overview of all aspects of Cemetery and Burial Management including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites • Opening hours • Plot and Section types • Maintenance regimes • Purchasing of burial plots • Installation of memorials
Memorial safety policies and procedures	3	Guidelines regarding safety testing and permitted memorials within different sections of cemeteries