

Closed Churchyard Report – Area Committees

Where a Church of England churchyard is closed to further burials in accordance with an Order in Council under the Burial Act 1853, responsibility for maintenance may, at the request of the Church, be transferred to the relevant local authority (Parish Council first and then Borough Council). The transfer is compulsory, not dependent on the condition of the churchyard in question, and not dependent on the local authority's ability to meet the additional maintenance costs.

The legislation requires a short time of statutory notice (3 months) although our policy is always to request an informal 12-month period to allow for suitable budgeting decisions. Quinquennial inspection reports are given to us by the Diocese.

Swale currently has 20 Closed Churchyards which are listed over the page. We also have 8 War Memorials and 2 other significant memorials that the Council is responsible for maintaining.

Urgent health and safety related works are covered under the Council's ongoing revenue budget; however, inspections often reveal works that could be undertaken to prevent future serious issues or to ensure heritage and conservation considerations are protected. These latter works often require specialists and are expensive. Recent inspections have shown possible works totalling over £1m.

Members may wish to allocate some of the Area committee funds to a closed churchyard in their area. This could be to achieve improvements or support community activities. For the Sittingbourne Area, a summary of the required works are as follows:

Site	Description of works	Estimated cost of works
Murston	Repair damaged copings, gates, fence and paths	£1,750
Murston Cross	Repair fencing, railings and re-lettering to cross	£3,550
St Michael's, Sittingbourne	Repair railings, paths, and drain channel	£11,000
Holy Trinity, Milton Regis	Repairs to walls and paths	£28,560

We are aware that there is a growing interest of volunteers to support their local community areas. Therefore, we are looking at opportunities to have 'Days of Action'. You may already have links to groups that are interested or use your engagement to promote opportunities

If you are interested in supporting this programme of works, please contact parks@swale.go.uk stating the churchyard you are interested in.

List of Sites:

Churchyards

- St Mary of Charity, Faversham
- St Peter's & St Paul's, Newnham
- St Peter's and St Paul's, Ospringe
- St Peter & St Paul, Lynsted
- Lynsted Burial Grounds
- Holy Trinity Burial Grounds, Sheerness
- St Catherine's Faversham
- All Saints, Graveney
- St Peter & St Paul, Boughton-under-Blean
- Murston Churchyard
- St Peter & St Paul, Borden
- St Michael & All Angels, Hartlip
- Holy Trinity, Milton
- All Saints, Iwade
- St Michael's, Sittingbourne
- Holy Trinity, Queenborough
- Minster Abbey
- North Road, Queenborough
- Union Road, Minster-on-Sea
- Love Lane, Minster

War Memorials

- Sittingbourne War Memorial, Central Avenue
- High Street Queenborough War Memorial
- Stone Street, Faversham
- Sheerness, Bridge Road
- Muston Memorial, Church Road
- St Peter's & St Paul's Ospringe War Memorial
- Milton Memorial, Holy Trinity Church
- Borden Memorial, St Peters & St Pauls Church

Other Significant Memorials

- Eastchurch Aviation Memorial
- Gun Powder Memorial, Love Lane, Faversham