

Councillors are hereby summoned, and members of the public and press are invited, to attend the annual meeting of the **Joint Burial Committee** to be held on **Tuesday 3 February 2026**, starting at **18.45** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

**Note:** - Members of the public who wish to view the meeting proceedings will be able to access the meeting through the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTA9K-7L4Onjcli2Gtz7tCg>

G. Hughes, Town Clerk (signed on original)  
28 January 2026

## Agenda

- 045/2526**      **To receive and approve apologies for absence.**  
a. To record members present:  
Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:
- a record be kept of the members in attendance.
  - this record forms part of the minutes of the meeting.
  - Members who are unable attend a meeting should tender apologies in advance to the Town Clerk and the grounds for apologies tendered will also be recorded.
- b. To approve any apologies for absence:  
Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires:
- Members present to decide if the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.
- 046/2526**      **To receive declarations of pecuniary or personal interests in items on the agenda and any dispensations.**  
The Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct requires:
- Members to declare any interests not currently recorded in the Member's Register of Interests or not notified to the Monitoring Officer of it.
  - Requests for Dispensations should be made in writing to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.
- 047/2526**      **To approve the draft minutes of the Joint Burial Committee meeting held on 2 December 2025.**
- 048/2526**      **Public Open Forum:** Questions may be put to the Committee in person during this public participation session of up to 15 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes per person. Issues notified to the Clerk a minimum of 3 working days before the meeting (i.e., by 5pm on the preceding Thursday) will receive a response during this session. Issues raised in this session without prior notice may be referred to the Clerk to respond to within 10 working days or listed on a subsequent agenda. The Mayor reserves the right to vary or extend these time limits.
- 049/2526**      **Clerk's progress report:** to receive an update report (for information).
- 050/2526**      **Financial Matters for consideration:**  
a. To receive the financial update report.  
b. To consider end of year allocated reserves.
- 051/2526**      **Double Fees:** To review and agree the qualifying period for a person to have moved out of the area before double fees are applied.

- 052/2526**      **Children’s Funeral Fund:** To consider making a claim for a burial
- 053/2526**      **Inspections:**  
a) to receive feedback from recent inspections and  
b) to make arrangements for cemetery inspections until April 2026.
- 054/2526**      **To approve the applications, transfers and memorials received.**
- 055/2526**      **Matters of report** (for information only).
- 056/2526**      **Date of the next meeting:** Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

INCOME/EXPENDITURE 2026/27

		2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	As at 27/01/26	End of Year F'cst Excl. Reserves	Notes	
ADMINISTRATION	CTC Staff		22,869		22,869	Increase of 3.2%. This figure is only for calculation of West Crewkerne contribution	
	Computer software	272	368	285	368		
	Admin	198	100	17	100		
	Insurance	5,957	6,106	6,176	6,176	Insurance £6,391.80 - 30.09.25 - 29.09.26 (£5,960.58 24/25)	
	Subscriptions	100	100	105	105		
	Cemetery Training	150	150	0	150		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>29,693</b>	<b>6,583</b>	<b>29,768</b>		
CHAPEL (Public)	General Maintenance	674	500	349	500		
	Repairs	24	500	1,610	500		
	Rates	1,547	1,578	1,547	1,854		
	Electricity	37	100	21	100		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>2,678</b>	<b>3,527</b>	<b>2,954</b>		
GROUNDS	Grounds Maintenance	20,537	19,000	10,927	19,000		
	Toilet Refurbishment	2,517	0	123	100		
	Water Rates	643	600	697	600		
	New Equipment	0	0	0	0		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,697</b>	<b>19,600</b>	<b>11,747</b>	<b>19,700</b>		
TREWORK/NEW PLANTING	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,121</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>7,179</b>	<b>5,500</b>		
PATH IMPROVEMENTS	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>8,850</b>	<b>8,850</b>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>54,277</b>	<b>65,171</b>	<b>37,886</b>	<b>66,772</b>		
RECEIPTS	Cemetery Fees	Burial Fees	9,160	9,000	7,360	7,500	
		Digging of plots	1,100	800	420	420	
		Garden of Remembrance	805	445	120	120	
		Plot Purchases	7,150	6,000	10,230	10,500	
		Memorials + inscriptions	4,455	6,000	3,960	5,000	
		Chapel Use	400	600	500	500	
		Transfer fees	1240	1,580	1345	1500	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,555</b>	<b>25,425</b>	<b>24,442</b>	<b>26,290</b>		
<b>TOTAL FORCAST NET EXPENDITURE - EXCLUDING SPEND FROM RESERVES</b>					<b>40,482.00</b>		
<b>WEST CREWKERNE FORCAST NET EXPENDITURE</b>					<b>2,833.74</b>		
<b>WEST CREWKERNE CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED (before deductions/additions)</b>					<b>2,782.00</b>		
<b>Forecast +/- West Crewkerne at year end - To be added/deducted to/from West Crewkerne contribution 2026/7</b>					<b>51.74</b>		
<b>WEST CREWKERNE CONTRIBUTION FOR 2026/27</b>					<b>3,287.00</b>		

<b>FORECAST Cemetery Reserves 2025/26</b>	<b>Balance brought fwd</b>	<b>Added in year</b>	<b>Used in year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>West Crew 7%</b>	<b>Town Council 93%</b>
<b>Chapels</b>	-			-		-	-
<b>Trees</b>	1,952.71		1,561.66	391.05		27.37	363.68
<b>New Burial Grounds/Paths</b>	16,900.00			16,900.00		1,183.00	15,717.00
<b>Lodge</b>	24,152.39			24,152.39		1,690.67	14,845.12
<b>Total Allocated Reserves</b>	43,005.10	-	1,561.66	41,443.44		2,901.04	30,925.80
<b>Cemetery Unallocated Reserves</b>	55,033.59		2,814.79	52,218.80	March grass cutting overspend 24/25 (£1,705.00) Balance of Repairs to Chapel (£1,109.79)	3,655.32	48,563.48
<b>TOTAL CEMETERY RESERVES</b>	<b>98,038.69</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,376.45</b>	<b>93,662.24</b>		<b>6,556.36</b>	<b>79,489.28</b>

<b>Report subject</b>	To review and agree the qualifying period for a person to have moved out of the area before double fees are applied.
<b>Committee name</b>	Joint Burial Committee
<b>Meeting date</b>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
<b>Report author</b>	Gemma Hughes, Town Clerk
<b>Report contact details</b>	townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk
<b>Consultees</b>	n/a
<b>Decision required?</b>	Yes

### **1. Purpose**

To consider and agree a clear qualifying period for cemetery fees, specifically the length of time a person must have moved out of the parish before they are classed as non-resident and therefore subject to double fees. This report seeks to address the current lack of guidance, which has resulted in uncertainty in some cases.

### **2. Background information**

2.1 The Council currently applies different fee rates for residents and non-residents in the cemetery. However, there is currently no formal policy or guidance defining:

- when someone ceases to be considered 'local' after moving away; and
- what discretion (if any) should apply in cases such as care home moves or end-of-life relocation.

2.2 This has created a grey area where officers may be required to make decisions on a case-by-case basis without an agreed structure, which could lead to:

- inconsistency and perceived unfairness;
- challenge or complaint from families; and
- reputational risk to the Council.

2.3 Other councils locally operate qualifying periods or exemptions which provide a helpful comparison.

### **3. Detailed Consideration**

3.1 At present, if a resident moves away shortly before death, it is unclear whether they should be charged at the resident rate or at double fees as a non-resident.

The Council may wish to establish a policy that is:

- fair and compassionate;
- clear and easy to administer;
- consistent with neighbouring councils;

- supportive of long-term community ties; and
- financially sustainable.

3.2 A summary of local arrangements is as follows:

- Chard – if death occurs within 12 months of moving away, they may still be considered 'local'; after that double fees apply
- Ilminster – if they were a resident within 10 years of death, single fees apply; after that double fees
- Martock – non-resident as soon as you move, then triple fees. Exception for long-term parishioners moved to end-of-life facilities (proof required).
- South Petherton – non-resident as soon as you move, then double fees. Exception: 6 months grace for care-home moves.
- Yeovil (managed by the crematorium) – resident up to 12 months after moving, then double fees

3.3 Councillors may wish to consider adopting one of the following options:

**Option A – 12-month qualifying period (aligned with Chard and Yeovil)**

A person will remain eligible for resident fees if they die within 12 months of moving out of the parish. After 12 months, non-resident (double) fees apply.

Pros:

- Simple and widely used locally
- Compassionate and reasonable
- Easy to evidence and administer

Cons:

- May be viewed as too short for long-standing residents who moved away earlier

**Option B – 6-month grace period for care home moves only (aligned with South Petherton)**

A person becomes non-resident immediately upon moving out, however a 6-month grace period applies where the move is to a care home or end-of-life facility.

Pros:

- Protects the most sensitive cases
- Limits loss of income
- Simple in principle

Cons:

- Does not address non-care moves
- May still lead to complaints from long-term parish families

**Option C – 10-year qualifying period (Ilminster approach)**

A person will be charged single (resident) fees if they have lived in the parish at any point within the 10 years prior to their death. If they have not lived in the parish within that 10-year period, double (non-resident) fees will apply.

Pros:

- Recognises recent connection to the parish, even if the deceased had moved away
- Clear, consistent rule that reduces ambiguity
- More compassionate than immediate non-resident status

Cons:

- Can be more difficult to evidence (historic proof of residence may be required)
- May reduce income from non-resident fees compared with shorter qualifying periods
- Could create borderline cases where families dispute dates/residency history

**Option D – Immediate non-resident status (Martock approach) with limited exceptions**

A person is non-resident as soon as they move out, with discretion/exemption for end-of-life moves or long-standing parishioners.

Pros:

- Maximises income and clarity
- Straightforward rule

Cons:

- Most likely to generate dissatisfaction
- Requires discretionary decisions and proof, which can be challenging and sensitive
- Could appear harsh

3.4 Given the Council's aim to remove ambiguity whilst remaining compassionate, Councillors may wish to consider adopting:

- Option A (12 months) as the standard rule; and
- an additional clause allowing discretion for end-of-life care moves (proof-based), if Councillors feel this is appropriate.

This provides a clear default position but allows fairness in exceptional cases.

#### **4. Financial implications**

The policy chosen will affect cemetery income.

- A shorter qualifying period or immediate non-resident status increases income from non-resident fees.
- A longer qualifying period reduces income but may be seen as more equitable for long-standing residents.

Agreeing a clear policy will also reduce officer time spent on case-by-case decisions and may reduce complaints and dispute handling. No direct additional expenditure is anticipated.

**5. Equalities considerations**

This policy may affect bereaved families who are elderly, disabled, or vulnerable, particularly where a move out of the parish is linked to:

- ill health;
- admission to residential care;
- family support needs.

Introducing a clear qualifying period and/or exemptions for end-of-life moves may reduce the risk of indirect disadvantage and improve fairness.

**6. Crime and Disorder considerations**

n/a

**7. Council Action Plan objectives supported**

n/a

**8. Recommendation**

8.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Agree a qualifying period defining when a person becomes non-resident after moving out of the parish and
- b) Agree if an additional clause allowing discretion for end-of-life care moves is required (if proof is provided)

<b>Report subject</b>	Children’s Funeral Fund for England
<b>Committee name</b>	Joint Burial Committee
<b>Meeting date</b>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026
<b>Report author</b>	Gemma Hughes, Town Clerk
<b>Report contact details</b>	townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk
<b>Consultees</b>	n/a
<b>Decision required?</b>	Yes

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on the availability of funding from the Children’s Funeral Fund for England (CFF) in relation to a recent child burial, and to seek approval to submit a claim for eligible costs within the required timescales.

**2. Background information**

2.1 The Children’s Funeral Fund for England provides financial support to cover certain funeral-related costs for children under the age of 18. Eligible costs include burial or cremation fees and memorial costs.

2.2 The family of the child are not informed that a claim is being made by the Council.

**3. Detailed Consideration**

3.1 A representative of the Children’s Funeral Fund advised that the Council may claim for:

- The cost of the burial plot for a child under the age of 18; and
- The cost of a memorial (headstone).

3.2 It was recommended that both the burial plot and memorial costs are claimed at the same time, even if the family has not yet applied for permission to erect a headstone. This is to ensure that the Council submits the claim within the permitted timeframe, as families may require time for the grave to settle or to decide on memorial arrangements.

3.3 The applicable claim deadlines are:

- Burial plot costs: within 6 months of the date of burial
- Memorial costs: within 12 months of the date of burial

3.4 The Children's Funeral Fund team requires a statement invoice, printed on Council headed paper, which must include:

- The child's full name
- Date of burial
- Location of burial
- A copy of the coroner's order or registrar form
- A copy of the Council's fees and charges
- The address of the Children's Funeral Fund team

3.5 Further information can be found here: [Claim for costs of a child's funeral \(Children's Funeral Fund for England\) - GOV.UK](#)

#### **4. Financial implications**

Submitting a claim to the Children's Funeral Fund will enable the Council to recover eligible costs associated with the burial plot and future memorial. This will mitigate the financial impact on the Council by reclaiming fees that are eligible under the scheme. Failure to submit the claim within the required timeframe would result in the Council being unable to recover these costs.

#### **5. Equalities considerations**

The Children's Funeral Fund is a nationally recognised scheme designed to ensure that families are not financially burdened by funeral costs for children, regardless of background or circumstances. Submitting a claim under this scheme supports fairness and equal access to support.

#### **6. Crime and Disorder considerations**

n/a

#### **7. Council Action Plan objectives supported**

n/a

#### **8. Recommendation**

8.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) approves the submission of a claim to the Children's Funeral Fund for England for a recent child burial within the prescribed timescales; and
- b) delegates authority to officers to submit claims to the Children's Funeral Fund for England for any future child burials that may occur, where eligible, without the need for further Council approval.