

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 7 October 2025**, 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)
1 October 2025

Agenda

- 018/2526 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.
- 019/2526 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.
- 020/2526 To approve the draft minutes of the Joint Burial Committee meeting held on 3 June 2025.**
- 021/2526 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.
- 022/2526 Clerk's progress report:** to receive an update report (for information).
- 023/2526 Financial Matters for consideration:**
- To receive the financial update report.
 - To receive a budget update
- 024/2526 Cemetery Post Box:** to consider a proposal for a Cemetery post box

- 025/2526** **Memorial Trees and Benches:** to adopt a new policy
- 026/2526** **Bin Storage Area:** To consider visual improvements to the area
- 027/2526** **Cemetery Maintenance Contract:** to receive a verbal update from the Clerk
- 028/2526** **Cemetery Survey:** To review the progress on the memorial inspections
- 029/2526** **Inspections:**
a) to receive feedback from recent inspections and
b) to make arrangements for cemetery inspections until December 2025.
- 030/2526** **To approve the applications, transfers and memorials received.**
- 031/2526** **Matters of report** (for information only).
- 032/2526** **Date of the next meeting:** Tuesday 2nd December 2025, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

INCOME/EXPENDITURE REPORT 2025-26

		2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	As at 30/09/2025	End of Year Forecast Excl. Reserves	Forecast Reserves Used	Notes
ADMINISTRATION	Salaries		22,869		22,869		*For calculation of West Crewkerne contribution only
	Computer software	276	368	282	368		
	Admin	198	100	5	100		
	Insurance	5,960	6,106	2,964	6,106		Renewal for 30/09/25 to 29/09/26 is £6,332
	Subscriptions	100	100	105	105		
	Cemetery Training	150	150	0	150		
	TOTAL	6,684	29,693	3,356	29,698	0	
PUBLIC CHAPEL	Maintenance/Consumables	674	500	128	500		
	Repairs/Refurbishments	24	500	0	500		
	Rates	1,547	1,578	929	1,547		
	Electricity	45	100	10	100		
	TOTAL	2,290	2,678	1,067	2,647	0	
GROUNDS	Grounds Maintenance	20,537	19,000	7,772	19,000		
	Toilet Refurbishment	2,517	0	123	750		
	Water Rates	643	600	467	600		
	New Equipment	0	0	0	0		
	TOTAL	23,697	19,600	8,362	20,350	0	
TREWORK/NEW PLANTING	TOTAL	8,121	5,500	7,180	5,500		
PATH IMPROVEMENTS	TOTAL	13,500	7,700	8,850	7,700		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		54,292	65,171	28,815	65,895	0	
RECEIPTS	Cemetery Fees	Burial Fees	9,000	9,000	2,870	9,000	
		Digging of plots	1,100	800	240	800	
		Garden of Remembrance	715	445	120	445	
		Plot Purchases	6,600	6,000	8,000	6,000	
		Memorials + inscriptions	5,000	6,000	2,880	6,000	
		Chapel Use	400	600	200	600	
		Transfer fees	1300	1,580	965	1580	
		Misc.	0	0	0	0	
		Bank Interest	1300				
		Total Cemetery Fees	25,415	24,425	15,275	24,425	
FORCAST TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE - INCLUDING SPEND FROM RESERVES					41,469.90		
FORCAST WEST CREWKERNE 7% OF NET EXPEND. TO BE INVOICED AT YEAR END					2,902.89		

Cemetery **	Balance brought fwd	Added in year	Used in year	Total	Comments	West Crew 7%	Town Council 93%
Chapels	-			-		-	-
Trees	1,952.71		1,679.20	273.51		19.15	254.36
New Burial Grounds/Paths	16,900.00			16,900.00		1,183.00	15,717.00
Lodge	24,152.39			24,152.39		1,690.67	14,845.12
Total Allocated Reserves	43,005.10	-	1,679.20	41,325.90		2,892.81	30,816.49
Cemetery Unallocated Reserves	55,033.59		1,705.00	53,328.59	March grass cutting overspend 24/25	3,733.00	49,595.59
TOTAL CEMETERY RESERVES	98,038.69	-	3,384.20	94,654.49		6,625.81	80,412.08

£7616.60 of TC reserves used for Lodge office refurb

* West Crewkerne reserves have been returned to them on 31st March 2025

Report subject	To consider a proposal for a Cemetery post box
Committee name	Joint Burial Committee
Meeting date	Tuesday 13 th October
Report author	G. Hughes, Town Clerk & RFO
Report contact details	townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk
Consultees	n/a
Decision required?	Yes

1. Purpose

To seek Council's consideration of a proposal to install a white post box within the cemetery grounds as a symbolic and therapeutic outlet for bereaved families.

2. Background information

In several communities across the UK, white post boxes have been introduced in cemeteries and memorial gardens. They are not connected to the Royal Mail system but serve as a place where families, particularly children, can post letters or notes to loved ones who have passed away. Feedback suggests this initiative can provide comfort and support in the grieving process.

3. Detailed Consideration

3.1 The post box would need to be installed in a discreet yet accessible area of the cemetery.

3.2 The Joint Burial Committee would be responsible for purchasing and maintaining the post box.

3.3 Arrangements would be required for respectful removal and disposal of letters. This could include periodic removal by Council staff.

3.4 Sensitivity will be needed in communications to ensure the concept is understood and supported by the wider community.

4. Financial implications

4.1 The initial purchase cost of the post box ranges from £160-£200.

4.2 Ongoing maintenance costs.



5. Equalities considerations

The proposal is inclusive in nature, providing an outlet that can support all members of the community, regardless of age, background, or belief. The scheme may be of particular benefit to children and young people experiencing bereavement.

6. Crime and Disorder considerations

The post box would need to be robust and securely fixed to minimise the risk of vandalism. Regular monitoring would help ensure that it remains in good condition and continues to be used respectfully.

7. Council Action Plan objectives supported

N/A

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. It is recommended that Council **CONSIDERS** the proposal for a white cemetery post box.

Memorial Bench and Tree Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Crewkerne Town Council (referred to hereafter as “the Council”) understands and respects the wishes of its residents to remember loved ones through memorial benches and trees. This policy provides guidance for potential applicants to understand locations that are available for memorial benches and trees, as well as our arrangements for application and for future maintenance.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to provide a guideline for applications for memorial benches and trees, only in locations owned by the Council or Townsend Cemetery which is jointly owned by the Council and West Crewkerne Parish Council. We cannot provide guidance on land owned by Somerset Council or by other landowners.
- 1.3 The content of this policy is not exhaustive and is subject to change. It will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances and proposed amendments will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee and/or Full Council. Any changes to the policy will also be adopted by the Joint Burial Committee in respect of Townsend Cemetery only.
- 1.4 The Council reserves the right to refuse any application which it deems unsuitable. The decision of the Council will be final.
- 1.5 The policy covers any memorial bench, tree or other lasting item (excluding memorials around graves) placed on Council-owned or managed property and is relevant to anyone who has commissioned or is thinking of commissioning a memorial tree or bench.
- 1.6 The Council does not accept applications for memorials for pets.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1 The planting of trees or installation of benches on land as memorials, is a private arrangement between the friends and relatives commissioning the memorial, and the landowner. As such, the Council can only approve memorials on Town Council-owned land.
- 2.2 Generally speaking, installing trees and benches will not be subject to planning permission, restrictive covenants, or other restrictions. However, there may be cases where the Council is unable to install benches for such reasons. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must consider the effect of its decisions on crime and disorder. It may deem a location unsuitable if it may attract antisocial behaviour.
- 2.3 When the Council approves the installation of a bench or tree, it must be purchased through the application process outlined below. Once installed, ownership transfers to the Council, and the donor does not retain any rights over its future management. However, the Council will endeavour to ensure it is properly maintained and cared for. Applicants must provide the Council with up-to-date contact details, which will be processed in accordance with the Council’s Privacy Policy and applicable data protection legislation

3. Application process

- 3.1 Applications for a memorial bench or tree must be made by using the official request form available on the Council website and must be signed by the applicant. On the receipt of the application, you will be contacted within 10 working days with a list of pre-approved benches or tree species. Applications will then be reviewed, and applicants will be notified of the decision within one month of submission.
- 3.2 Memorial benches and trees will only be considered from people who can demonstrate a close tie with the person being commemorated. The Council reserves the right to refuse a memorial bench or tree should it have any grounds to believe it would be contrary to the wishes of the commemorated person's next of kin.

4. Location and Placement

- 4.1 The Council will endeavour to accommodate any reasonable requests for the planting of memorial trees or installation of memorial benches on Council-owned property only. Requests may not be able to be fulfilled if the location is unsuitable due to the risk of vandalism, antisocial behaviour, over-population of trees or benches, or any other material factors.
- 4.2 If a site is at capacity for benches or trees, applicants can request to join a waiting list.
- 4.2 The location of any memorial trees will be determined by the Council to ensure ecological balance. The exact location of a bench will be agreed between the donor and Council staff.

5. Bench and Tree Specifications

- 5.1 Only durable, low maintenance benches from an approved supplier will be considered. Specific styles and colours are pre-approved by the Town Council to ensure uniformity. A list of these bench types is available upon application. The Council will not accept benches provided directly by applicants.
- 5.2 The Council will provide an appropriate species list on application to ensure that the tree is native and environmentally suitable for the planting location.

6. Memorial Plaques and Inscriptions

- 6.1 Commemorative plaques can be affixed to a memorial bench, or placed next to a memorial tree, subject to agreeing a wording with the Council. The Council will approve the wording before it is finalised.
- 6.2 Plaques fitted to benches must be a maximum size of 200mm wide x 70mm high or shall fit in the centre of the upper most lath of the back of the bench, or whichever is greater. Memorial plaques may not be fitted directly to trees. Plaques a maximum size of 150mm x 100mm high may be placed adjacent to the tree by way of a ground spike. All plaques will be fitted by Council grounds staff.
- 6.3 Plaques may be subjected to vandalism. Any replacement costs will need to be met by the donor.
- 6.4 Commemorative plaques may be affixed to existing benches, where there is no other visible sign of it being a memorial bench, subject to the conditions in 6.1.

7. Costs

- 7.1 The costs associated with purchasing, installing and maintaining benches and trees are outlined in the application form. The donor is responsible for the initial costs and any potential replacement. If the bench is deemed to have failed one of the Council's visual inspections the donor will be

offered the chance to fund a replacement. If we are unable to contact the original donor then the bench will be removed and the space offered to the first person on the waiting list for that area.

7.2 As benches and trees are ordered from external suppliers, we do not provide prices in this policy. The Council will obtain a price at the time of application.

7.3 An administration fee and installation fee will be payable on receipt of a successful application.

8. Installing/planting

8.1 The arrangements for ordering and installing the bench or tree will be made directly by the Council once a specification has been agreed with the donor and once the financial donation has been received.

8.2 The Council will oversee the installation of benches and the planting of trees to ensure proper placement and adherence to safety standards.

8.3 Tree planting will usually only be permitted between late autumn and early spring, in line with the tree planting season.

8.4 Trees should be no smaller than 5ft in height to ensure that the tree is well established and more resilient.

8.4 All trees will be planted with stakes, protected by tree guards, and surrounded by mulch for optimal growth.

8.5 Trees will normally be planted by a member of the Grounds Team, or by a Council appointed, qualified contractor. However, donors are welcome to be present at the tree planting and carry out a small ceremony if they wish. Please note that these will be limited to weekday working hours due to staff availability.

8.6 The Council is unable to agree to the interment or scattering of ashes at public open spaces within the parish, other than in Townsend Cemetery on payment of the appropriate fee. Please contact the Town Council offices directly to arrange for an interment or scattering of ashes.

8.7 No scattering of pet ashes at any site will be permitted,.

9. Maintenance and Vandalism

9.1 Once installed, the memorial bench, plaque or tree will not be insured by the Council but will be maintained in accordance with the Councils routine maintenance programme for such furniture. The Council will only source high quality/durable benches and will endeavour to maintain a bench until it fails a visual inspection, and to care for the tree indefinitely.

9.2 Donors should also be aware that benches or young trees in public areas may be subject to vandalism. The Council will not accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of a commemorative or memorial tree, unless this is reasonably shown to be due to negligence of the Council.

9.3 Trees and benches are regularly inspected by a member of Council staff/ independent Council-appointed contractors, however if you notice any problems with your tree please contact the Town Council office.

- 9.4 The Council shall endeavour to maintain and care for a memorial tree and bench for as long as possible. However, it reserves the right to re-site or remove any tree or bench that it deems to be unsafe, unrepairable, or other reasons.
- 9.5 No additional mementoes (e.g., vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation etc), shall be permitted on or around the memorial tree or bench, except with the permission of the Council. If such are found the Council reserves the right to remove and dispose of any such items without reference to the family or donor concerned.
- 9.6 The donor shall not be permitted to undertake any maintenance of the memorial tree or bench without the permission of the Council. Donors are however welcome to undertake their own cleaning of benches. Dedication of a memorial tree does not give the donor any right to determine or influence its future management, however the Council's tree management strategy will ensure that there is proper maintenance and appropriate care of all trees.
- 9.7 Where an existing bench is in poor condition, the Council and donor may agree to install a memorial bench in its place, the full cost of which shall be met by the donor as detailed in 7.1.
- 9.8 The Council may remove a bench or tree if it becomes damaged, poses a safety risk, or is affected by redevelopment. In such cases, the Council will notify the donor and discuss options for replacement.
- 9.9 The Council accepts no liability for replacing a bench or tree at the end of its useful life. When a bench or tree has been disposed of, the commemoration will automatically cease. If the Council installs a new bench or tree at the same location, it reserves the right to agree a commemoration with a new donor.

10. Memorial Register and Contact Details of Donors

- 10.1 Applications for memorial benches and trees shall be kept by the Council on a Memorial Register. The Register is a confidential document for use only by the Town Council for the purpose of contacting the donor should the need arise. Consent for such use will be assumed upon submitting the application, in accordance with the rules for Data Protection.
- 10.2 Donors may request that their details are not held on the Memorial Register (or removed from the Register) on the understanding that in the absence of such contact details, the Council will not be able to consult them on matters relating to the memorial and it will therefore take such action as it sees appropriate.
- 10.3 It will be the responsibility of the memorial owner to ensure that the Council is kept informed of any changes to contact details. If the Council is unable to contact a memorial owner on a matter concerning the donated bench or tree, the Council reserves the right to take such action as it feels appropriate.



Memorial Bench and Tree Policy Application Form

Section A – Applicant details

Applicant Name	
Applicant Address and Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	

Section B – Purpose of Application and Associated Costs

Please note that all applications are subject to a £25 admin fee plus installation costs listed below:

Application for (please tick):	
Memorial bench - £50	
Plaque on memorial bench - £25	
Memorial tree - £50	
Plaque for a memorial tree - £25	

Details of person being remembered or other reason:

Section C – Preferred location

Preferred location:	
Barn Street Recreation Ground	
Bincombe Beeches	
Happy Valley	
Henhayes Recreation Ground	

Townsend Cemetery	
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Please add specific area details for consideration. (Use this section to highlight a specific area within one of the sites listed above if applicable).

Section D – Memorial Plaque

The plaque will be supplied by the applicant in accordance with the Council's Memorial Bench and Tree Policy and will be installed by the Town Council. Wording is to consist of no more than 120 characters (this includes spaces and punctuation) and will be aligned in the centre of the plaque. The wording will be at the Council's discretion. Common phrases include 'In loving memory of' or 'In tribute to' or 'to commemorate'

Details of inscription (Please use exact wording/format):

Section E – Terms and Conditions

By signing this application form, the applicant agrees that they have reviewed the Council's Memorial Tree and Bench and agrees to the conditions set out in this policy. Applications will not be accepted without such acceptance or in the absence of a signature.

Signature	
Print Name	
Date	

On the receipt of the application, you will be contacted within 10 working days with a list of pre-approved benches or tree species. Applications will then be reviewed, and applicants will be notified of the decision within one month of submission.

Please return the completed form by email or post:

towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

Crewkerne Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7LN