

**Calne Without Parish Council**  
**Finance Committee**  
**25<sup>th</sup> August 2020**  
**Agenda Item 6 Review of Spending**  
**Stockley Methodist Cemetery**

## **1 Introduction**

A local resident has brought to the attention of local Parish Councillors the poor state of repair of the old Methodist graveyard in Stockley and asked if the Parish Council would consider taking on its maintenance.

## **2 Powers of the Parish Council**

It is not yet clear if the cemetery has been officially closed but it has not been used for burials in the current inhabitant's lifetime.

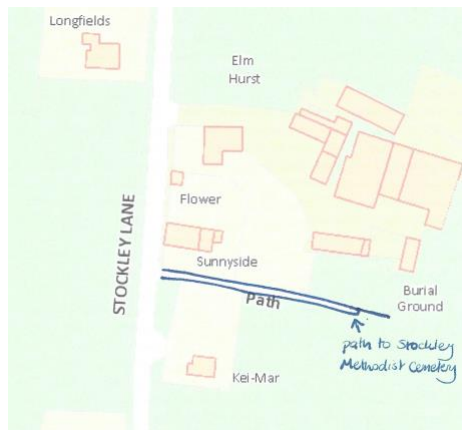
Section 214 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Parish Council to contribute toward the maintenance of a cemetery and S215 of the 1972 Act relates to the maintenance of a closed Church of England cemetery where the Parish Council may be served a written request to take on the maintenance of a graveyard, the same rule does not apply to a Methodist graveyard.

Therefore, the Parish Council will not have a duty to take on the maintenance of the churchyard but section 214 of the 1972 Local Government Act does allow the Council to contribute to the maintenance if it so wishes.

## **3 Location**

The Cemetery is off Stockley Lane and is accessed by a right of way (footpath CALW28).





## 4 History

The only reference that can be found at present to the cemetery is here

[https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/wiltshire-2/q-z/stockley\\_primitive\\_methodist\\_chapel](https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/wiltshire-2/q-z/stockley_primitive_methodist_chapel)

The chapel was built in 1849, although the return from the 1851 Census of Places of Public Religious Worship also dates it as 1841.

The chapel is shown on Ordnance Survey maps of 1886 and 1924 at GR SU002677. By 1973-5 only the burial ground is shown, it having apparently spread onto the site of the chapel.

### 4.1 Wiltshire Records and Archaeology

The Wiltshire Records office had no details of the cemetery or chapel but would be pleased to hold any information that the Parish Council finds.

### 4.2 The Wiltshire Council Archaeologist

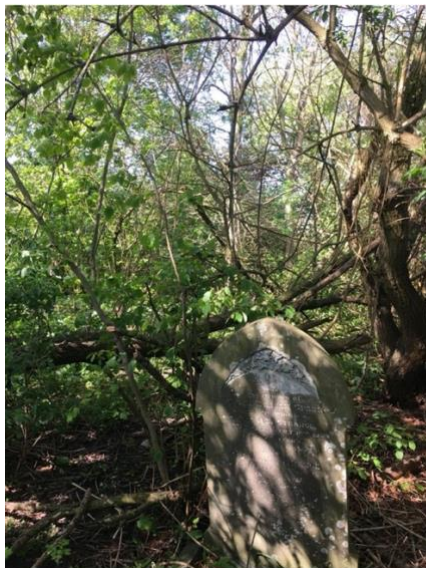
The County Archaeologist has confirmed that there should be no problem with the Parish Council clearing the cemetery and looking after it. She has advised the key thing will be to ensure that any method and equipment used will not damage the graves and gravestones. If it is all being done manually it should be fine, but if the Council plans to employ contractors using machinery, they will have to be careful. The Archaeologist recommends the writing of a method statement to ensure that works are carried out in an appropriate manner. She was unable to provide an example of a suitable method statement.

## 5 Ownership of the site

The Clerk has asked the local Methodist Church for information on the church yard and who the Parish Council should contact regarding ownership of the site. Previous enquiries by a local resident did not turn up any information.

## 6 Current Condition

The following photos show the former and current condition.



## **7 Access/Footpath CALW28**

Access to the graveyard which is by way of a footpath (CALW28) off Stockley Lane is also overgrown. Stephen Leonard, Wiltshire Council Countryside Access Officer for our area, has offered to inspect the path and action works to clear it. Overhanging vegetation from adjoining properties is the responsibility of those properties.

## **8 Works Required**

The graveyard was previously maintained by a local resident.

The cemetery is now very overgrown with a significant number of trees that would need works done by a qualified contractor. A survey would be required to obtain the list of works and associated costs.

Once the major works to clear the overgrown vegetation is complete, general maintenance could be done by volunteers.

## **9 Budget**

The Parish Council budget for 2020/21 has Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Sun Edision Funding allocated to Community Improvements (£1,000) and Community Facilities (£5,500). Neither budget currently has any projects allocated to it and would be available should the Council wish to pursue this project. Being close to the Cherhill View development on Stockley Lane use of CIL could be considered but the use of Sun Edision funding may be thought more appropriate.

Ongoing maintenance costs would need to be calculated and included in the budget estimates for 2021/22, therefore the Council will need to make a decision on this project before the Council sets its budget in December 2020.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Finance Committee decide to either:

1. Recommend this project to the Parish Council with the following schedule of work:
  - Find out the ownership and status of the graveyard,
  - Prepare a method statement and obtain quotes for the cost of clearance of the overgrown trees and vegetation,
  - Ask the Engagement and Participation Working group to consult with local residents regarding the long-term maintenance of the cemetery and report back to the Council.

or

2. Recommend that the project does not fit with the Parish Council's expressed priorities for this year and cannot be taken further.