



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Extension to Longwater Lane Cemetery, Costessey, NR5

1 Introduction:

At the time of writing (end of March 2020) Costessey TC has 76 new burial plots and 26 new cremation plots available for use in its current cemetery at Longwater Lane. There is a rough 80% / 20% split between cremation and burial interments, with approx. 20-25 interments in total (including re-openings) per year.

Costessey TC has been looking to extend the current cemetery for some time, but given the coronavirus pandemic it is likely that more burial space will be needed in a shorter space of time than previously anticipated.

Many years ago in 1985 Costessey TC purchased land from South Norfolk Council for an extension to the west of the existing cemetery. This remained as agricultural land. Subsequently in 1993 Costessey TC purchased a parcel of woodland fronting Longwater Lane again to use as a cemetery extension. These two parcels of land have not yet been brought into use.

More recently Costessey Town Council was granted a 10m strip of land adjacent to the Dr Torrens Way development constructed by Taylor Wimpey as part of a S106 agreement. The Town Council also purchased an area of agricultural land and woodland totalling 5.09 hectares adjacent to its current cemetery from South Norfolk Council at a cost of £75,000.

Both of these latter parcels are intended for use for the purpose of providing additional burial provision as an extension to the existing cemetery. Both areas have covenants / conditions relating to this use placed upon them.

The current planning application relates to the 10m strip which it is intended to use for cremation plots only, and to a square flattish area to the west of the existing cemetery, backing onto the Norfolk CC Traveller site. It is currently laid to grass, and it is intended to use the area for coffin burials. This land was previously acquired from South Norfolk Council as part of the intended expansion to the west.

2 Geological suitability of the soil structure & Flood Risk:

The previously obtained desk studies are still relevant as the land structure has not changed and this is acceptable to the Environment Agency (see letter from EA).

The land is not in an area susceptible to surface water, ground water or river flooding, and given the nature of the light, sandy soil, coffin graves would be dug to no more than double depth as is current practice.

3 Design, Site Layout and Landscaping:

The two areas which form this application are not wooded, therefore no trees will be affected and no tree survey is required. It is intended to keep the existing line of trees between the current roadway and the 10m strip as this will provide some shielding from the rest of the cemetery.

The 10m strip backing onto Dr Torrens Way has some planting adjacent to the fencing, and there is a restriction on interments within the strip (Section 4 Restrictive Covenants by the Transferee which is why Costessey TC considered it most appropriate for the interment of cremated remains.

The cremation plots would be arranged as 2ft x 2 ft squares in 12 blocks with grass pathways between them for access. The area should provide up to 1,080 additional cremation plots of double depth thus providing for up to 2,160 ashes interments. The block design would avoid the existing tree roots, and allow access to the plots from both the north and south sides as well as from the pathways between the blocks.

The square grassed area will be a traditional burial area with grave plots in rows. However, the gravedigger has advised that because of the slight slope of the land the graves should be oriented north-south rather than the more traditional east-west alignment in the current cemetery. It is not anticipated that the land will be consecrated by the Church of England.

The grave plots will be 5 feet wide as the current 4ft 6 inch plots in Section D are proving very tight for modern day standard coffins. Some rows may be allocated to 7 foot wide "casket plots" as natural coffins eg made of seagrass and the like tend to compress and require a greater width, as well as caskets becoming more popular.

It is anticipated that there would be planting of bushes around the edges of the grassed area to shield it from the Traveller site and the wayleave for the redundant oil pipeline wayleave behind the wire fence. A large tract of approx. 4metres will be left between the first row of grave plots to the south and the embankment against the Traveller site as well as to the east and west of the square. This will allow access for large machinery to maintain the undergrowth / planting on the embankment. It would also avoid the wayleave for access to the sewerage pipe running from the Traveller site to inspection chambers on Council land, and allow access to the miscanthus crop on the agricultural section.

The amount of land in the grassed square area will provide at least as much burial space as in the current cemetery and in the current circumstances would be more than sufficient to accommodate large multi-use graves for assisted burials if necessary.

4 Phasing:

There is a large amount of land available to the Council for future burials. It is intended that this application for the 10m strip for cremation and the grassed square area for burials be Phase 1 of a much larger project.

The remainder of the agricultural land is planted with miscanthus (elephant grass), and it is not expected to bring this area into use for at least 10 years.

Eventually the adjacent woodland could be used for a mixture of natural coffin burials, ashes interments in specific plots and an area for the scattering ashes without exclusive rights, but this would form part of a later phase of development under a separate planning application.

5 Access:

The application site will be accessed via the current cemetery entrance onto Longwater Lane in Costessey.

The 10m strip for cremation interments will be accessed via a path leading off the vehicle driveway near the current car park and eventually at the further end by a similar path near the current cemetery boundary with the agricultural field.

The square grassed burial area for coffin burials will be accessed from the field gate at what is currently the end of the existing driveway. Eventually a roadway will be constructed westwards, which will be wide enough to accommodate two passing vehicles. The roadway will have hedge planting set back slightly to shield the new burial area