

Cemeteries and Churchyards

Introduction

- 10.1 This typology encompasses both churchyards contained within the walled boundary of a church and cemeteries outside the confines of a church. These include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation but also for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

Strategic context and consultation

Strategic context

- 10.2 Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance.
- 10.3 PPG17 Annex states that “many historic churchyards provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas, and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can also be viewed as amenity green spaces. Unfortunately many are also run down and therefore it may be desirable to enhance them”.
- 10.4 Some churchyards retain areas of unimproved grasslands and other various habitats. They can make a significant contribution, particularly in urban areas providing a sanctuary for wildlife but also often providing some historic value in the more rural landscapes. In some instances, cemeteries and churchyards may be the only open space within settlements.
- 10.5 Cemeteries and churchyards are an important asset. As well as the value placed upon them by families of the deceased they offer many other benefits, for example they provide sanctuary for wildlife and places for people to reflect undisturbed. They are cherished for the historic value they provide, often respected for their part in creating a historic landscape.
- 10.6 These values were recognised by some residents at local consultations, where the wildlife benefits and opportunities for quiet relaxation provided by cemeteries were highlighted.
- 10.7 Other issues emerging from the analysis of local consultation included:
- a limited number of respondents to the household survey indicated that cemeteries and / or churchyards were their most frequently visited open space type in Ryedale – the highest aspirations of this group were parking facilities and a clean and litter free environment
 - all respondents were asked to comment on their perceptions of the quality of cemeteries and churchyards across the district. This painted a positive picture, with only 5% suggesting that cemeteries were of poor quality, contrasting with 45% who indicated that the overall quality of these open spaces in Ryedale is good.

SECTION 10 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

Current position

- 10.8 There are currently 80 churchyards and cemeteries in Ryedale. The distribution of sites across the analysis areas is discussed in table 10.1 below.
- 10.9 The quality of each site was assessed taking into account the quality of the landscape and the condition of the buildings. The wider benefits of sites were also considered.
- 10.10 Churchyards and cemeteries across the district are owned, managed and maintained by a vast array of different providers. Consultations highlighted that some providers find managing and maintaining the sites to a high quality to be challenging in light of shortfalls in funding.

Table 10.1: Provision of cemeteries and churchyards across Ryedale

Analysis Area	Number of Sites	Landscape and Condition of Buildings	Wider Benefits
Malton	6	Previous audit suggests that all six sites are very well maintained, free for litter – with no change needed.	St Mary's Priory Church and Norton Cemeteries are thought provide a recreational use.
Pickering	5	Previous audit suggests that all sites are very well maintained.	The main emphasis in terms of wider benefits is on heritage, For those 3 sites within Thornton Dales ward, this is perceived as the only wider benefit.
Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside	5	Previous audit suggests that all sites are very well maintained.	The main emphasis in terms of wider benefits is on landscape importance. All Saints Church was also noted as a pedestrian thoroughfare.
Rural North	28	The audit undertaken suggests that the landscape and buildings condition is good, indicating that all sites are well maintained. No sites were perceived to be poor and 71% were rated as good	Despite the good perception of the landscape and condition of buildings, eight sites were considered to be poor in terms of the wider benefits offered. The majority of sites were considered to offer landscape benefits.
Rural South	36	Like in the rural north, the building condition and landscape of all sites was perceived to be moderate to good and only Settrington Cemetery was highlighted as poor overall.	Many sites within the rural south were perceived to be of benefit in terms of both landscape and heritage.
DISTRICT WIDE	80		

10.11 The key issues arising from table 10.2 overleaf include:

- the higher proportions of cemeteries and churchyards are located in the rural north and rural south areas of Ryedale, sporadically distributed in smaller settlements across the district
- the largest concentration of sites is in the rural south area. Distribution across the three more densely populated areas is consistent. Given the more urban nature of Malton, Pickering and Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside the lower level of provision could be expected.

- the landscape and building condition of cemeteries across the district is good, with almost all sites considered to be good or moderate. Cemeteries and churchyards were also perceived to offer a significant number of wider benefits, particularly in terms of the heritage and landscape.

Setting provision standards

- 10.12 PPG17 Annex states that as churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one”. Full indication of consultation and justifications for the recommended local standards are provided within Appendix F. The recommended quantity standard and the justification for this standard is set out below.
- 10.13 The fact that it is inappropriate to set standards in terms of quantity and accessibility for cemeteries and churchyards is reflective of the nature of supply led facilities i.e. there may be few realistic opportunities for additional provision. Despite this, planning policy can influence and facilitate the location and provision of additional cemeteries and churchyards.

Quality Standard (see appendix F)

Recommended standard
<i>“A clean and well-maintained site providing long-term burial capacity, an area of quiet contemplation and a sanctuary for wildlife. Sites should have clear pathways and varied vegetation and landscaping and provide appropriate ancillary accommodation (eg. facilities for flowers litter bins and seating.) Access to sites should be enhanced by parking facilities and by public transport routes, particularly in urban areas”</i>
Justification
It is important for the Council and the public to acknowledge the important open space function that churchyards and cemeteries provide. This can be particularly the case in rural areas where cemeteries and churchyards may be the only open space in the village. However, it is essential that sites are regularly maintained with clear footpaths so as to increase the ease of access and safety for those who visit the sites. It is important that good practice is promoted throughout the district. Parking facilities as indicated in the aspirations have been incorporated into the vision.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 10.14 Given that it is not appropriate to set any local quantity or accessibility standards it is also not appropriate to state areas of deficiency or need or examine the spatial analysis of these sites. However, it is useful to look at the quantitative distribution of cemeteries and churchyards.
- 10.15 It can be seen that there is a good distribution of churchyards and cemeteries across the district, with rural areas in particular well served.
- 10.16 In some settlements, churchyards and cemeteries are the only type of open space provision. These sites may be of particular importance to local residents in providing a recreational resource to replace the function of amenity green space.
- 10.17 Settlements where cemeteries may be of particular importance include:

- Scampton
- Gillamoor
- High Hutton
- Langton
- Howsham
- Acklan
- Scrayingham
- East / West Heslerton
- Oswaldkirk
- Nunnington
- Stonegrave
- Gilling East
- Sackleton
- Appleton le Street
- Normanby
- Yeadingham
- Wilton
- Warthill
- Foston

Value Assessment

- 10.18 65 of the 80 sites within this typology were thought to be very well maintained and free for litter – with no change needed. Despite this, many providers of cemeteries and churchyards highlighted the challenges that they face in maintaining these types of open space.
- 10.19 Given the function and historical value of this type of open space it is essential that all sites are protected. In areas of limited open space provision (or where churchyards are the only open space type) churchyards and cemetery sites are of particular importance. In these areas, enhancement and protection is particularly important to ensure they are valued by local residents.
- 10.20 In light of the importance of this type of open space, it will be important for all providers of cemeteries and churchyards to work in partnership to improve and maintain the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in line with the quality vision. The nature conservation value of cemeteries and churchyards should be promoted to increase awareness of ecological management of these types of open space.

Summary

- 10.21 Local standards for accessibility and quantity have not been set. Despite this, it remains important to consider the future delivery of cemeteries and churchyards anticipating future demand as well as assessing the current level of provision. At present, there is a good distribution of cemeteries and churchyards across Ryedale with 80 sites in total. The quality vision and quality benchmark should guide the future development and improvement of cemeteries and churchyards across the district. The quality of cemeteries and churchyards in the district is currently good.
- 10.22 In some instances cemeteries and churchyards are the only type of open space within a village, making them a particularly valuable element of the rural green space

SECTION 10 – CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

network. The enhancement to the accessibility and quality should be prioritised in these areas.

- 10.23 The wider benefits of churchyards are key and it is wrong to place a value of churchyards and cemeteries focusing solely on quality and accessibility. In addition to offering a functional value, many cemeteries and churchyards have wider benefits including heritage, cultural and landscape values.
- 10.24 Previously work assessed the existing sites for ecological, heritage, recreational use, landscape (outstanding trees and / or shrubs) and other factors. Out of the 80 sites, 32 scored two or more wider benefits of significant value. In contrast 9 sites were considered to have no wider benefit of significant value.