



## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

### **Restriction of burials In London Road Cemetery extension from March 2017**

It is a statutory requirement that measures are taken to protect groundwater from potential pollution sources. Burial practices give rise to potential sources of pollution and so are covered by these regulations.

The Environment Agency (EA) has powers to prevent or control activities such as burials that may result in the discharge of certain pollutants to groundwater. Due to the cemetery's location overlying the Upper Chalk Formation, a Principle Aquifer which is used extensively in the Anglian region for water supplies - it was necessary for rigorous and intrusive investigation and ground water monitoring to take place in order to obtain planning permission.

After extensive bore holing, water monitoring and risk assessments of the cemetery extension site, planning permission was granted in early 2012. The EA and Breckland Council granted permission with the requirement that ongoing monitoring was completed and that a management plan was put in place to safeguard the environmental impacts of the cemetery with the underlying groundwater of principle concern.

As a result of this Thetford Town Council implemented an Environmental Management Plan in 2012 and one of the recommendations was that burials in the new extension were limited to 20 - 25 per annum. Recent monitoring has shown that this limit is likely to be exceeded in the future unless the Council introduce measures to restrict burials.

The possible consequence of the pollution of groundwater above acceptable limits is that all burials are suspended and the cemetery is forced to close. However you can be reassured that the Council are taking steps to mitigate the risk of this happening and it is very much a 'worst case scenario'. One of the measures the Council wish to take is attempting to restrict burials in order that they do not exceed the maximum recommended amount. Accordingly, it was agreed by Council at a Full Council meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 that burials in the new cemetery will be restricted to two per month from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The restriction on non parishioner burials in the new cemetery remains in force.

Burials in the older part of the cemetery and cremated remains interments will not be affected. Further non parishioners in care homes/hospices who lived in Thetford immediately prior to their move into care will be considered a parishioner on production of a letter confirming their eligibility.

This has been a difficult decision for the Council but it has been taken to try and ensure that the Council remains able to fulfil its obligation to bury parishioners.

Tina Cunnell  
Town Clerk BSc (Hons)  
Thetford Town Council  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2017