

To receive an update on the P.C.C registering the churchyard as closed and consider any actions and associated expenditure

The Law Commission is currently considering changes to update burial laws with a public consultation running until 9 January 2025. Lack of burial space has been identified as a key issue with grave reuse being proposed as a solution to the problem. One of the areas being considered is closed and disused churchyards. The Commission proposes reforms to allow them to be reopened, allowing people to be buried closer to home, or in a graveyard that holds special meaning for them. It appears that the proposals currently do not intend to stop closures of churchyards, but will allow, if there is a need, to reopen them. A summary of the consultation paper is attached as part of the reports pack. There is also a short video summary which can be accessed here:

[Law Commission Burial and Cremation Consultation 2024](#)

The Law Commission will use the responses to the consultation to develop their recommendations to government for reform and expect the report to be published in late 2025.

The Reverend Laura Bushell Hawke is concerned that changes to legislation may prevent closure of churchyards, and the Ministry of Justice may choose not to allow any applications until the outcome of the consultation is known. There is a possibility that the church may be required to reopen the old part of the cemetery first. In the meantime, she is waiting for the information to become clearer and has requested advice from the diocese legal team.

CALC have no further information on the subject at present, but NALC have issued a consultation to member councils which they will use to inform their response to the Law Commission.

The Town Clerk suggests that until there is something more solid on the horizon than a consultation about a future recommendation, St Stephen's Church proceed within the parameters of the current law.

End of report

Senior Policy and Data Compliance Officer