

**To receive a report on the Headstone Health and Safety Audit 2025 and
consider any actions and associated expenditure.**

Report to: Joint Burial Board

Date of Report: 7.11.25

Officer Writing the Report: Office Manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk

Purpose of the report:

To ensure that Members are aware of the agreement between Saltash Town Council and St Stephens Church and the Town Council's liabilities therein.

Officers Recommendations

To seek a legal review of the constitution to clearly define the Town Council's liabilities and ensure accurate budgeting for the site.

Report Summary

The 2025 Headstone and Memorial Safety Audit is currently underway for all headstones and memorials located within the grounds of St Stephens.

Under the terms of the 1982 agreement between the Incumbent and the Town Council, it was agreed that the Town Council would be responsible for some of the maintenance of the churchyard outlined in green on the attached agreement. Please refer to map in **Appendix A.**

The 2021 Headstone and Memorial Safety Audit was partially completed, during which headstones were tested for stability and, where necessary, safely laid down to prevent risk.

Following recent advice from the ICCM, the Service Delivery Department have been using treated wooden stakes and strapping techniques to secure unstable or unsafe memorials from the ICCM advice received is as follows:

ICCM's general advice is that if possible stake and band a memorial to try and establish if there is a living owner or anyone that would like to take ownership of a grave by placing a notice and also contacting any living owners via grave records.

You should put a sign on it and cordon the memorial off as well if possible for health and safety.

If a stone is very dangerous and cannot be supported via a temporary fix, then it is possible to lay it flat but it is best to try and preserve the look of the cemetery first as laying them flat also causes a trip hazard.

As mentioned by the ICCM, an alternative option is to lay unstable headstones flat on the ground. This approach may result in an unsightly appearance, pose a tripping hazard and risks damage to machinery and plant equipment when stones become obscured by grass growth.

To date the Service Delivery Department have completed approximately 60 staking and strapping of existing headstones. Please refer to picture below:



For health and safety reasons, each unstable headstone requires a warning notice. It is hoped these signs will encourage those responsible for individual memorials to come forward and arrange necessary repairs.

The number of unsafe headstones identified has been significantly higher than expected. Treated wooden stakes, used to temporarily secure these memorials, have an estimated lifespan of 3–4 years due to ground contact and weather exposure, and will need replacing over time.

Given the current and future costs of this work, it is recommended that members seek a legal review of the constitution to clearly define the Town Council liabilities. This will support accurate budgeting.

If the current approach continues, over 200 additional headstones will require staking and strapping.

Budget Overview

Item Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Cost
Health and Safety Warning Signs	200+	£4.07	£814.00
250 machine-rounded, tanalised timber posts (100mm x 1.8m)	200+	£5.99	£1,198.00
Total			£2,012.00+vat

Budgets

Budget Codes: 6104 BB General Site Maintenance

Budget Availability: £1,426.00

Committed Spend: £688.46

Budget Code: 6170 BB EMF General Maintenance

Budget Availability: £9,952

Committed Spend: £0

Signature of Officer:

Office Manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk