

TITLE:	Ruscombe Burial Ground
FOR CONSIDERATION BY:	The Executive on 26 January 2017
WARD:	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe
DIRECTOR:	Josie Wragg, Interim Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER:	Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Provision of additional burial space and development of a memorial garden to include scattering areas and memorials to accommodate cremated remains.

Additional burial space for the Borough will alleviate some of the pressure on the burial plot requirements at the two existing WBC Cemeteries, St Sebastian's and Shinfield Cemeteries and offer improved choice to residents as an alternative location.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to give:

- 1) approval to proceed with the acquisition of the freehold title from the Diocese of Oxford consisting of 0.51 acres of land subject to planning permission (as detailed in Part 2 of this report);
- 2) approval to seek planning permission and to develop the land to increase burial and memorial opportunities within the Borough.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Wokingham Borough has a need for more burial and associated memorial space. The Diocese of Oxford is willing to release the land opposite Ruscombe Church for sale to Wokingham Borough Council for this exclusive purpose.

Background

The overall site size is 0.206ha (0.51acres) and the area suitable for graves is 0.157ha (0.387acres). The Environment Agency has indicated that the site is only suitable for single burials due to the high winter water table. However, it is likely that this site could accommodate a maximum of 272 burials in single grave plots.

Analysis of Issues

The site will enable Wokingham Borough Council to maintain its status as a burial authority.

Pre-application planning advice has been obtained which has advised on the necessary reports needed to accompany a formal application for change of use in respect of the site.

The change of use required will include provisions for car parking and a means of enclosure of the site.

There will be no ratable implications in respect of this use.

The purchase and initial development of the site will be funded by S106 contributions already allocated in the capital programme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See Part 2	Yes	Capital (allocated)
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Within existing revenue budgets	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Within existing revenue budgets	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

All new provision will cover its own costs.

Cross-Council Implications

- Maintains status as Burial Authority
- Asset to be added to the Asset database
- Area to be added to the current grounds maintenance contract with ISS.
- No impact on other services other than those noted above.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Certain elements of this report are commercially sensitive.

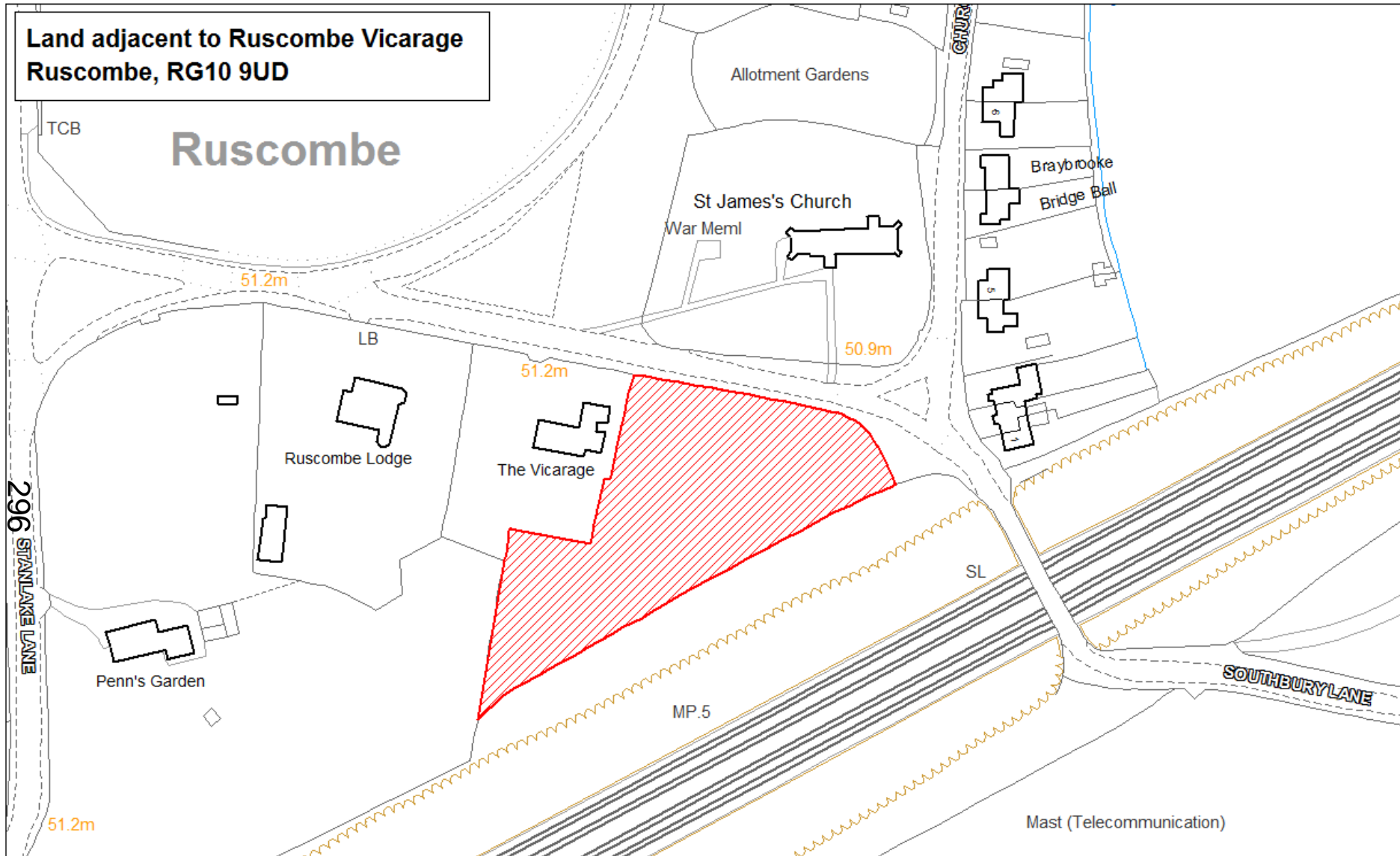
List of Background Papers

All relevant documents included in the Report and Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Site Plan

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Appendix 1 - Site Plan



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