

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

PART 10: CEMETERIES, CHURCHYARDS AND BURIAL GROUNDS

Introduction

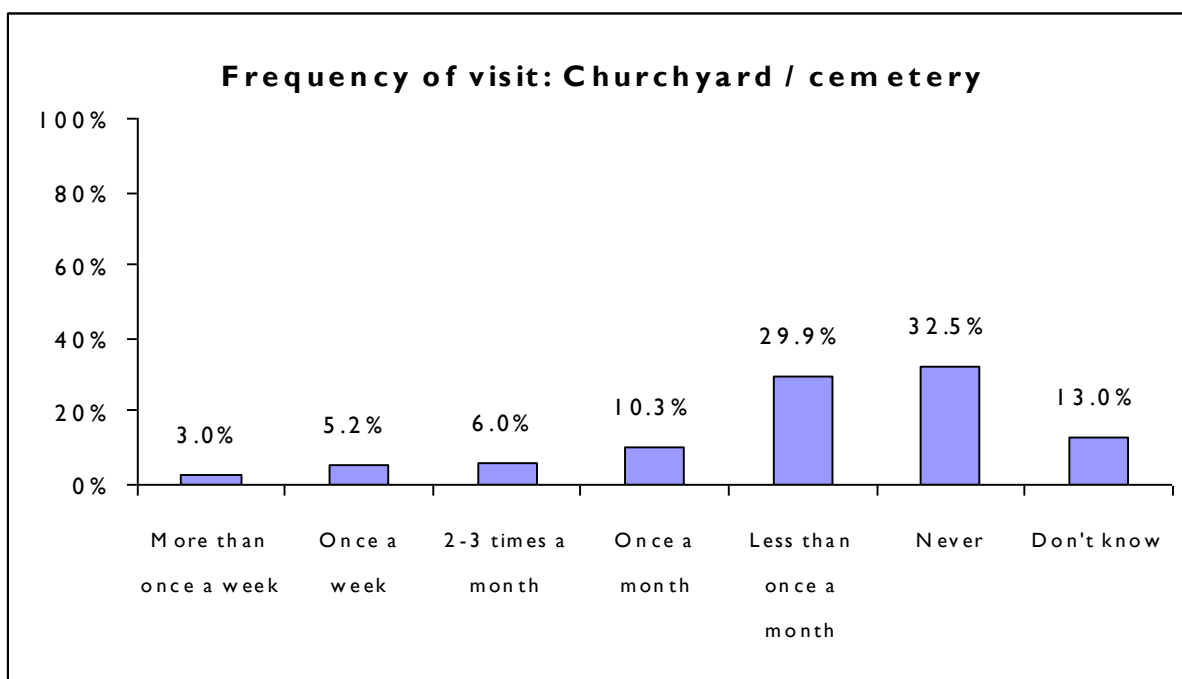
10.1 The typology of cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes areas for 'quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.'

Context

10.2 This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of cemeteries in Malvern Hills District. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision. Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

Usage

Figure 10.1: Frequency of usage of cemeteries/churchyards in the previous 12 months

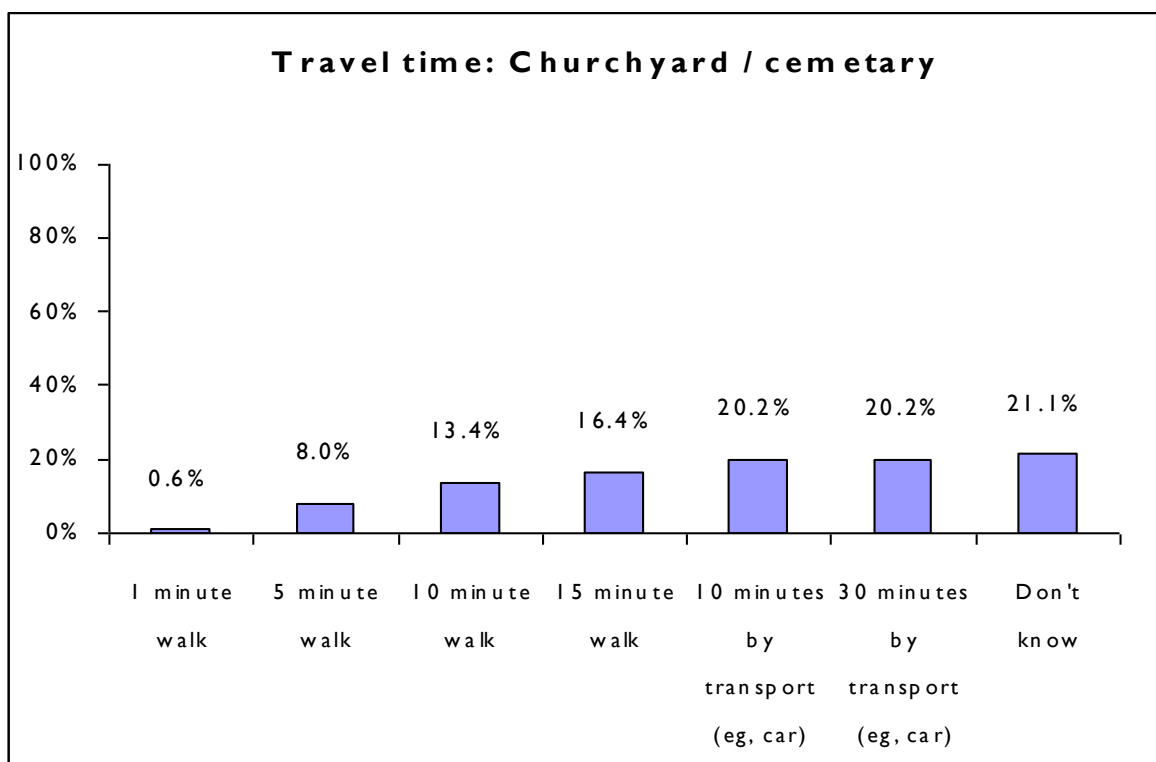


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10.3 Overall, just over half (54.5%) of residents in Malvern Hills District have visited a churchyard or cemetery in the previous 12 months. Reflecting the nature of most visits to this typology, nearly a third (29.9%) visit this typology less than once a month. Usage is slightly higher in Tenbury Town area (58.2%) and the rural areas (57.2%). The proportion that has visited a churchyard/cemetery in the previous 12 months is lowest for young age groups (41.5% for 25 – 34 year olds), increasing to 59.5% amongst 55 – 64 year olds.

Travel time

Figure 10.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a cemetery/churchyard



10.4 The nature and distribution of provision in Malvern Hills District means that residents appear generally to be willing to travel slightly further than for many other typologies. A significant proportion of respondents would be willing to travel up to 30 minutes via the use of transport (40.4%). There is no significant variation by area, age or gender.

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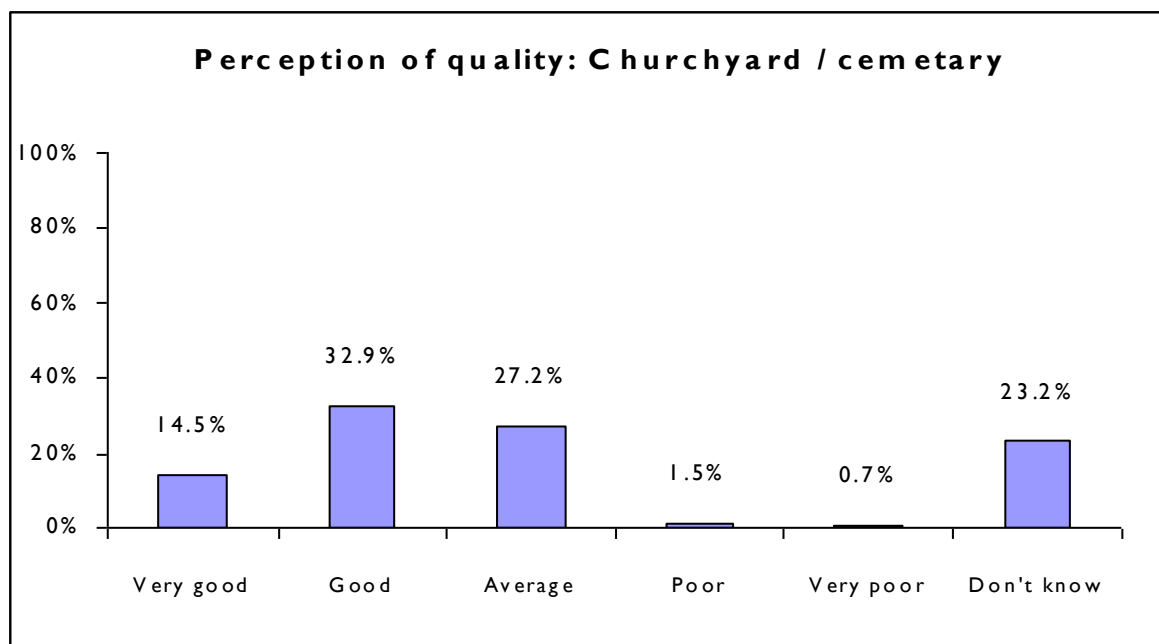
Quality of provision

10.5 Nearly half the respondents view the quality of this typology to be good or very good (47.4%). Only a very small proportion (2.2%) view the quality as poor or very poor. Sizeable proportions rate quality as average (27.2%) or are unable to rate it (23.2%). The proportion rating quality as good or very good is slightly higher in Upton and Hanley areas (50%) and Tenbury Town area (54.4%) than the other areas of the District. There is some variability in the rating of quality by age, for example, over half of 25 – 34 year olds (55%) and 65+ (52.5%) rate it as good or very good, but the figure is lower for 35 – 44 year olds (43.7%) and especially the 45 – 54 age group (38%).

Availability

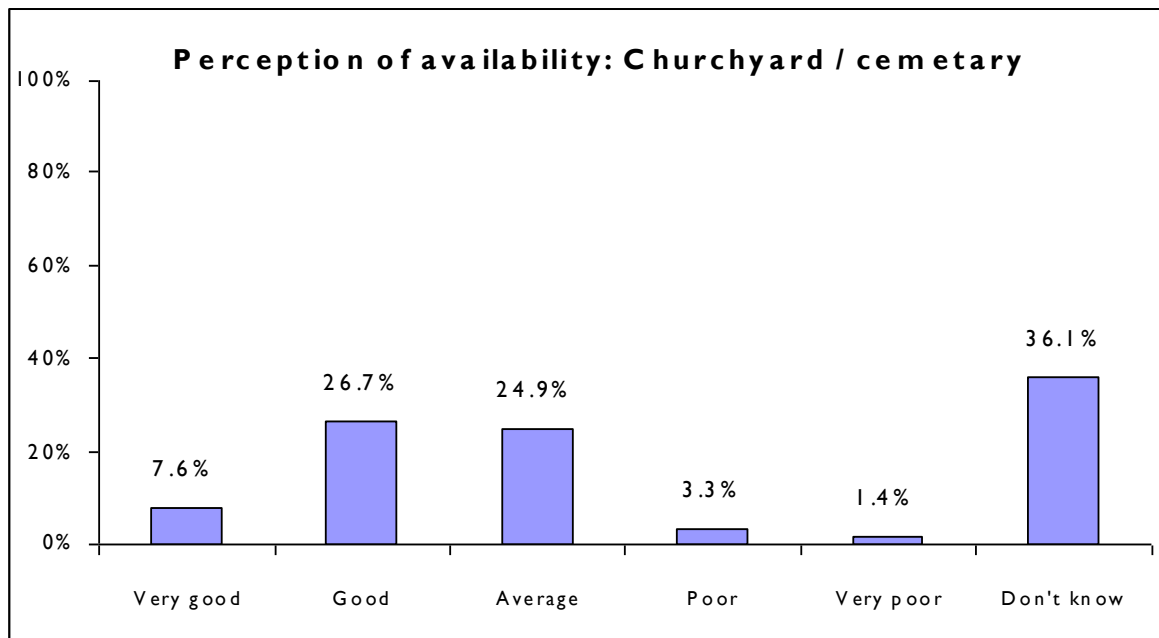
10.6 Residents are much more likely to rate the availability of cemeteries/churchyards as good or very good (34.3%) than rate it as poor or very poor (just 4.7%). A quarter (24.9%) rate it as average and over a third (36.1%) are unable to rate it, reflecting overall usage levels. Availability is rated as lower in the rural areas (26.7% reporting it to be good or very good) than the rest of the District (all around two – fifths). It is, however, very consistent across the age ranges.

Figure 10.3: Quality of provision of cemetery/churchyard



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Figure 10.4: Availability of cemeteries/churchyards



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Key issues

Current provision

10.7 There are nine sites classified under this typology equating to ten¹ hectares of provision in Malvern Hills District. However, only the key sites in each urban area have been identified.

Table 10.1: Distribution of cemeteries sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Cemeteries	
	Number	Size(ha)
Malvern Town area	6	8.93
Rural areas	2	0.52
Tenbury Town area	-	-
Upton and Hanley areas	1	0.67
MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	9	10.14

Accessibility

10.8 The effective catchments of cemeteries has been identified using data from the household survey (see Figure 10.3) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)¹. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- ❑ District-wide significance (Area more than 10ha) – 3,200 metres.
- ❑ Settlement significance (Area between 1ha and 10ha) – 1,800 metres.
- ❑ Neighbourhood significance (Area between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 1,200 metres.
- ❑ Local significance (Area up to 0.66ha) – 240 metres.

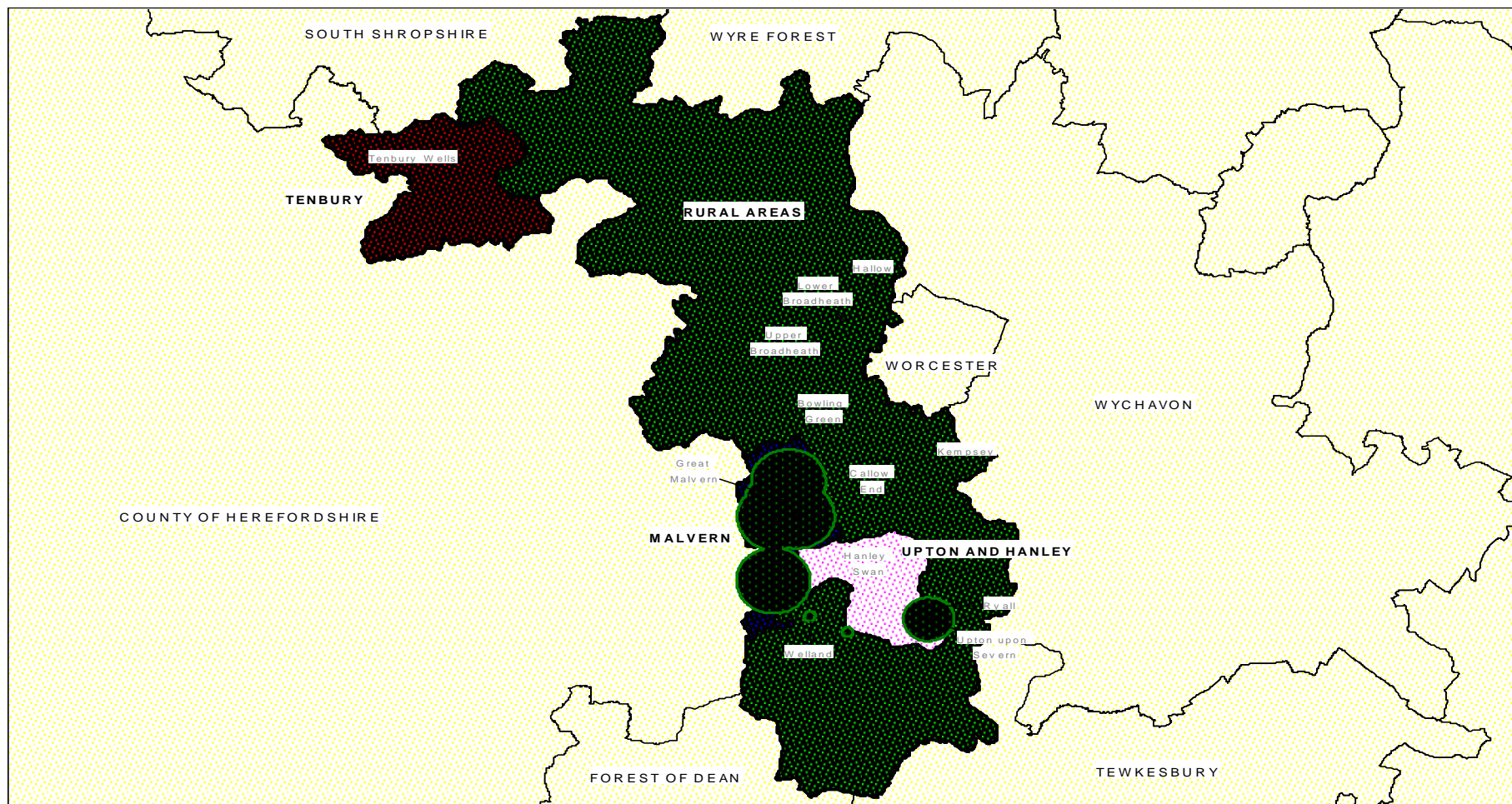
¹ Figures rounded up

¹ Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies



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Figure 10.5: Cemeteries sites mapped against settlement areas with catchment applied



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Settlement hierarchy

- 10.9 Catchment mapping, based on all current provision, shows catchment gaps in the Tenbury and Rural Area analysis areas. Tenbury analysis area contains no cemetery provision and the Rural Area analysis area contains two small sites, Welland Court, off Drake Street, Welland and Marl Bank Cemetery, Marlbank Road, Welland. However, it is not considered appropriate to cover all of these catchment gaps through new provision of this typology because of its nature. Therefore, no minimum provision in terms of the settlement hierarchy is identified.
- 10.10 Officer consultation identifies that an extension of Malvern Cemetery is immediately required due to the need for additional burial space. At the current rate of five burials per month, the Cemetery has capacity to last for a further 18 months. Land adjacent to the site, currently Madresfield allotments, offers the ideal opportunity for the extension. However this is at the cost of losing the allotment provision, as discussed in Part 9. Since 12-18 months will be required to clear the land and add the necessary infrastructure MTC has submitted a planning application for the extension.
- 10.11 A similar predicament may be faced by Upton-upon-Severn in coming years. Consultation suggests that burial space capacity at Upton Cemetery will be reached within the next 15 years. The resultant need for expansion will put pressure on the adjoining allotment provision (Rectory Road allotments).

Management

- 10.12 Management and maintenance of the operational cemeteries in the District lies with the relevant town and parish councils e.g. MTC and Upton-upon-Severn Town Council. MHDC undertakes grounds maintenance, including cutting of grass areas, planting and maintenance of shrubs and planting and maintenance of hedges, at the closed cemeteries. Although seven of the sites are assessed as low quality, overall maintenance and cleanliness scores are high for all sites indicating that grounds maintenance is adequate throughout the District, regardless of management.

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Quality

10.13 The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for cemeteries in Malvern Hills District. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 10.2: Quality scores for cemeteries sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Malvern Town area	153	30%	51%	64%	34%	4	2
Rural areas	153	27%	33%	39%	13%	2	-
Tenbury Town area	153	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upton and Hanley areas	153	55%	55%	55%	-	1	-
MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	153	27%	47%	64%	37%	7	2

10.14 There is some considerable variation in the mean quality scores across the analysis areas (from 33% to 55%), none of which lie above the threshold. Although only two sites, Priory Churchyard and Malvern Cemetery, are assessed as high quality consultation does not identify any concerns regarding the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in the District.

10.15 Priory Churchyard is centrally located in Great Malvern Town Centre. Consultation identifies that the location and high quality of the site results in it being highly used as an amenity with many residents and town centre workers using the open space for sitting to have lunch in the summer.

10.16 Malvern Wells Cemetery is assessed as low quality. However, consultation identifies that, with the assistance of a local environment group, a planting scheme is currently being undertaken to enhance the visual appearance of the site. This was also recognised during the site assessment.

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Value

10.17 The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for cemeteries in Malvern Hills District. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A full list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Part 33.

Table 10.3: Value scores for cemeteries by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Malvern Town area	100	7%	19%	47%	40%	4	2
Rural areas	100	12%	17%	22%	10%	1	1
Tenbury Town area	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upton and Hanley areas	100	48%	48%	48%	-	-	1
MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT	100	7%	22%	48%	41%	5	4

10.18 There is considerable variation in the value scores, ranging from 7% for Trinity Road Churchyard to 48% for Upton Cemetery. Half of the sites score low value and half of the sites high value. A number of the sites have high ecological/biodiversity value, high cultural and heritage value and also high amenity value. This recognises the variety of opportunities that a cemetery can offer.

10.19 There is potential for the value of cemeteries in the District to be recognised through increased educational opportunities and wildlife habitats. Cemeteries can also offer a valuable amenity resource and can be used by local residents for walking and uncovering historical interest. There is a need to encourage this informal use of cemeteries through, for example, the provision of seating areas where it is currently lacking and would be of benefit (St Mathias's Churchyard and Cemetery, Church Road, Malvern Link). Powick Church is a very old church and churchyard with much history, having played a pivotal role in the Battle of Worcester. Interpretation or even signage explaining its background could increase its value to residents and visitors.

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Community involvement

- 10.20 There are currently no community groups actively involved in the management and improvement of cemeteries in Malvern Hills District. The formation of such groups would assist in bringing about improvements throughout the sites and can attract greater external funding opportunities. Consultation identified potential to establish greater community involvement and education at Powick Cemetery to utilise the historical/heritage value the site offers.
- 10.21 Consultation also highlighted potential to encourage more community use through the establishment of wildlife interest in cemeteries.

Summary of site consultation

- 10.22 This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of cemeteries in Malvern Hills District. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality Score	Value Score	Comments
Matthias's Churchyard	52%	22%	The site is a popular cut-through route to access Malvern Link Primary School. Consultation suggests that, although lighting is provided, it is insufficient during the winter months when daylight is limited.
The Priory	64%	12%	Consultation suggests that the view of the churchyard is obscured from Church Street due to the large trees present within the site. To open the church yard and the view of the Priory there is potential to investigate the relocation of the post office depot/sorting office. This is ongoing within MHDC in partnership with the Town Centre Partnership. The site has a lot of potential for greater amenity use. It is popular for lunchtime workers during the summer.
Upton Cemetery	55%	48%	Good site but security needs addressing as it experiences spates of vandalism. To tackle this consultation identifies the need for railings on the low boundary wall to restrict vandal access in the evenings.

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Cemeteries summary

Current provision

- ❑ There are nine sites classified under this typology equating to ten hectares of provision in Malvern Hills. Of these, seven sites are identified as low quality and two as high quality. In terms of value, five sites are identified as low value and four as high value.

Future provision

- ❑ Of the low value sites, the quality and value should be increased at two.

Other issues

- ❑ Burial space is reaching capacity at Malvern Cemetery and the next 15 years will create pressure on burial space in Upton Cemetery leading to the need for cemetery space expansion or the identification of new provision.
- ❑ There are no formal community groups working in cemeteries.