

---

# Burial Strategy Update

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee  
November 2024

# Burial Strategy overview

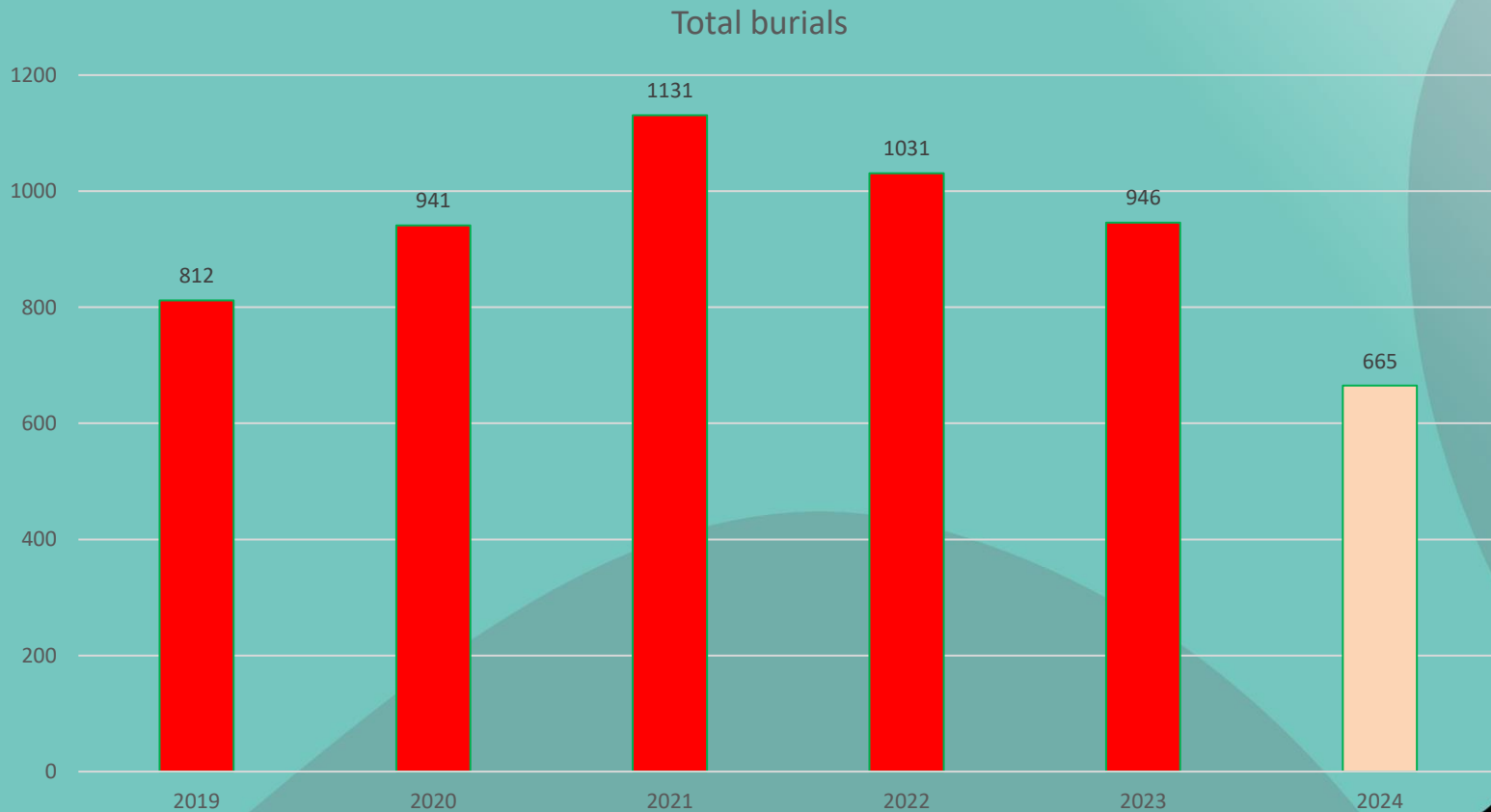
Space demand	Evidence and track existing demand
Muslim burials	Assessment of the uptake of graves and ability of faith groups to provide their own spaces
City growth	Using census data to inform our decision making and future death projections
Future provision	Planning the shape of bereavement services in the future
Policy development	Ensuring our policies are robust and reflective of the needs of Leicester's residents
Sustaining Existing Provision	Ensuring the service remains financially viable and is able to perform into the future, recognising the ongoing demand of the service and private sector provision

# Background

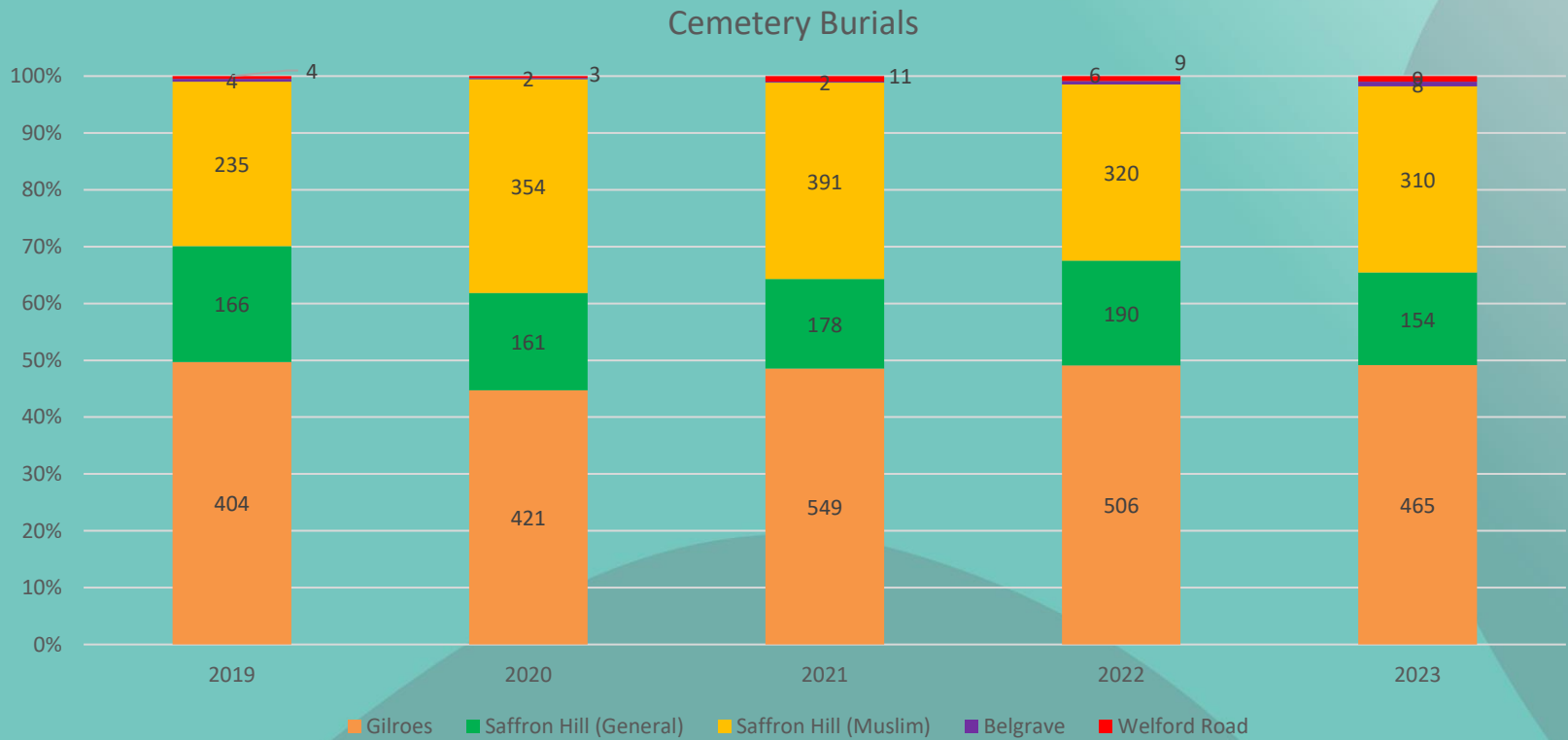
---

- No statutory duty on local authorities to provide burial space
- Four cemeteries with approximately half a million burials
- Providing burials for 175 years but almost 100 years since the last cemetery was opened to serve the city
- Based on current burial rates and availability of new graves, the remaining burial space in our cemeteries is projected to reach capacity around 2030/31
- In the UK, 20% of deaths result in a burial, however In Leicester there is a higher demand for burials (35%) due to the city's population
- Bereavement Services provided 946 burials & 1,688 cremations in 2023

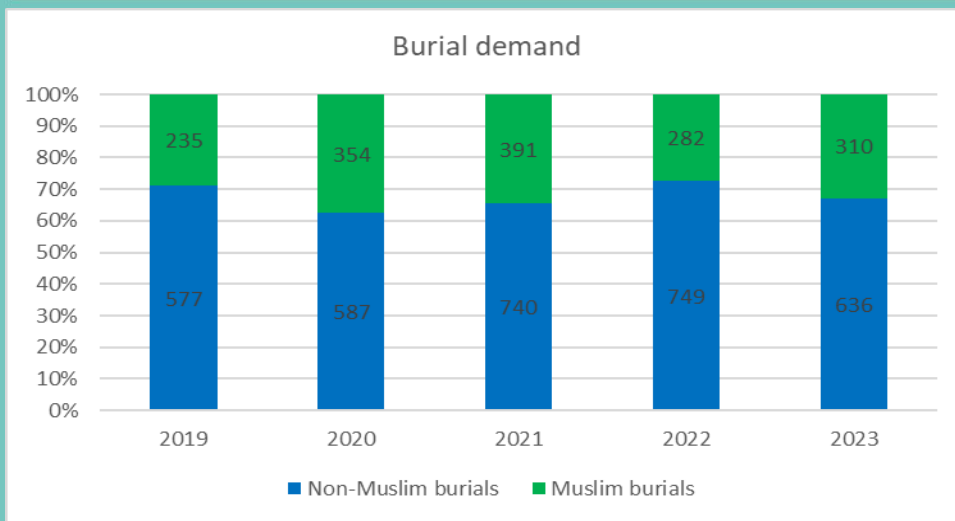
# Number of burials



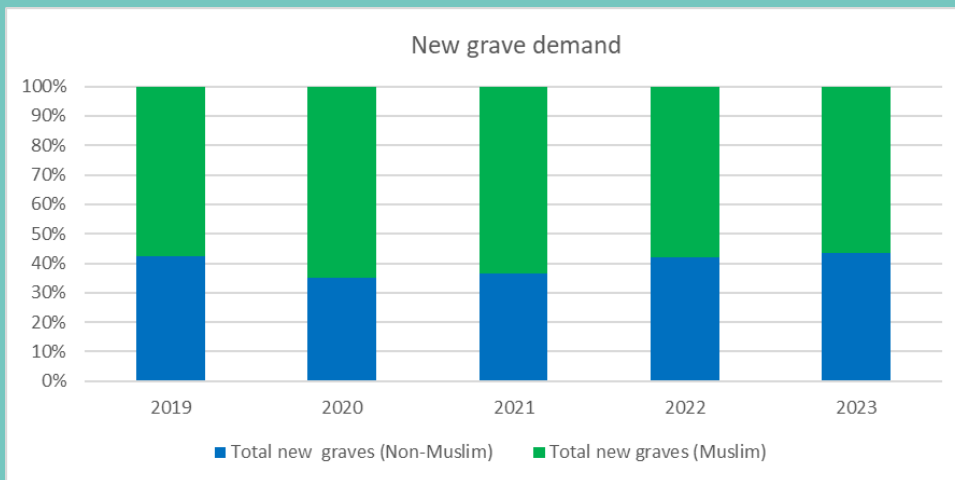
# Burial locations



# Demand for burials & new graves



- Demand for Muslim burials is on average 30% - 35% of all burials per year



- Demand for new graves for Muslim burials is on average 60% - 65% of all new graves per year

# Saffron Hill Cemetery



The map is reproduced from 'Saffron Hill' Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction is illegal. Crown copyright and any right reserved by its proprietor(s). Leicester City Council 16/01/2014 (2018)

SAFFRON HILL CEMETERY - SECTION MAP

Date: 16/04/18  
Scale: 1 : 1 850  
Paper Size: A3  
By: CM

Leicester City Council  
Neighbourhood & Environmental  
Services  
Standards & Development



Leicester  
City Council

Section redesignated for Muslim burials

# Future burial space

---

- Need to find a solution by the end of 2026 to allow time for development by 2030/31
- Limited land availability within the city makes finding a suitable location challenging
- Potential sites need to consider:
  - Site availability
  - Local Plan commitments
  - Planning constraints
  - Planning permission
  - Environment Agency restrictions
  - Environmental permit to operate
  - Accessibility
  - Climate change
  - Costs



# Gilroes Cemetery improvements

Consultants commissioned to resolve ongoing problems experienced by cemetery visitors within the cemetery extension:

- i. Poor traffic circulation around the site
- i. No designated car parking provision
- ii. Poor drainage



# Improvement works

---

- Proposed works:
  - Install new parking bays
  - Construct new road circuit
  - Undertake drainage improvement works
- Benefits:
  - i. New car parking provision will stop cars parking on grass or obstructing funeral services and visitors
  - ii. Creates a one-way traffic flow to improve traffic circulation and stop cars driving on the grass to pass other vehicles to prevent damaging the grounds and graves
  - iii. Improve drainage efficiency and maintenance to mitigate climate change and wetter weather conditions
- Project costs & timetable:
  - i. £675,000
  - ii. Development works from Sept 2024
  - iii. Construction works April 2025 – August 2025

# Legislation changes in 2024

---

- Biggest change to death certification in over 50 years commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024
- All deaths (except stillborn babies) are now scrutinised either by a Coroner or a Medical Examiner
- Bereaved families will be able to speak with a Medical Examiner/Officer and express any concerns they have about a death
- Burials now scrutinised the same way as cremations

# Review of burial & cremation legislation

---

- There is recognition that the complex laws which govern how we deal with the bodies of the deceased are out date and not fit for purpose.
- It is also recognised that burial space is running out across England & Wales, with the situation worse in some urban areas.
- The Law Commission of England & Wales is carrying out a project called Burial, Cremation and New Funerary Methods. Because the issues involved are so broad, the project has been split into three parts:
  - 1) Burial and Cremation
  - 2) New Funerary Methods
  - 3) Rights and Obligations in Relation to Funerals, Funerary Methods and Remains

# Law Commission

## Burial & Cremation consultation

---

- Public consultation runs for 14 weeks until 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- The consultation paper contains provisional proposals for reform on a number of issues:
  - the regulation of burial grounds
  - grave reuse and reclamation
  - closed and disused burial grounds
  - exhumation
  - the rights granted to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission
  - cremation law
  - uncollected ashes at Funeral Directors' premises



# Law Commission consultation

---

- The full Consultation Paper is available on our website at: <https://lawcom.gov.uk/project/burial-and-cremation/>. The deadline for responses is 9 January 2025.
- Responses to the consultation may be submitted using the online form available at the link above. If possible, please use this method.
- Alternatively, comments may be sent:
  - by email to [bcnfm@lawcommission.gov.uk](mailto:bcnfm@lawcommission.gov.uk); or
  - by post to  
Burial and Cremation Team  
Law Commission  
1st Floor, Tower  
52 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1H 9AG