

## Cemetery Chapel Consultation FAQs

**Q: Does the Parish Council (PC) own the chapel ?**

A: Yes, the chapel and the area to the South and East of it, including the War Memorial, belongs to the PC as ‘common land’ – which means that it can’t be sold. The rest of the cemetery belongs to Durham County Council (DCC).

**Q: What is the chapel used for at present ?**

A: The chapel is not currently used for anything (apart from temporary storage sometimes) and has not been used for anything for many years.

**Q: Is it consecrated ground ?**

A: No, the area owned by the PC, including the chapel and war memorial, is not consecrated. The area owned by DCC is.

**Q: What condition is the chapel in ?**

A: The chapel is in very poor condition inside and out. If nothing else is done we will probably have to put up temporary security fencing before next winter to prevent access as some parts (in particular the chimney) are in danger of falling.

**Q: Is the chapel a listed building, or protected in any other way ?**

A: No, the chapel is not a listed building and is not under any sort of protection. (The adjacent war memorial is a grade 2 listed structure, however).

**Q: Could the chapel be described as of historic significance ?**

A: Whilst it has existed in one form or another for well over a century, the chapel is not of any historic significance. No noteworthy events have taken place there that the PC is aware of and there is nothing architecturally unique about it. In recent times the replacement of the original windows and door with modern uPVC items has contributed to a rather odd façade which visitors have commented upon – in fact it has been described on more than one occasion as an eyesore.

**Q: Can DCC not take it over ?**

A: The PC has approached DCC to ask them to take over ownership of (and therefore responsibility for) the area currently owned by the PC, including the chapel. We have been firmly rebuffed !

**Q: What are the remaining options from here ?**

If we discount the ‘leave it to further decay’ option then there are two remaining alternatives:

- a) **Refurbish it.** This option would cost several thousand pounds and we would then be faced with the problem of what to use it for, given that its location in a cemetery limits the uses to which it could be put. In addition there would be ongoing maintenance costs which

council tax payers in Woodland would have to pay for.

- b) **Demolish it.** This is the option currently favoured by the PC. We would envisage a garden of remembrance taking its place, with bench seating, flowerbeds, bins and places to leave flowers and to provide water for Memorial vases.

**Q: Where will the money come from to refurbish or demolish it ?**

A: Both refurbishment and demolition are likely cost in excess of ten thousand pounds. The PC does not have sufficient funds for either, so we would have to look for grant funding from elsewhere, such as the National Lottery.

**Q: Would permission be required to demolish it ?**

A: We anticipate that permission would be required from DCC to demolish. However, we don't anticipate that this would be withheld, particularly as – so we are told – DCC is itself processing the eventual demolition of a number of buildings in cemeteries and graveyards in order to save money that would be required for upkeep.

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