



BARKER
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JEWISH BURIAL GROUNDS: UNDERSTANDING VALUES

Barker Langham on behalf of Historic England

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I. INTRODUCTION

The cemetery is a meeting place not only between the dead and the living but also of ideas – of spiritual, emotional, and aesthetic trends and conceptions. The outcome of this gathering is a whirlpool, the result of the combination of utterly different ideas stemming from diverse sources, yet influencing and shaping the visitor's world, who in each tour of the cemetery takes a trip to his or her future.

Professor Avriel Bar Levav, 2002

As the above quote from Professor Avriel Bar Levav of the Open University of Israel makes clear, cemeteries and burial grounds are highly complex spaces. At one level, such sites are of course hugely important for individuals and families, acting as deeply personal places of remembrance. At the same time, cemeteries can assume a wider significance for specific communities, who often value such spaces for their broader 'place-making' and 'place-marking' qualities (CABE 2007: 2). In this sense they are a vital component of the built environment, carrying especial interest not just for their aesthetic or architectural importance, but for the affective connection they provide between past and present, living and dead. This quality is strengthened by the fact cemeteries frequently (though certainly not always) escape the destruction that befalls much of the historic environment. They are thus liable to endure beyond the presence of the communities who established them, with their significance shifting accordingly. With this in mind, the protection and management of cemeteries demands great sensitivity; a position made all the more pronounced in a multicultural society (ibid: 4).

The present study looks to address these issues with specific reference to Jewish burial grounds. This work originally formed part of Historic England's **National Heritage Protection Activity 4D2** (now continuing under new corporate plan), which sets out the way in which churchyards, cemeteries and burial grounds across the country will be protected over coming years. This Activity recognises that burial grounds and cemeteries are extremely important as resting places for physical remains (considered sacred in Jewish thinking) and as 'places of memory for individuals and communities', but that their lack of direct economic value increases the risk of neglect and puts sites under significant pressure from development (especially in urban areas). As the Activity Description notes, cemeteries

'are usually important locally or to specific communities, and sometimes have national significance. They contain a variety of personal and cultural values and can have widely different characters. They are often green open spaces, attractive places, with important architecture, monuments or layout. Large-scale urban redevelopment can affect 'lost' and hidden burial grounds. Where archaeologists have investigated them, they have increased our knowledge of the past. However, the public response to such development can show the strength of feeling many of us have about the need to protect this fragile and often highly personal aspect of our past.'¹

Building on this complex appreciation, this document focuses on the diverse community values that may surround Jewish cemeteries. The main body of the report is given over to direct quotes gathered from key individuals and community spokespeople at two consultation seminars in London and Manchester. These quotes demonstrate the broad spectrum of attitudes towards the protection and management of cemeteries present across UK Jewry, and the multifaceted values such sites may elicit. Indeed, from the outset this consultation has sought to emphasise that there will be no single and clearly defined 'Jewish' set of values associated with burial grounds, as variations in customs and regulations shape the way different congregations engage with and care for these sites.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/research-results/activities/4d2>

To help contextualise these findings, a brief introduction to death and burial in Judaism is given in Chapter 2, alongside an overview of cemetery sites and other Jewish heritage in England. A more detailed description of the methodology used in this study and a full list of individuals consulted is provided in Chapter 3, with quotes structured around key themes making up the bulk of the study in Chapter 4. Case studies from across the UK suggest definite strategies for building on this research in Chapter 5, while Chapter 6 provides an action plan for moving forward in terms of further stakeholder engagement, funding and enhanced protection. Ultimately, then, this work provides a solid foundation from which to galvanise support for Jewish cemeteries, and instigate a more nuanced approach to safeguarding such sites across England.

1.1. Aims and Research Questions

The aims of this research can be summarised as follows:

- To understand the heterogeneous values associated with Jewish burial grounds amongst the diverse communities that make up British Judaism
- To contribute to Historic England's internal project on the 'Assessment and Protection of Jewish Cemeteries', which aims to enhance the protection of Jewish cemeteries in England through designation, local listing and the enhancement of Historic Environment Records
- To set the protection of Jewish cemeteries within the wider context of UK Judaism, as a means of identifying behaviours expected of those visiting and working in burial grounds
- To fully involve appropriate communities in the future management of Jewish burial grounds
- To suggest new strategies for the management of historic Jewish cemeteries, based on best practice from across the UK
- To develop community focused methods for countering the threats facing Jewish cemeteries, especially vandalism and poor maintenance
- To ensure that Jewish burial grounds are preserved as vital components of the historic landscape, not just from an aesthetic or material perspective, but as a resource for genealogical research and a means of understanding the stories of community migration into and across the UK
- Where possible, to ensure that respect is shown and no offence caused in pursuing future research or assessment.

These aims give rise to a series of key research questions:

- What place do burial grounds hold in Judaism, and how does this differ from other religious and cultural communities?
- What are the key Jewish legal considerations that need to be understood in the management of burial grounds?
- What are the main threats faced by Jewish communities in protecting their cemeteries?
- What are the values that individuals and Jewish groups have towards their cemeteries?
- How are these values manifest in and around burial grounds, and what are the implications of this for any future protection and management initiatives?
- What are the key organisations that should be included moving forward with any such initiatives, and what are the best methods of engagement for Historic England and other stakeholders?

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Death and Burial in Judaism

Death is the crisis of life. How a person handles death indicates a great deal about how he approaches life. As there is a **Jewish** way of life, so there is a **Jewish** way of death.

Maurice Lamm, 1999

A central tenet of Judaism is that the body is a gift of G-d – indeed, that it belongs to G-d (Lamm 1999: 242). This belief structures the careful consideration given to the dead in Judaism, with **halakhah** (Jewish law) requiring that, whenever possible, burial takes place within 24 hours after death. Two important steps precede the burial:

1. **Taharah** (purification) – a ritual cleansing process in which the body is cleaned and groomed, and water ritually poured over it.
2. **Levayah** (the funeral) – friends and family accompany the body to its resting place in a show of respect for the deceased.

Every Jewish community has a **Chevre Kadisha** (holy friends) society to whom the preparation and internment of the body is entrusted. This society is committed to ensuring that every Jew who dies is accorded a proper burial, at no cost to the individual. Participation in the society is voluntary and is considered one of the most important obligations a Jew can fulfill (Menachemson 2007: 202). According to **halakhah**, a Jew should be buried among Jews, with the body in its entirety returned to the earth in a way that allows for natural decomposition to occur. Although Jews do not place great emphasis on the afterlife, the eventual Resurrection of the Dead is a basic doctrine of the faith. As a consequence, the integrity of the body must be respected and preserved throughout the burial process, with strict rules against embalming, display, autopsy or cremation.²

Following internment, Jewish law also has strict dictates with regards the mourning process and subsequent remembrance of the dead. There are five stages to mourning:

- **Aninut**, pre-burial mourning
- **Shivah**, a seven-day period following the burial; within the Shivah, the first three days are characterised by a more intense degree of mourning
- **Shloshim**, the 30-day mourning period
- The First Year (observed only by the children of the deceased).

Looking further ahead, Jewish tradition ‘insists that the dead not be forgotten, lost in the busyness of the here and now’ (Lamm 1999: 187), but that excessive grave visitation should be discouraged. As Lamm notes, ‘The rabbis were apprehensive that frequent visitations to the cemetery might become a pattern of living rather than foster closure, thus preventing the bereaved from placing the death in proper perspective. They wanted to prevent making the grave a sort of totem at which the mourner would pray to the dead, rather than to G-d, and thereby violate one of the cardinal principles of Judaism: that G-d is One and that there are no intermediaries between a Jew and his G-d’ (ibid: 193). For this reason, certain times of the year or moments of life are considered more appropriate for visiting cemeteries. These include days of personal calamity or decisive incidents, but also official points in the Jewish calendar: ‘on the **yahrzeit**; on the concluding day of **shivah** and **shloshim**; on fast days, such as Tishah be-Av; before the High Holy Days; and on **erev** (the eve of) Rosh Chodesh, the day prior to the first days of the month, especially Nisan and Elul’ (ibid: 194). As Lamm concludes, ‘there is no rule of thumb as to the annual frequency of such visitation, excepting

² Some progressive Jewish communities do now offer the option of cremation, although strictly speaking this is against **halakhah**

that people should avoid the extremes of constant visitation on the one hand, and of complete disregard on the other' (ibid).

Ultimately, the strict rules governing burial and mourning in Judaism can be seen to specify the time and quality of 'legitimate grief', limiting the connection between the living and the dead (Bar Levav 2002: 19). By the same token, the cemetery 'has its rightful place, but nothing further' (ibid). This place is simultaneously marginal yet central, with burial grounds understood to be a fundamental aspect of community life, yet to some extent estranged from those very same communities. Jews for instance consider the dead to be impure, and this sense of impurity leads to the physical distancing of cemeteries from their associated communities (ibid: 18). Unlike churchyards, Jewish burial grounds are therefore rarely located next to a synagogue, although the establishment of these two sacred spaces often goes hand-in-hand. The humble character of Jewish tombstones also marks out a key difference from Christian cemeteries. As Menachemson writes,

'The desire to create modest tombstones is motivated by tradition. Proverbs 22:2 holds that [in death] 'the rich and the poor meet together'. This belief is strengthened by an ancient rabbi, Simeon ben Gamaleil [c10BC – 70AD], who explains in Talmud Bereishit Rabbah 82:10 that 'we need not erect monuments for the righteous; their accomplishments are their memorials' (Menachemson 2007: 2-3)

Nevertheless, Jewish cemeteries have an important role to play in remembrance. In Hebrew, a burial ground may be referred to by several names: **Bet Kevarot** 'house of graves', **Bet Hayim** 'house of life' or **Bet Olam** 'house of eternity' (Kadish 2011: 59). As these names imply, the cemetery carries many values and layers of significance, not least remembering the dead, an act which 'carries moral implications for the behaviours of the person engaged in remembering' (Bar Levav 2002: 34). Cemetery visits constitute one of the main routes to remembrance, particularly as *memento mori* and other reminders of death are less common in Jewish culture than in other faiths. The cemetery thus functions as a setting to inspire the 'necessary atmosphere' for remembrance and shape the visitors mood (ibid). As Bar Levav continues,

'The cemetery setting is not necessarily beautiful and aesthetic, but rather moral. The tombs might be aesthetic, both in their form and the content of their epitaphs, but it is only in the modern period that some artistic effort was devoted to the Jewish cemetery as a whole. The atmosphere of neglect found in some Jewish cemeteries also reflects the marginality of death and the cemetery in the larger framework of Jewish culture. It is the place one goes to in order to achieve a sense of *hishtavut*, equanimity, in which one accepts praise and condemnation with the same spiritual calm, as a place not only of *memento mori* but of *mors* itself' (ibid).

Crucial to *halakhah* is the proscription against the disturbance of human remains for any reason (including archaeological investigation and redevelopment), with the presumption being that Jewish cemeteries will remain cemeteries in perpetuity, even after closure (CABE 2007: 4). This sense of the continued holiness of a Jewish cemetery also shapes accepted behaviours at such sites. Because graves are places from which no benefit may be derived, Jews (and others) are restricted from lounging in the burial ground (Lamm 1999: 71). This is in stark contrast to the Christian and secular perception of cemeteries as recreational spaces, or at least areas of peaceful respite from the modern world. Moreover, while a minority of Orthodox congregations and those belonging to the Reform and Liberal movements may take a more relaxed attitude, the Orthodox view is that men should wear a head covering and long-sleeved shirts and trousers, not shorts. Married women should cover their heads and wear tops that have long sleeves and skirts with hems below the knee. A sense of decorum is expected from everyone, to show respect for the dead:

- It is forbidden to eat, drink or smoke inside a Jewish burial ground
- Photography is forbidden on Shabbat [the Jewish Sabbath]
- It is forbidden to walk over or step on any grave
- It is the custom amongst Jews to wash their hands on leaving a cemetery.

The tension between what Bar Levav (2002; 2014) has called the centrality and marginality of death and the dead in Judaism underpins many of the problems currently facing Jewish burial grounds in England. Death in Judaism is marginal in time, with mourning restricted to a certain period, and it is also marginal in space, with the dead placed in cemeteries which are almost always isolated (Bar Levav 2014: 6). At the same time, however, these sites serve as a focal point for identity, offering a vital link between the living and the dead at the level of the individual and the community (Bar Levav 2002: 46). The cemetery is thus central to Jewish culture, yet in practice marginal to everyday life. Coupled with religious laws surrounding the proper place of cemeteries, this contradiction can lead inadvertently to sites seeming neglected and 'unloved', which in turn exacerbates the risk of vandalism and development.

2.2. Jewish Burial Grounds and their Associated Communities in England

The individual, even in death, is not separated from the society in which he lived.

Maurice Lamm, 1999

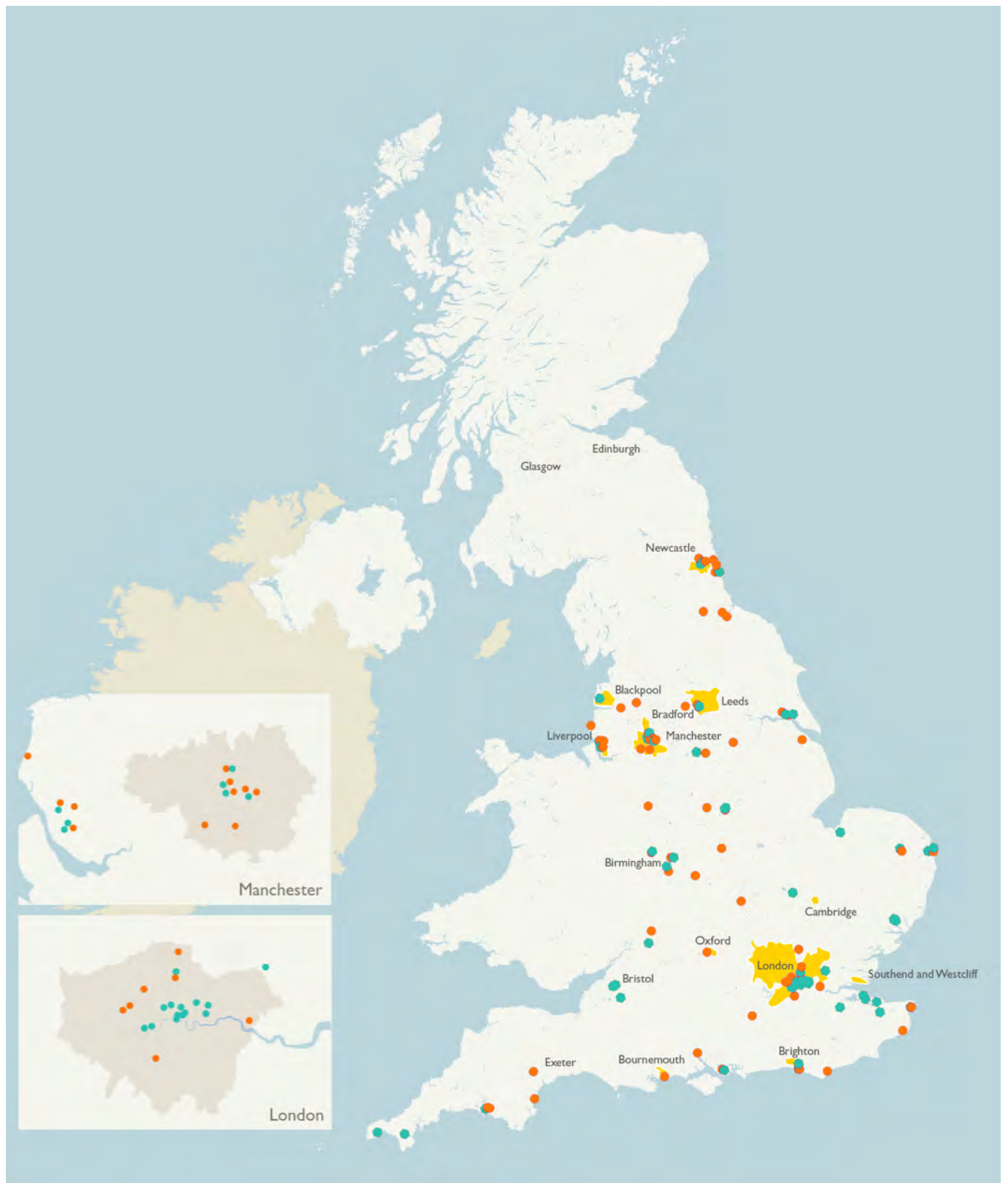
Jews first emerged as a significant presence in England after the Norman conquest of 1066. By the middle of the 12th century, Jews could be found in most major cities, although the only permitted Jewish cemetery – established in 1068 – was in London. This meant that corpses had to be transported by wagon to Jewin Crescent (Cripplegate) in the City for burial, although after about a further one hundred years Jews could bury their dead elsewhere. In 1290, Edward I expelled all Jews from England – the culmination of over 200 years of persecution. This banishment remained in place until 1656, when Oliver Cromwell permitted their return. The initial congregation following resettlement consisted of Sephardi Jews who came essentially either directly from Spain and Portugal or indirectly via the Netherlands and the West Indies. Their congregation subsequently became known as the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation. They founded a cemetery in February 1657 at Mile End; this became known as the Velho (Old) Cemetery. In the meantime, Ashkenazim Jews began to arrive, mainly from Holland and Germany, and although at first they used the Sephardi cemetery they soon established their own burial ground adjoining the Velho. This latter site was extended by an additional four and a half acres in 1849, by which point tens of thousands of Jews could be found in this area of London, with further small communities across the country.

Between 1880 and 1914 the Jewish population of England increased from 65,000 to 300,000, largely as a result of immigration from Russia and Eastern Europe. It reached a peak of about 450,000 in the 1950s. As one commentator wrote in 1970, the most significant trend of the post war years was the migration of Jewish populations from urban central areas to new suburban districts, and the settlement of families in a more scattered fashion among predominantly non-Jewish communities.³

In the 2011 census, 263,346 people in Britain described themselves as Jewish. This population, already much decreased from its post-war peak, has been consolidated in key urban areas in recent years. Around two-thirds of the Jewish population lives in Greater London and contiguous areas of South Hertfordshire and South-West Essex. Outside of this population, significant Jewish communities can be found in Greater Manchester, Leeds, Gateshead and Liverpool, with smaller congregations distributed across the country (See below map).

Despite these declining numbers, Anglo-Jewry represents the oldest non-Christian minority in Britain (Kadish 2006: xiii). Jewish cemeteries therefore occupy an important place in the wider historic environment, speaking to the continued presence of Jewish communities in Britain since the seventeenth century and – in the case of archaeological sites such as Cripplegate – documenting the pre-expulsion history of UK Jewry. As material traces, Jewish burial grounds represent a significant feature of our national cultural heritage, but they remain largely closed spaces, literally and symbolically, with many locked and only accessible for interment ceremonies, or by prior arrangement (CABE 2007: 6). This isolation carries benefits and drawbacks, not least around the vandalism such seclusion protects against, or makes possible.

³ http://www.hist-chron.com/eu/GB/EnclJud_juden-in-England07-1948-1970-ENGL.html



Jewish cemeteries and present day communities.

The main Jewish communities in England are shown in yellow, with disused cemeteries highlighted in green, and in-use cemeteries in orange. This map highlights the number of 'orphaned' cemeteries across the country, i.e. those burial grounds that are no longer cared for by a nearby Jewish community.

Distribution of UK Jewish population by congregation

Central Orthodox	54.7%	Consisting of the United Synagogue, the Federation of Synagogues and independent Orthodox synagogues
Reform	19.4%	Movement for Reform Judaism and Westminster Synagogue and Chaim V'Tikvah
Strictly Orthodox	10.9%	Synagogues aligned with the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations and others of a similar ethos
Liberal	8.7%	Liberal Judaism and Belsize Square
Sephardi	3.5%	
Masorti	2.7%	

Source: JPR/Board of Deputies 2010

The Survey of Jewish Built Heritage has identified a total of 131 Jewish burial grounds in England and Wales dating from 1656-1939. In addition, there are a number of dedicated Jewish plots in municipal cemeteries. In terms of current protection, the National Heritage List for England indicates 45 entries for designated assets associated with Jewish cemeteries. As noted in the Project Brief, these encompass 30 listings, 13 Registered Parks and Gardens, and 2 scheduled sites. A précis of some of the key cemeteries or associated items of funerary architecture listed by Historic England is given below. This list does not cover all 45 entries, as many of the sites associated with Jewish heritage are not highlighted as such in the listing descriptions. The difficulty in identifying relevant sites through the list is one area that should be addressed by Historic England as a matter of urgency.

Location	Short Description	Grade
Bath and North East Somerset	Jew's Cemetery, Walls and Ohel, Greendown Place, Combe Down	II
Birmingham	The Ohel, Witton Cemetery Jewish Section, The Ridgeway and Warren Road	II
Birmingham	Granville Street Memorial, with Associated Low Level Wrought Iron Railings, Witton Old Jewish Cemetery, The Ridgeway	II
Falmouth, Cornwall	Two Headstones: To Isaac Ben Benjamin and to Alexander Moses, in south of Jewish Cemetery	II
Falmouth, Cornwall	Jews and Congregationalist Cemeteries at Ponsharden	II
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	Walls Enclosing Jewish Cemetery, Stonegate Street	II
Liverpool	Jewish Cemetery Screen with Front Railings, Deane Road	II
Newham, London	Rothschild Mausoleum, Jewish Cemetery	II
Penzance, Cornwall	The Boundary Walls with the Remains of the Bet Torah and 14 Monuments at the Jewish Cemetery in Penzance, Leskinnick Terrace	II

Ramsgate, Kent	Prayer Hall and Section of Attached Cemetery Wall to Ramsgate Jewish Cemetery, Dumpton Park Road	II
Ramsgate, Kent	Mausoleum of Sir Moses and Lady Judith Montefiore	II*
Southampton	Jewish Mortuary Chapel at Southampton Old Cemetery	II
The City of Brighton and Hove	Jewish Cemetery Chapel, Florence Place	II
The City of Brighton and Hove	Jewish Cemetery Gates and Walls, Florence Place	II
The City of Brighton and Hove	Lamp Post outside Jewish Cemetery, Florence Place	II
The City of Brighton and Hove	The Hanbury Arms Public House The Sassoon Mausoleum, Paston Place	II
Tower Hamlets, London	Jewish Cemetery, Alderney Road E1	II
Tower Hamlets, London	South East and South West Boundary Walls to Jewish Burial Ground, Mile End Road	II
Tower Hamlets, London	Tablet in North Wall of Portuguese Jewish Burial Ground, Mile End Road	II
Tower Hamlets, London	Velho Cemetery of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Congregation of London, Mile End Road	II
Tower Hamlets, London	The Novo Cemetery, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road	II

As the above overview of death and burial in Judaism makes clear, Jewish cemeteries have traditionally been established at some remove from the communities they served, and this is no different in the context of English Jewry. As these communities shifted and migrated across the country, their associated burial grounds were often left with no local faith-based presence to care for them. This has led to the emergence of so-called 'orphaned' burial grounds, i.e. sites that can seem abandoned and neglected because the communities that established them no longer represent a significant presence in the local area. How best to confront the issue of orphaned cemeteries surfaced as a key point of discussion throughout this consultation exercise.

One of the main points here is that the 'abandonment' of burial grounds exacerbates the natural age-based deterioration that affects most cemeteries, and this has reached a critical level for the many Jewish burial grounds that were founded in the nineteenth century. Jewish Heritage UK has designated a number of sites as 'At Risk' largely as a result of this neglect, with memorials and other structures exposed to environmental threats, including erosion, vegetation and poor drainage. The issue of ownership and the responsibility for managing such neglected burial grounds also formed an important element of our consultation.

Given the vital role present Jewish communities can play in the protection of historic cemeteries, it is worth mentioning here the make-up of Burial Societies across the country. As Bar Levav notes, 'Burial Societies are mentioned in general terms in the Jerusalem Talmud, but the first substantial testimonies to their existence are known to us from Spain. Until the sixteenth century, Jewish burials were conducted, in an unorganised fashion, by members of the community. The sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries witnessed the development of the *Chevra Kadisha*, the burial society, that attended to the burial of the dead, and became a central society among the many societies in this period' (2014: 12). Within the UK, these organisations assume an important role in the management of operational and disused cemeteries, and there is scope for their involvement in the protection of historic sites to expand.

United Synagogue Burial Society maintains the cemeteries and arranges funerals for members of over 60 congregations, mostly in the vicinity of London. They are not staffed for general queries. The following are United Synagogue cemeteries:

- Alderney Road Cemetery, Stepney, London E.1 (formerly of Great Synagogues) (disused)
- Brady Street Cemetery, Whitechapel, London E.1 (formerly of New and Great Synagogues) (disused)
- Bushey Cemetery, Bushey, Hertfordshire (active)
- East Ham Cemetery, Marlow Road, High Street South, London E.6 (disused)
- Hackney Cemetery, Lauriston Road, London E9: (formerly of Hambro Synagogue) (disused)
- Hoxton Cemetery, Hoxton Street, London N1 (formerly of Hambro Synagogue) (no longer exists)
- Plashet Cemetery, 361 Manor Park High Street North, London E12 (disused)
- Waltham Abbey Cemetery, Skillet Hill (Honey Lane), Waltham Abbey, Essex (active)
- West Ham Cemetery, Buckingham Road, Forest Lane, London E15 (closed)
- Willesden Cemetery, London NW10 (generally full, unless plot reserved)

The United Synagogue Burial Society also holds burial authorisations from 1872 and general burial registers from 1872-1912. In addition, they hold pre-1872 burial registers from the Great Synagogue, Hambro Synagogue and New Synagogue.

The **Federation of Synagogues** operates a Burial Society for members of over 20 congregations, mostly in the vicinity of London. The following are Federation of Synagogue cemeteries:

- Edmonton Cemetery, Montagu Road, Angel Road, Lower Edmonton, London N18
- Rainham Cemetery, Upminster Road North, Rainham, Essex (active)

The **Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations** (Adath Yisroel) UOHC operates a burial society for approximately 6,000 members of over 50 orthodox and ultra-orthodox congregations, currently all now in London (apart from a yeshiva in Hitchin). The following are cemeteries of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations:

- Carterhatch Lane Cemetery, Enfield (active)
- Silver Street Cemetery, Goffs Oak, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire (active)

The **Jewish Joint Burial Society** also provides a funeral service for its members and affiliated members of a large number of other progressive synagogues (Reform, Liberal and Masorti) in England. Until recently, the Western Cemetery at Cheshunt was the burial ground used by JJBS but, with the acquisition of adjoining land, the Society now carries out Woodland burials and is able to arrange for non-Jewish partners to be buried in an area set aside for this purpose. There is also an area for a lawn cemetery, which has smaller tombstones.

3. METHODOLOGY

Our approach to this project has sought to gather a range of opinions on the protection of cemeteries from across UK Jewry. The consultation focused on two key events, the first held at Queen Mary University of London and the second at Manchester Town Hall. The final attendees at these events are listed below. Individuals from a broad spectrum of stakeholders were present at one or both events, with spiritual, historical, political and administrative bodies represented.

Rabbinic and Synagogue Representatives

Rabbi Herschel Gluck	Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe
Robin Michaelson	Reform Synagogue
Lester Harris	Spanish and Portuguese Congregation
Roger Leon	Spanish and Portuguese Congregation
Thomas Zelmanovits	Federation of Synagogues
Mark Levy	Reform Synagogue
Jack Dunkirk	Reform Synagogue
David Kaplan	United Synagogue

Burial Societies and Cemetery Representatives

Mitzi Kalinsky	Jewish Joint Burial Society
Stanley Coorsh	Sandymount Regeneration Project
Linda Stone	Hoop Lane Cemetery
Denis Salamon	Deane Road Cemetery
Melvyn Hartog	United Synagogue Burial Society
Peter Grant	Deane Road Cemetery
Stephen Wilson	North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust & Manchester and District Council of Synagogues
Brian White	North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust
Stephen Niman	North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust

Representatives of Jewish and Heritage Organisations

Michael Mail	Foundation for Jewish Heritage
Clive Bettington	Jewish East End Celebration Society
Charles Tucker	United Synagogue Archives
Dr. Eva Frojmovic	Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Leeds
Jonny Basger	Community Security Trust
Doreen Berger	Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain
David Jacobs	Jewish Historical Society of England & Working Part on Jewish Monuments in the UK and Ireland
Marcelle Palmer	The Board of Deputies of British Jews
Nigel Grizzard	Leeds Jewish Representative Council
Dr. Sharman Kadish	Jewish Heritage UK
Malcolm Sender	Jewish Historical Society of England
Sheila Gewolb	The Board of Deputies of British Jews

Individuals	
Ken Marks	Scholar of Jewish archaeology
Raphael Langham	Independent historian of British Jewry
Reverend Malcolm Weisman	Minister to small communities
Darren Barker	Nottingham Jewish Community

The consultation sessions began with a brief introduction to the wider project by Eric Langham, followed by two presentations pertinent to the topic of the day. In London, Andrew Abdulezer of Seth Stein Architects and Dr. Caron Lipman of Queen Mary University outlined the history and recent redevelopment of Novo Cemetery, while Stanley Coorsh described community based activities to protect and improve Sandymount Cemetery in Glasgow. In Manchester, the case study of Novo was again presented, followed by an overview of Jewish burial grounds in England by Dr. Sharman Kadish of Jewish Heritage UK. At each event, attendees were then split into two discussion groups of c10 individuals. To encourage inter-communal dialogue, the groups were not divided along any particular congregational or special interest lines, and an agenda was distributed prior to the event to ensure people understood the questions they would be asked. The discussions focused on three core themes:

- **Visits** - How Jewish burial grounds are used and accessed
- **Management** - The care, maintenance and management of Jewish cemeteries. Discussions considerations of Jewish law and the threats currently facing cemeteries
- **Values** - The values and significance ascribed to Jewish burial grounds, ranging from the physical remains to personal and sacred aspects.

Following the discussion sessions, the groups reconvened for a summary of the day where they were able to make final comments. All elements of the consultation were recorded and transcribed by Barker Langham.

As part of the consultation process a separate discussion was held between Historic England and the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe, attended by Rabbi Abraham Ginsberg.

4. CONSULTATION

The following pages provide direct quotes from participants at the London and Manchester consultation events held as part of this study. For ease of reference, the quotes have been separated into five themes: Ownership, Management and Maintenance; Visitation and Access; Shifting Communities; Education; and Intangible Values. As outlined above, these themes resonate with the different layers of significance ascribed to Jewish cemeteries, and there is a clear thread linking the various discussions around the centrality and marginality of burial grounds. How do Jewish cemeteries differ from those of other faiths? How are they used and visited? What should be done with sites that are no longer associated with a particular community? How can Historic England better protect these sacred spaces in a way that ensures they remain relevant to communities today? The following quotes offer some sense of the varied attitudes and opinions that may be encountered in trying to address these issues.

4.1. Ownership, Management and Maintenance

Understanding who owns a cemetery site and who has ultimate responsibility for its management is a vital first step in enacting better protection and maintenance. While small scale initiatives might be undertaken by individuals or community groups to improve the physical fabric of a site, the long term preservation of burial grounds demands a more joined up approach. Ongoing co-operation is key here, with synagogues, burial societies and national bodies (e.g. The Board of Deputies) working alongside heritage organisations and local people to bring about improved care for the historic cemeteries. There are many cases of best practice in this respect (see next section), and while the discussion sessions brought a number of urgent issues around management and maintenance to the surface, the opportunity for cross-communal programmes focused on cemeteries was highlighted by all.

Community Responsibilities

"Many British Jewish cemeteries [...] have a rather decimate air [...] With hardly a blade of grass to relieve the serried ranks of gravestones. Overall use of chemical weed killers rather than regular gardening has been the cause of this and it is a difficult job to change management policy on the point" (Sharman Kadish)

"Outside Manchester and London if you want to take a long-term view, who is going to look after these burial grounds? I think Anglo-Jewry has a sense that something should be happening but it is unclear at this moment what that should be. The Board of Deputies has responsibilities for a number of 'orphan burial grounds' and has a view, but who is going to take the long view?" (David Jacobs)

"It comes back to that issue of ownership. Obviously United Synagogue maintains its existence and maintains ownership of its sites even if the communities that they were serving are no longer there. Whereas the more pressing issue is where there are no longer communities – and this is where the Board of Deputies has been playing such an important role. Who owns the cemetery when a community disappears? And who's responsible for maintaining the cemetery?" (Michael Mail)

"While in theory Jewish communities have a religious obligation to maintain the last resting place of their ancestors, in practice some communities including large ones [...] are unwilling to spend money on closed burial grounds that belong to Synagogues that have ceased to function" (Sharman Kadish)

"One of the problems at cemeteries like Hoop Lane is that - it's not wilful neglect - it's simply pressure of funding and resources and partly (dare I say it) in the past Jewish cemeteries in this country have suffered from below-average management in the past across all religious dominations and I think that's also an issue" (Lester Harris)

"Jewish Heritage is a registered charity that was established in 2004 and it's the only organisation in Anglo-Jewry whose sole remit is to care for the historic buildings and sites of Britain's Jewish community. On cemeteries we maintain a sites at risk list which flags up cemeteries in danger available on our website. We've drawn up a code of practice with the Jewish cemetery maintenance and are campaigning for the creation of a central Jewish community conservation fund, to tackle the issues of abandoned cemeteries on a national scale" (Sharman Kadish)

"Despite the *halakhah* imperative to leave the dead undisturbed in Britain there are recorded cases of disused burial grounds being cleared and remains reinterred elsewhere, in the 19th Century often the result of railway development especially in the Midlands and the North" (Sharman Kadish)

"The family issue is a red herring; I actually think it's the institutions that are responsible for them and how they look after the maintenance and whether they prioritise it [...] I'm a bit new to this game but I look at other organisations such as in Edinburgh for example, where I'm from, and the cemetery's looked after by a small group of volunteers and as a result, it doesn't work. Most people here are part of a professional organisation and it's up to us to put it higher up the agenda. We've got 11 cemeteries that we look after, open and closed, and certainly even the phrase "open and closed", for visiting, people think "well, it's closed. That's it; it's finished." And that actually is more of a problem than maintenance than anything else because those are the ones that need the maintenance more than the ones that are open because people see it more often. But, I think it's a red herring on the family; I think the key issue is institutional ownership" (David Kaplan)

"Bath has been taken over by the Board of Deputies. Establishing ownership was a problem and we found in the records office the actual documents when the site was purchased; Bath had established a "Friends of Bath Cemetery", which has more non-Jews on it than Jews. And they had raised money, they open the cemetery now two or three times a year for visitors. A few years ago, they got the local boys who were yobs to come in and clean up the place" (Ken Marks)

"We're synagogue institutions, which part of joining our Synagogues is that we provide burial grounds for you to be buried in. You can't be buried unless you are a member or unless you pay a fee as a non-member. I think that's the same for all of us. And there are different institutions that have historical heritage departments - Board of Deputies have one, and there are other institutions in the community that have them, but they're not linked to our synagogue memberships - the Reformed, Liberal, Orthodox movements, etc. In our offices, we're arranging stone settings in funerals. There's nobody going, "Well, why don't you come and visit." That's not the business, it's a different part of the business, which may be required but it's not a priority as we would see it in this moment in time" (David Kaplan)

"The Board of Deputies has over the years come more and more into that role, as being an umbrella body for orphan cemeteries and for cemeteries for which at present there is no Jewish community. Like in Doncaster, like in Falmouth, Penzance, etc. So I think there is perhaps a wide role for the Board in this [...] in Eastern Europe there are hundreds of cemeteries which have been renovated, refurbished by descendants of people whose family come from those villages, towns and cities. And there's been a very constructive, and I use it in the best possible way, a partnership between these people, the local community, the local government, and the national government, to help in refurbishing these cemeteries. And I think that we can learn, in the UK, from this model and try to emulate this type of project over here" (Herschel Gluck)

Listing

"Listing buildings [...] can mean a disaster for us. It's not a great thing at all. I think people forget that we're about living Judaism as well as taking care of the dead, but we're an active religion, not a museum, and we've got a smaller community, as the demographics show; we've got an assimilating community, a lack of philanthropy now in investing in certain areas. We just can't afford listings - whether it be on cemeteries or our synagogues, unless it's something we really really want for various reasons" (David Kaplan)

"I looked into [listing] for Hoop Lane three years ago and asked two completely separate organisations to advise me and both of them said absolutely not. Because once you start going to be listed, everything has to run by the council, you can't even replace even a tiny, tiny windowpane in the prayer hall without going to the council first. We didn't go listed, and we actually built a new columbarium. We have existing walls and for one of the associated congregations we built another wall. If I tell you, it took over 18 months, just to get permission for an unlisted cemetery to build between two existing walls and the horror!" (Linda Stone)

"Designation by listing and scheduling can help protect sites of most architectural or historical significance, whilst others particular Jewish plots located within municipal cemeteries may fall within designated parks and gardens or conservation areas which have already been mentioned. However, statutory protection does not necessarily guarantee physical survival though it can assist with fundraising. We should remember that many burial grounds simply do not qualify for such national recognition. Nevertheless they may possess significance for the local community because they provide a sense of place and a belonging and because they contribute to the character of the given neighbourhood. In smaller provincial towns the survivor of the Jews burying ground maybe the only reminder of the former presence of a minority community long since disappeared" (Sharman Kadish)

Ongoing and Everyday Use

"I value the history but I also accept that it goes maybe two generations, maybe three, and after that - forget it. And that's why we try and encourage people to keep their stones maintained without relying on the family to do that. I

find it fascinating to walk around any cemetery and read on the stone and how lovely and respected they were if I can read through the dirt, if the family didn't take care of it. So, I think a) we should look at people to take care of more-up-to date so in 50, 100 years time they still look very good and people can walk around (and read them)" (Melvyn Hartog)

"I think we're forgetting one thing, which are our clients. Most of our clients are only members of ours because of burial. That actually really matters to them. I come from Edinburgh where, actually, there's double the numbers in the burial society than there are members of the synagogue there because the two are not linked [...] we're actually Living Judaism. I think that more Jews visit our cemeteries, every year, than visit our synagogues. And therefore we have to understand that they are critical to our current situation and not just our past" (David Kaplan)

"Health and safety is one of the key issues, there are two other reasons as well which are respect and responsibility. We generally visit graves and cemeteries to pay respects to those have died. Even if we're only record keeping for those previous generations we still respect what they stood for [...] No matter how many centuries or decades ago, we are dealing with grounds that are deteriorating which need huge amount of investment and management and a professional approach" (Denis Salamon)

"There is also a political problem, communities won't cooperate, they make excuses like oh it's not our cemetery or they've inherited it from a previous synagogue so they do not feel responsible for it. They inherit the assets but not the responsibilities that goes with the assets and this happened a lot and is still happening. In the 19th CE, in the 1890s the chief rabbi found a letter another rabbi had written that said if a community had disappeared the first priority should be the cemetery. Funds should go to the cemetery. This letter was never published and therefore this was never enforced. This is still going on today where synagogues have closed down and the cemeteries have just been left and they've taken the money and used it elsewhere" (Sharman Kadish)

"If there is not someone there to look after it and hand over to the next generation to own the problem, goodwill is not enough to maintain these cemeteries. To put money into these causes they have to be professionally funded and professionally managed and properly set up for the future. Maintenance contracts where the families take on responsibility to maintain the stones and the ground" (Denis Salamon)

"Our generation and the generation just gone are the people buried in these cemeteries which are generally in the midst of large residential areas. Fast forward 100 years when the population of England has increased and the need for burial grounds has increased, the ones we're using now won't be maintained and the only way to preserve them is through organising ourselves as a community and making sure they don't fall into the hands of the council. If we can't get ourselves organised from a financial and health and safety aspect we will lose the battle. We've got to be thinking hundreds of years ahead" (Denis Salamon)

4.2. Visitation and Access

As noted above, the everyday use of Jewish cemeteries differs greatly from that of other faiths, particularly Christianity. With specific times and dates designated for visitation and strict rules around access and behaviour, Jewish burial grounds occupy a distinctive place in the historic or urban landscape. They are often peripheral and may be locked – a situation that gives rise to significant risks, but may also aid in protection from vandalism. Regular visitation is seen as important for highlighting the problems individual cemeteries face, but this goes against Jewish tradition. The common approach taken by bodies such as Historic England to sites of heritage – that increased use equals better protection – may therefore not be appropriate for Jewish cemeteries. Any encouragement of use should therefore be sensitively managed and respectful of Jewish law.

“Cemeteries are basically a sacred space and we tend to use our cemeteries as a place just where people go to say Kaddish and a place they visit before Rosh Hashanah; they don't tend to just go to the cemetery and use the cemetery as an open park” (Mitzi Kalinski)

“About two years ago I went to visit my grandparents [cemetery]. Both stones looked as though they had been vandalised; in fact, they had just collapse because of old age and what we did was - we didn't ask the cemeteries to do anything - we contacted all the grandchildren and between us we raised the £4,5,6,7 thousand pounds, and we had a massive rededication ceremony with all 50-odd members of the family [...] this remarkable history of how he had left Russia and come to England in 1880. So it was a very important stone, but the cemetery wouldn't do anything about it. They said, “You pay for it, and we'll do it” so we paid for it” (Malcolm Weisman)

“On locating your grandfather or great grandfather's grave it can sometimes come as a shock to discover the neglected state of the burial ground that is his last resting place” (Sharman Kadish)

“I think Jewish cemeteries tend to be in slightly peripheral locations [...] they're kind of off the beaten track. And if you open the doors and there's nobody there, that could cause some problems” (Darren Barker)

“If you keep a place looking nice, people are less inclined to vandalise. Preventative medicine” (Mitzi Kalinski)

“I think there's an understanding amongst us, that cemeteries are not public spaces. They're not part of the city park structure. As far as we're concerned they're not open ground for people to spend time in. Is that a particularly Jewish value in association with these grounds? Because that's not the understanding of Christian burial sites; certainly in management of them, once they get disused the best practice is to bring them into the park network and that. Are we opposed to this in general?” (Andrew Abdulezer)

“For ordinary, everyday cemeteries [...] I think they are just for ourselves, for the relatives [...] it is almost a closed shop so to speak” (Linda Stone)

“It's also a very holy place. You're supposed to say a prayer when you go into the ground, as you step inside the boundaries, so it's actually still a holy place, and as such it has the same sanctity as one of our - I think more people attend our cemeteries than attend our synagogues. And more people hear our prayers and participate in prayers at our cemeteries than they do at our synagogues, maybe bar a few in NI 6 or NW 11” (David Kaplan)

“Sometimes the cemetery authorities have to bring someone in to unlock the cemetery as there is no resident caretaker. I have been showing people round burial grounds in the East End of London for over 40 years. In much more recent times booklets have been produced to encourage visitors to one or two historic cemeteries” (David Jacobs)

“It is important to see these burial grounds as places to learn about Anglo-Jewish history. It is not necessary to differentiate between those that are open or closed burial grounds.” (David Jacobs)

“The idea of treating a graveyard as a nature reserve or garden of rest is unknown” (Sharman Kadish)

“Access needs to be carefully managed and security concerns remain utmost. Sensitivity must be shown to the sacred nature of these sites and proper respect shown by the covering of heads, modest dress and no eating or drinking or stepping on graves. Therefore it would not be appropriate to turn a Jewish burial ground into a park or play area” (Sharman Kadish)

“For Mitzvah day, over the last few years we’ve had a party go on that Sunday and do some weeding, some cleaning, some leaf cleaning- just the basics which, first of all, gives them cohesion between the burial ground and the community and it also results in the place looking nice and help mitigate a range of problems” (Mark Levy)

“We have a very romantic story of a member of the congregation who died in 1843; he was a man with a large family and was very poor, and his relatives couldn’t put up a headstone for him. We got a telephone call from 2011 from a descendent from Australia who says that they’d actually been to the cemetery and they’d like to put up a headstone. So his family all collected, and we had a consecration by the local rabbi, it was all in the newspaper - that’s a very romantic story I keep for the people who come around” (Peter Grant)

“It’s not just because of anti-Semitism that cemeteries are vandalised. You get yobbos going around - especially for famous graves where they’ve smashed [...] they’re yobbos, there’s no religious aspect to it at all. They’re just yobs going around. As soon as we come to clean up the grave stones, and plant and that, and have open days and that, that’s been reduced considerably. People turn up on open house days, they’re given guided tours, and you know they’re just filled with fascinating people [...] We’d never have come here otherwise” (Clive Bettington)

“All our closed cemeteries - we’ve got seven closed cemeteries - can only be gained by getting in touch with us and we would arrange when possible to open them. We obviously open them at set times, Tisha B’Av, Rosh Hashanah, they’d be open, we’d have people there. Because we can’t send a member of staff to sit there all day for, maybe, West Ham, half a dozen visitors [...] We can’t let you go in on your own. We can’t let people just wander the cemetery because how do we know they’re coming out?” (Melvyn Hartog)

4.3. Shifting Communities

The decline and migration of Jewish communities provides vital context for the current status of burial grounds across England. As populations have ebbed and flowed, the cemeteries associated with once thriving communities have suffered severe neglect. Families have died out or moved on, leaving ‘orphaned’ Jewish cemeteries dotted around the country. While many sites have since come under the protection of The Board of Deputies, or smaller scale local Jewish or secular organisations, issues of abandonment and communal responsibility surfaced throughout this consultation.

“Above all, Jewish cemeteries in Britain have been threatened by the demographic decline of the Jewish community since the Second World War” (Sharman Kadish)

“The problem we have [...] is that the older the cemetery becomes, the more maintenance to be done. And unfortunately what is happening is that the Jewish population in itself is dwindling, so therefore the resources that we had maybe 20, 30, 40 years ago are no longer there. Now in order for us to keep up with the “demand” of burial, we have to look for new premises which is why we just bought a large plot of land in northwest London, next to Edgware. And those are our priorities; the gentleman touched upon that in the talk, is that we do need to have partnership with other groups, not necessarily Jewish groups, but groups to look at that whole situation in the long term because sooner or later old cemeteries fall into disuse simply because there’s no funding, and that’s our biggest problem” (Thomas Zelmanovits)

“Burial grounds are not a profitable enterprise. Income generated by the sale of plots comes to a natural end while the cost of maintenance increases. The shrinking size of Anglo-Jewry means that small and ageing congregations around the country are increasingly needing outside assistance with the upkeep of historic Synagogues and disused cemeteries” (Sharman Kadish)

“Though you’ve got your population centres moving, the people who know that they come from a small community, where everybody knows each other, there’s more of a community feel than say places like Golder’s Green or any large community where there’s sort of the sense that someone else will do it and I don’t have to step up to the plate” (Marcelle Palmer)

“In a number of places where the Jewish population is very small non-Jewish men and women become interested through their own local history research to support initiatives to properly support and maintain Jewish burial grounds working together with the members of the Jewish community.. This is the case in Penzance and Falmouth where initiatives have been supported by local people, together with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a Jewish Burial Society based in London and a commercial organisation (Sainsbury’s in the case of Falmouth). These initiatives rely on the good will created by building cross-communal relationships and the building of active partnerships between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. This reduces the sense of isolation that is often felt in undertaking such restoration work” (David Jacobs)

“The essence of the problem is the graves themselves, being the responsibility of the families, rather than the communities means that once those families disperse or die out, the gravestones become the responsibility of no one, and then it’s a major problem of the Jewish community isn’t it? Do we want to spend money on dealing with those stones or are they just going to crumble and disappear?” (Mark Levy)

“They should have a system in place where larger communities take on responsibility for all the cemeteries in the region, therefore when a synagogue closes down like in Wolverhampton, the responsibility for that cemetery would go to Birmingham. We need funding from the community to do this, it can’t come from nothing” (Sharman Kadish)

4.4. Education

As well as being sites of memory and important historical markers within specific localities, Jewish cemeteries have a vital role to play in terms of education. For those undertaking genealogical research gravestones are an essential source of information, and while the physical degradation of some memorials is now irreversible, the knowledge contained in associated records can help 'fill the gaps'. Guided tours and managed access for educational groups can also help introduce the place of Judaism within British history, and reinforce Jewish identity for younger visitors. As Herschel Gluck states below, burial grounds can thus be seen as 'working institutions' through educational activities and ongoing cross-communal engagement.

"[At] Velho [...] most of those stones are almost entirely unreadable. So, to any interested eyes, there's a whole level of information that's missing, and missing and potentially engaging to someone" (Andrew Abdulezer)

"Jewish Genealogical Society [...] Our members are very keen to know about their heritage - I think a lot of them are obsessed with their heritage and we organise visits from time to time to cemeteries" (Doreen Berger)

"Most of our members are actually researching their own families, they're not doing it for other people and we have many members who are not Jewish but have a Jewish line and ancestor, so the historic content of these cemeteries are very very important" (Doreen Berger)

"A lot of people don't want to talk about cemeteries, so I think there's an education side about people who are involved in their communities, to be told about the importance of their heritage and we're very aware of it" (Roger Leon)

"The Board actually are part of the Living Jewish Tours. We bring non-Jewish children into northwest London and they often want to go to Hoop Lane. Volunteers will say, "Why would you take children into a cemetery?" But it's part of the national curriculum and they look at faiths deal with the issue of death, and we do lots of visits at Hoop Lane" (Sheila Gewolb)

"[At] Brady Street - there's a Muslim school that backs onto it and one of the deputy heads, is a Jewish guy, phone and said "Can I take my year into the cemetery?" I said, "Absolutely!" And we should encourage it - we should encourage all these non-Jewish schools to visit but also save a lot of problems later on, with things like vandalism because now they appreciate it" (Melvyn Hartog)

"On behalf of the Genealogical Society, the importance of finding out information about one's own ancestors is very important. In a wider context, we're so much a part of the history of this country that we have a duty for people to be aware of this because many of the people buried in our cemeteries were part of the history of this country and we have a duty to remember that" (Doreen Berger)

"Cemeteries are an effective resource for education, especially minority history and antiracist education and environmental awareness. Visiting cemeteries is the best way to show you care" (Sharman Kadish)

"As a community, we are ultimately responsible for those buried in all the cemeteries, without exception. But, I think it's very important to engage families. I think it would be highly beneficial for many members of the Jewish community to know that their engagement in the cemetery is important, it's wanted, it's desirable. And this will help on two levels. It will help as far as the cemeteries are concerned - that they will come, they'll see the tombstones [...] of their family and hopefully think about contributing something to repairing them, if they require repair. But it will also help with their Jewish identity. They'll feel a greater sense of belonging that these are their parents, grandparents, great grandparents, ancestors and the cemetery will become a working institution. People ask what is a cemetery? There are two elements in play. There's the element of the past but also a contemporary issue - the present issue, to remind us of who we are and where we come from" (Herschel Gluck)

"As important as maintaining the physical remains of cemeteries, is the development of good record keeping of those remains so that we can more easily allow contact with those records for people who are doing genealogical searching, because it's very popular at the moment, could potentially provide some income" (Mark Levy)

"Orphan cemeteries have historic value and an educational value which can be beneficial at all levels as Sharman mentioned in her presentation. Educational activities should be safeguarded in order to continue a sites protection in the long run" (Eva Frojmovic)

4.5. Intangible Values

As Sharman Kadish notes above, the physical appearance of Jewish cemeteries can often be underwhelming. In contrast to the Christian tradition, there are very few notable monuments or large scale architectural features in Jewish burial grounds, and landscaping is minimal. This is due to important notions around equality in death prevalent in Judaism, and is one sign of the way theological differences are manifest in the physical fabric of the cemetery. These differences shape how cemeteries are used and what they mean to diverse constituents. Alongside these vital spiritual values, Jewish burial grounds also transcend their tangible significance in terms of the vibrant Jewish tradition they are part of, and the connections they help forge with broader local and national histories.

"Often in Eastern Europe we have issues regarding boundaries of cemeteries, where the walls have disintegrated over the years and we're wondering where to put up a wall. And sometimes the locals have issues with the walls, saying, "you can't make the walls that wide," and Rabbi Schlesinger, who is one of the heroes of the Jewish cemeteries, he says, "Unless you can include everyone, you don't build a wall." He was talking about excluding one person from the cemetery? No wall. Either everyone or no one. And I think this is a very important lesson about the importance of individual, it's not just about ticking boxes and saying, "I saved the cemetery". It's about caring for the individuals who are buried in the cemetery" (Herschel Gluck)

"We're a living Judaism and not a museum" (David Kaplan)

"The very essence of what makes a Jewish cemetery different to the concept of general cemeteries that we understand. There is a basic theological and ideological difference in the attitude to the body that the church sees it and as Judaism sees it. Judaism sees the body as something holy. Judaism sees the body as being the ultimate medium of connection with G-d. All the mitzvahs, all the commandments in the Torah are connected to the body; so therefore death isn't just seen as relief of the soul from the body and "bye bye body". Death is seen as an interim stage between now and, we believe in the resurrection of the body, the world to come, when the body will come back to life. In other words, the body is seen as even being on a higher level than the soul, on a certain level, so the cemetery isn't seen as something, which sadly is required, but it is seen as a repository of holy items (being bodies), which are there for a certain period to be looked after, to be respected, to be in communication with" (Herschel Gluck)

"A cemetery is part of our history - not just Jewish history [...] It's the history of a particular area, parts of London and how it moved elsewhere and it's very much a part of our living present and the future, most importantly" (Roger Leon)

"Not only is it 'my story' and my journey, it is our collective story and our collective journey. I like to use the image of a jig saw and individuals and organisations are the pieces which help create a complete picture" (David Jacobs)

"I think that if we don't hold our own cemeteries, and the preservation of what's in our own cemeteries, in high regard, how can we expect the Jewish community to be held in respect by the non-Jewish world? I think it's very important that we show to the outside world how we respect our past and if we don't remember our past, we're really nothing. So it's our traditions and our past that's so bound up in these cemeteries that it's of vital importance" (Doreen Berger)

"I loved your term, "the bodies we represent" because that's what it's really about. And to continue on that note, I find the concept of disused cemeteries very difficult because there's no such thing as a disused cemetery because the body is still there. In other words, it's always an engaged cemetery. There perhaps now aren't any new burials, but that doesn't disqualify the burials that took place in the past. I think that the sacred element in Jewish Tradition is very basic and goes to the very heart of the issue of cemeteries. As I mentioned in the previous session, that in Judaism, the body is given tremendous prominence and the body is the vehicle, the medium, through which all the mitzvahs are performed. So, therefore, the body is given eternally - tremendous respect and dignity, which the community has an obligation to ensure that it receives due dignity and respect.

There's another aspect, which I know there are a number of lawyers in the room here, and I also have quite a connection with lawyers. In Judaism, it is imperative that the space where the body is buried belongs to the person interred there. In other words, this is their legal space; there is a legal element in Jewish law, in civil law that this actually belongs to them. So therefore even if they'd been buried hundreds of years ago the place is still tenanted by its freeholder and therefore the space doesn't just have a sacred element but it also has a legal element" (Herschel Gluck)

"The feeling that that particular marker stone was more precious than others was always very difficult, because essentially what I had been told as someone who had been working with burial sites is that no one piece of bone is more valuable than another piece of bone. There's something inherently equalising about death in the Jewish community. To some extent, before we are able as a group to promote our cemeteries via celebration of particular people or a particular thing, we have to address this issue - the instinct is perhaps not to celebrate an individual over others" (Andrew Abdulezer)

"I guess if you haven't got a really exciting *ohel* or a great wall or a great portico, your site might not be deemed architecturally significant, but really it's more about the value of it to a community so why can't it be listed in that way? It transcends architecture cause it's not really necessarily about the architectural story - it's more about the social history, it's about the people, it's more about sense of place, how it fits with the history of a local place. You could have local heritage designation but does that really go far enough because that's not really a statutory designation. That doesn't necessarily protect what you have. So maybe there's something that's slightly more nuanced in the sense that it doesn't have to be a listing because of architectural significance" (Darren Barker)

4.6. Summary

The above quotes demonstrate the strength of feeling that exists across the Jewish community with regards their burial sites. While certain values expressed during the consultation resonate with the common concerns of heritage stakeholders – better protection for the historic environment, the importance of history for identity and community cohesion, the important role heritage sites play in connecting past and present – there are unique issues within the Jewish community. Not least amongst these is the fact that Jewish cemeteries take on a distinctive role within their communities, one that is very different from churchyards. They are not to be seen as recreational, and neither are they valued for their aesthetic qualities. Instead, the burial ground must be maintained as an intensely spiritual place, one that protects the body of the deceased individual in perpetuity and allows for Jews to be buried together. As mentioned above, these sites are not to be viewed as outdoor museums, but are rather part of the living culture of Judaism in Britain. Future synagogue closures must incorporate plans for the maintenance of attached cemeteries that reflects this status.

A number of issues should also be stressed in terms of the future management of Jewish cemeteries. In terms of protection, there is a clear tension between approaches that favour ‘hiding’ sites so that they are inaccessible to potential vandals, and those that wish to make cemeteries more visible as a means of discouraging anti-social behaviour. This is a difficult path to navigate and is perhaps best dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, while there are many valuable initiatives already in place across the country, these are often based around an active local community who engage in the operation and maintenance of a site or sites. While the Board of Deputies are involved in a small number of historic cemeteries, there is scope for such an organisation to take on a broader stewardship role, perhaps alongside the Joint Burial Society or United Synagogue. Supra-communal organisations such as the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe also have an important role to play here, as do interested parties outside of the Jewish community (local history groups, individual stakeholders, local businesses). The involvement of Historic England in these programmes will be crucial to their success, but Listing should not be seen as a panacea for the problems faced by Jewish burial grounds. A more nuanced approach is needed – one that reflects the layers of meaning and significance that surround these important sites.

The following pages provide brief case studies that demonstrate some of the ways Jewish cemeteries are currently cared for across the UK.

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1. Sandymount Cemetery

The Jewish section in Sandymount Cemetery, Glasgow, is one of the older Jewish cemeteries where some of the members of the Glasgow Jewish Community are buried, with records held at the City Council dating back to 1905.

The Jewish section closed to new burials in 1993, and a lack of maintenance funds led to significant deterioration of elements of the site. Headstones had fallen over through a combination of weathering and vandalism, paths had been inadequately maintained and vandalism to the stepped entrance set a poor tone for visitors to the site.



In response to the condition of the cemetery's Jewish section, family members of some of the people buried there established the Sandymount Charitable Trust in 2004. Through a series of phases, the Trust was able to raise the funds to lay down and repair headstones, restore the entrance to the site and repair pathways. Bolstered by growing local and financial support and profile, the project scope was widened to include the construction of a children's memorial to the several hundred children buried in unmarked graves who had died during childbirth or infancy. Over the course of 7 years, investment through grants from Forward Scotland and the Queen's Charitable Trust, contributions from the local council, as well as private donations from the local community and family members from around the globe, made these outcomes possible.



Following this, where names on headstones had become illegible through the passage of time, they were photographed and identified by their plot number where they can now be accessed on line through the Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society website.

With the various phases of the Sandymount Regeneration Project completed, the Trust has now begun to turn its attention to the Jewish Enclosure within the Glasgow Necropolis, and was awarded funding to undertake restoration works by Historic Scotland.

5.2. Penzance

Penzance's Grade-II listed Jewish cemetery, considered amongst the best-preserved outside London, tells the story of the Jewish Community in Cornwall in the mid-18th century. Records indicate that there was a Jewish Community established in Penzance as early as 1740, with the earliest surviving tombstone in the cemetery dating to 1791. The population, although small, was thriving in the area until the 1990s, when waves of migration from the area occurred. Today, there is no longer an established Jewish community in Penzance, and the cemetery falls under the ownership of The Board of Deputies of British Jews.



In 1997, the custodian of the cemetery came under Keith Pearce, a non-Jewish local resident, who took an interest in Jewish history and liaises with the Town Clerk's Office to maintain it. This interest led to extensive research about the history of the Jews in Cornwall and has since produced two books on the subject, uncovering a history that was little known and raising the profile of the cemetery. This helped to galvanise the community, and in 2014 the Friends of the Penzance Jewish Cemetery was formed. An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund with partners Kehillat Kernow – The Jewish Community of Cornwall, Penlee House Gallery & Museum in Penzance and the Penzance Town Hall resulted in a grant of £13,100. Alongside this, other individuals and community groups helped raise the funds to repair the fabric, namely the walls, entrance and Bet Tohorah areas of the cemetery. Works began on site in early 2015.

5.3. Novo Cemetery

Novo Cemetery is situated in the heart of campus of Queen Mary, University of London.

The Jewish East End is the historic home of a vibrant Jewish community. In this area are some of England's oldest Jewish cemeteries, including Alderney Road, the nation's oldest Ashkenazi cemetery, and Velho Sephardic Cemetery, which is the earliest post-resettlement burial ground.

The Novo, itself the second oldest Jewish Burial ground in England, was in use from 1733 through to the 1970s, when the last burial occurred. In 1941, bombing destroyed parts of the cemetery, and the land was eventually sold to Queen Mary in 1972. The older, Georgian section of the cemetery was controversially built over to make room for new development on the campus and the bodies exhumed and reinterred in a field in Brentwood. What was left were the newer Victorian and later headstones, which were enclosed by shrubbery, walls and a gate, inaccessible to the public.

In 2012, works were undertaken to preserve the cemetery and improve the appearance and use of the surrounding areas. New plants, fencing, hand washing basin and raised pathway were put in place. Work was undertaken in consultation with the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue who also oversaw the construction, to ensure sensitivity towards Jewish law throughout its duration. An interpretation panel was also produced to communicate the history of the site, which included the controversy surrounding its purchase by the university.

The cemetery was Grade-II Listed in 2014.



5.4. North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust

The NMJCT is a coalition of synagogue burial boards that maintain and manage Jewish cemeteries in North Manchester. Its main aim is to maintain, manage and preserve Manchester's Jewish cemeteries to ensure that they are properly looked after.

Historically, Manchester has had a number of burial challenges. In addition to lack of adequate burial space for all its members, there was no uniform system for funding burial maintenance across the communities. Often, this financial burden of maintaining cemeteries had a detrimental impact on the care of the cemeteries.

The NMJCT was founded in 2012 in response to the lack of provision of the current burial system for running and maintaining cemeteries. Subsequently, in 2013, the NMJCT facilitated the formation of a joint burial board, a model adapted from the operations at London's United Synagogue burial society in London. Made up of ten shul burial boards and a charitable trust, the board was designed to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of the cemeteries.

The NMJCT currently aims to establish regular long-term and adequate funding streams to ensure the ongoing maintenance and servicing of all cemeteries.



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6. MOVING FORWARD

We need champions for this agenda and that includes being prepared to take the long view. We can say that there's a general feeling in the room that we very much welcome this initiative of Historic England. It's already an achievement to be brought together to discuss collectively this issue which we all agree is very important. If this initiative can act as a catalyst towards addressing a number of the key concerns that have been raised today, it would be generally welcomed.

Michael Mail

The problem always lies in yourself, when you look in the mirror. Historic England can be a great accessory to offer help, but it's not their problem alone.

Denis Salamon

6.1. Introduction

Concerns over visitation, ownership, education and of course the values people ascribe to heritage are central to the work of Historic England. The lessons that can be drawn from this consultation exercise therefore suggest a number of strategic 'ways forward' in relation to the preservation of Jewish burial grounds, and historic cemeteries more generally. While some of these might be considered specific to the Jewish faith, the key message to be taken from this research is that the values held by Jewish communities are not 'alien' or incompatible with the aspirations of Historic England – indeed, they might equally be seen as integral to rethinking how heritage should be cared for and made meaningful to present societies.

With this in mind, the following recommendations are loosely structured around the core activities of Historic England, touching upon issues of advice and guidance, protection through designation, research, the championing of historic places, and grants and funding. The next steps outlined here can thus be read as a blueprint for ways in which Historic England (and other non-Jewish bodies) might work with UK Jewry to design and implement effective initiatives for the protection of Jewish heritage. Crucially, these recommendations should be seen as part of an ongoing dialogue between Historic England and the Jewish community, rather than a simple checklist for engagement. They should therefore be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

6.2. Advice and Guidance

One of the key issues to emerge from this consultation has been the level of involvement that Jewish communities might expect from Historic England, and what forms this might take. This feeds into the need for a more joined-up

approach to the protection and enhancement of Jewish cemeteries nationwide, particularly those classified as 'orphaned' sites. There are two key ways Historic England can help to galvanise and facilitate work in this area:

6.2.1. *Offering different levels of support and engagement across the field, from strategic partnerships to ad-hoc advice and guidance*

Currently, a number of organisations and bodies of differing scale and influence are involved in the protection of Jewish cemeteries across the country (and internationally). In addition to individual synagogues, Burial Societies and locally based initiatives such as the North Manchester Jewish Cemeteries Trust, key national organisations to engage in any future heritage programmes include:

- Board of Deputies of British Jews
- Jewish Heritage UK
- Foundation for Jewish Heritage
- Working Party on the Protection of Jewish Monuments in the UK and Ireland
- Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe
- Jewish Genealogical Society (especially as part of the International Jewish Cemeteries Project)
- Jewish Historical Society of England
- National Anglo-Jewish Heritage Trail

In the vast majority of cases, the protection and management of Jewish cemeteries is best undertaken by the communities they are connected to, Jewish or otherwise. There is a danger here however that any initiatives might be seen as piecemeal, rather than holistic. Working with Historic England, the above organisations are therefore integral to formulating a more cohesive strategy around the preservation of burial grounds, with specific practical guidance focused on particular sites offered to individuals and community groups as and when required. Here it is worth noting that the willingness of the Board of Deputies to take ownership of orphaned cemeteries was broadly welcomed during the consultation.

The exact format of this engagement should be worked through with the Jewish community, but may include providing a regular forum (physical or digital) to meet and discuss best practice, producing toolkits in collaboration with relevant Jewish bodies, and offering training sessions around some of the key issues raised in this consultation, and the wider work of Historic England.

6.2.2. *Ensuring the correct people are familiar with best practice around historic cemeteries*

Cemeteries (historic and otherwise) should be run on a professional footing, with proper working methods based on international best practice. To this end, there should be an obvious and coherent structure in place across various societies and congregations to allow individuals to become involved in the protection of their local burial ground, or sites that may be of particular significance to them for other reasons (ancestor burials etc.). While Historic England need not be fully involved with all issues of management and maintenance, they do have an important role to play in facilitating professional development. This may take the form of training programmes focused on the conservation and protection of burial grounds, which would be applicable across faiths. Working alongside this – and supporting the work of Jewish Heritage UK – an online portal should gather and make available best practice information on Jewish cemeteries.

6.3. Designation

Protection through listing was seen as a double-edged sword by many of the respondents to this consultation. Nevertheless, designation has an important role to play in highlighting the national significance of Jewish heritage. To better meet the needs of Jewish communities, future list entries should account for a broader sense of 'value' and be aware of the active status of many cemetery sites.

6.3.1. *Conservation principles should encompass intangible values and be adaptable to specific theological needs*

According to Jewish law, burial grounds must be protected in perpetuity, and Historic England's approach to listing can help reinforce this principle, offering a statutory level of protection for such sites. This may mean focusing less on specific monuments or items of funerary architecture, and instead looking to protect burial grounds in their entirety, even where certain areas are not deemed 'historically' significant. As this consultation has highlighted, sites may have a

strong social significance while not being deemed to have any special historical or architectural value. Crucial to remember here though is that established means of protecting sites of heritage through increased use (i.e. visitation) may not be appropriate in this context. Other methods of access and of raising awareness should therefore be explored whenever a site is listed.

6.3.2. *Produce guidance on other avenues to protection*

In line with the perceived problems of listing Jewish cemeteries, Historic England should ensure that relevant individuals and communities are fully aware of the alternative means of protection available to sites of heritage. This can include photographing, reporting and publishing detailed information on cemeteries at risk, engaging with local authorities to provide better protection, and local listing.

6.4. Research

Building on work already carried out by Historic England (and formerly as English Heritage), there is a clear need to continue research into the history and present condition of Jewish burial grounds. This subject is not well publicised or understood beyond the Jewish community, and Historic England has a key role to play in improving this knowledge base.

6.4.1. *Host or facilitate a cross-faith conference on the subject of cemetery protection*

One of the key findings of this study is the need to understand Jewish cemeteries within the broader context of burial grounds of all faiths, drawing out differences in values and use, but also the commonalities that transcend these cultural and religious distinctions. In the short to medium term, Historic England should look to host or facilitate a cross-faith conference on this subject to bring together interested parties and decision makers to share best practice in cemetery protection.

6.4.2. *Produce original resources focused on Jewish burial grounds within broader cemetery initiative*

Linked to the conference, Historic England should make printed and online resources freely available as part of a wider 'resource pack' focused on historic cemeteries across all faiths. A key area of information to cover here will be ownership, to help clarify who has current control of sites.

6.4.3. *Work with historic and genealogical societies across Jewish communities*

To date, Jewish historical societies have played a vital role in ensuring cemeteries are part of the wider narrative of Judaism in the UK. Greater links between these and related genealogical societies should be forged to enable further education work and more consistent record keeping. This should be part of a wider collaboration between the public and the private and across communities. As one participant at the Manchester event suggested, a 'polity' is required to adequately care for burial sites. Ultimately, this is about organising things today so that future generations do not inherit the same problems as we currently face, but are rather fully empowered to take on the protection and enhancement of burial grounds in future years. Historic England's role here should be one of support, facilitating intercommunal dialogue and research by offering opportunities for publication (print and online), best practice guidance, and forums to meet.

6.5. Championing Historic Places

6.5.1. *Undertake advocacy and lobbying at local, regional, national and international levels*

Historic England has an important role to play in starting a national discussion on the preservation of burial sites. Alongside the aforementioned conference and publications, this should take place at the highest levels, galvanising support from influential stakeholders across the political spectrum. As well as lobbying to the UK government and local authorities, Historic England may consider partnering with international Jewish organisations such as the CPJCE and the Foundation for Jewish Heritage to advocate at a European level. A prominent media campaign encompassing all faiths will provide a backdrop to this work.

6.5.2. Produce clear policy statements that reflect Jewish values

Underpinning any advocacy campaign must be a clear and coherent set of policy statements that respond to and build upon the present research. Recognising that there will be no one set of 'Jewish values' with respect to burial grounds, and therefore no one-size fits all approach to their protection, these should offer a nuanced and flexible outlook on the preservation and management of such sites. The policy statements should be authored with the full involvement of the Jewish community, particularly key organisations such as Jewish Heritage UK. These should respond to the fact that, while there are differences in interpretation and application, there are common core Jewish values across the various religious streams of Judaism.

6.6. Grants and Funding

One of the main topics that surfaced during this consultation is the issue of funding. This is a crucial point of concern for many Jewish communities, who have limited resources at their disposal with respect to the protection, conservation or restoration of burial grounds. As several participants in London and Manchester mentioned, external organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, and The Big Lottery Fund should be seen as potential avenues of funding, but should not be relied upon. Instead, a more long-term view is needed.

Endowment and insurance should be in place for prospective burials and cemetery sites to ensure the problems of neglect and natural deterioration are dealt with in a more coherent and timely fashion in the future. This should also look to address the issue of closed cemeteries through strategic planning and dedicated funding streams. The funding of such sites may also benefit from a change in their status, with some participants suggesting that burial grounds should be classed as charities to allow for tax relief when donations are given for their maintenance. This possibility should be looked at in greater depth.

At both consultation events, the potential for some form of Jewish community conservation fund was raised, and this should be explored further as a means of initiating the holistic approach outlined above. More directly, another suggestion focused on the possibility of a Life Cycle Costing Model for cemeteries that would look to build in maintenance costs from the outset. Although primarily seen as an approach that would ensure any cemeteries established today do not face the same problems as communities are now dealing with, it was also felt that historic burial grounds could be preserved through such an initiative. Again, this should be explored further.

For Historic England, two key action points can be highlighted from this analysis:

6.6.1. Provide advice and guidance on project costs and funding applications

An immediate and ongoing responsibility for Historic England lies in providing advice and guidance on the costs associated with caring for historic cemeteries. This can be done on an ad-hoc basis, responding to the needs of specific burial sites, or it can be enacted via clear and easily accessible cost breakdowns based on recent case studies.

6.6.2. Lobby for a new funding stream focused on cemeteries

Drawing all of the above together, perhaps the strongest message Historic England can send with respect to the protection and management of Jewish cemeteries is to lobby for a new funding stream focused on historic burial grounds of all faiths and denominations. Building on the current National Heritage Protection Activity, the HLF and other funding bodies should be strongly encouraged to launch a tailored funding scheme akin to **Parks for People**, but concentrated on the particular needs of cemetery sites. While issues of physical preservation and maintenance will be imperative here, any such initiative should also reflect the elusive yet central importance of intangible values to the meaning and significance of historic burial grounds.

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