



WESTMILL WOODLAND BURIAL GROUND CIC

# NEWSLETTER

*Welcome to the Summer newsletter 2024*

## OPEN DAY

# Saturday June 8th – 2.00-5.00pm



*Do come along to our Open Day this year. We will have a nature walk, children's trail, talk on green burial and the usual gorgeous refreshments and time just to enjoy being together on site.*

Sadly it will also be your chance to come and say goodbye to Becky. She is not disappearing completely thank



goodness and will be continuing to work for Westmill remotely but she will not be in the office after the end of July as she and her family are moving to Warwickshire. As you all know Becky has been a wonderful support to families and we will miss her presence here very much so do take the chance to pop in a see her if you can. She will of course still be available on the phone.



## A big welcome to Joe our latest Director



*As you may know Westmill is run as a Community Interest Company. This means we are a not for profit organisation and committed to serving our local community and providing support and information around death and dying.*

For many years Liz and Adam (the founders of the burial ground) were the sole directors, then they were joined by Dr. David Birley and now we are delighted to be working with Joe Heapey who is coming to help us look at our succession planning for

the medium and long term future of the site. Thanks to the wonders of modern technology he can join us over zoom.

Joe grew up in Oxford, moved to London to study, and lives in Hertfordshire. Joe owned and ran a small business for 24 years and works as a consultant, helping large companies and government departments improve the services they provide to their customers.

With both Joe's parents now buried at Westmill, the burial ground will remain very special to Joe and his family. Westmill is a remarkable place and a unique community interest company,

firmly guided by its values. Joe wants to support the business as it, like any business, looks ahead, makes plans and responds as the world changes.

Joe was first taken to Westmill by his parents in 2014 to visit the burial plots they had booked for themselves. When Joe's dad died in 2017, he discovered why they had chosen Westmill. To the shock and pain of loss, Liz and Adam brought calm, clear thinking, solutions and genuine care. The land and sky provided the space to grieve together or alone, with perspective, hope, and much-needed signals that life continues.

Joe continued to visit Westmill with his mum, and they attended meetings of the Family and Friends group because she wanted to remain part of this supportive community. She did so until she died in 2023.

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## What3words – fish, kettle, drone



*For those of you not familiar with What3words this is the kind of random computer generated choice of words you might find yourself getting when checking the location of your grave. We do realise that occasionally a word may feel jarring but it is so useful. It is very popular with hikers, birdwatchers, cyclists and anyone who likes walking in remote places. It is used regularly by the emergency services for locating lost or injured people.*

For years we have not mentioned this app because it was not accurate enough for our purposes but our surveyor feels that we can now fully recommend it. We are now sending out

the3words location with every new interment and we are happy to assist you with learning how the app works on your phone. We want everyone to become confident about finding

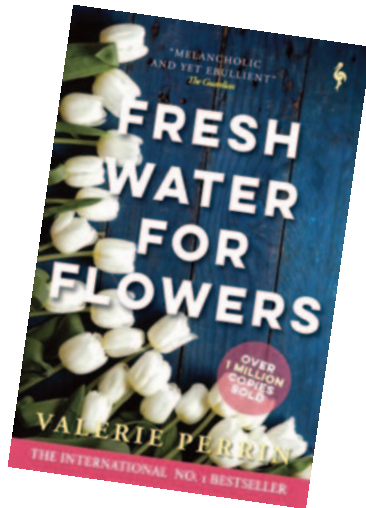
their graves without needing office support. For now we can put up a sign but we invite you to come with the app installed on your phone and then take your reading or ask us to send it over to you so that in future you can be independent and share the information

with anyone who might need it.

Do tell us how you get on with it. Please give us at least one weeks notice to go up and obtain any past plots.

[www.what3words.com](http://www.what3words.com)





## Book Review

*This heartwarming novel about a woman running a small rural cemetery in France obviously appealed to me. It is a rather niche topic and not one I usually find featured!*

It is about finding hope after loss and suffering and also a bit of a mystery story. I found I could not put it down and I just lent it someone at a Coffee Morning and they said they felt the same. Very approachable with a great set of varied characters.

## Hungry Ghosts and Marriage in Heaven

*Tangjie Ward*

*Many Chinese people hope that their deceased relatives are in Heaven contentedly waiting to be reunited with their loved ones. The departed, however, will only rest content if they are properly looked after by their surviving relatives.*

Living relatives are expected to sweep the tomb, cook dishes, and send extra money to the deceased several times each year on important dates on the Chinese lunar calendar. But no matter how diligent one is, it is inevitable that the deceased may fall short of one thing or another.

The result may be a dream in which the dead tell one exactly what they desire. But, more often, the dead say little or nothing, leaving one to guess. My aunt, for example, dreamt about her deceased brother stating that he was a bit cold. After many hours of hard thinking, my aunt realized that the quilt, this time a real one, burnt on the day of funeral was on the narrow side. So hastily, a wider quilt was made and sent to the shivering uncle. Failing to satisfy the needs of the dead promptly, can lead to the dead wandering down to earth as a hungry ghost, causing disharmony in the family, disease, bad luck in business or failure in securing a place at university.

Food is not the only thing the dead hunger after. Mischief can also arise from the dead feeling frustrated in their love life. In a family in my hometown, a child became seriously ill, and no medicine could make her better. According to the soothsayer consulted by the family, the child's uncle was the source of the trouble. He had died prematurely many years ago and now had reached an age where he was longing for a wife. Luckily

this could be resolved as a family in a nearby village had a daughter who had died several years before and would also have been coming of age.

So, after looking into the suitability of the couple and negotiating which family was to pay for what, an auspicious date was chosen on which a wedding with more than two-hundred guests took place. After a grand feast, the families took the ashes out of their original burial grounds and put them together in one urn, which was then buried. The wedding was completed with a bonfire of all the things the newlyweds would need.





## Our revised booking policy

*We are currently working on our succession planning for the burial ground, as it will not be many years before we are full. When we have all the details clear, we will share them but meanwhile we will be sending out a document to all those with prebookings with us so they understand how our service will alter.*

We have also reviewed our prebooking policy. From now, we only take prebookings from people over the age of 65 and only if they are a spouse/partner or parent of someone who is buried with us.

We also want to encourage everyone to learn how to locate their own graves using the What3words app so please do read that article carefully. Now is the time when we can help you ensure this is working properly for you.

*It is now very easy to donate via our website by going to the home page and pressing on the donate button at the top right.*  
[www.woodlandburialwestmill.co.uk](http://www.woodlandburialwestmill.co.uk)

All articles written and edited by Joe Heapy, Liz Rothschild and Tangjie Ward. Photographs courtesy of Becky Norman, Liz Rothschild and Freestock. Design/artwork by Lee Hiom and Simon French

## Dates for the diary

**LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH.** Our monthly meetups continue on the £2 for a cuppa and biscuit to cover costs. A chance for a chat and sharing experiences of being bereaved.

**OPEN DAY Saturday June 8th 2-5** including nature walk, children’s trail, talk on green burial, hot and cold drinks and cake. A chance to say goodbye to Becky.

**MEMORIAL GATHERING Saturday September 28th - 4.30-6.30pm (Sunset)** - Lantern decorating, hot drinks, singing and readings in memory of those who have died. (date has moved from the one proposed at AGM)

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY DAY Saturday November 16th** (Please tell us if you plan to have lunch)  
11-1 - planting trees and caring for the site. Bring tools, wellies, thermos.  
1-2 - Lunch at Root & Branch - £7.50 booking required  
2-4 - AGM

**CRAFTY COFFEE MORNINGS 25th October - 11-12.30** - Come and join Abingdon textile artist Clare Davis who made our lovely memorial tree and make a fabric leaf for the tree or to take home in memory of someone who has died. She will bring everything needed just bring yourself or just come and cuppa and watch the rest of us work.



**20th December - 11-12.30** - Norah is coming back again! She is going to come along and make willow starts again. Make a fistful and put some on your grave and take some home with you. Very easy with Norah’s brilliant teaching and great fun. Everyone who thought they would just watch last time got the bug and joined in but you can still just come along for the company and the coffee.



*Other events may be scheduled and announced via email*

## Mission Statement

- To make death approachable.
- To help people plan for the end of their life.
- To enable people to ask for and get what they want from a funeral.
- To show that funerals can be personal and beautiful without being expensive.
- To support people as they grieve.
- To create a community of people connected to the burial ground - our Friends and Family group.
- To create a beautiful nature reserve by increasing the bio-diversity and providing a place of peace and relaxation for future generations.