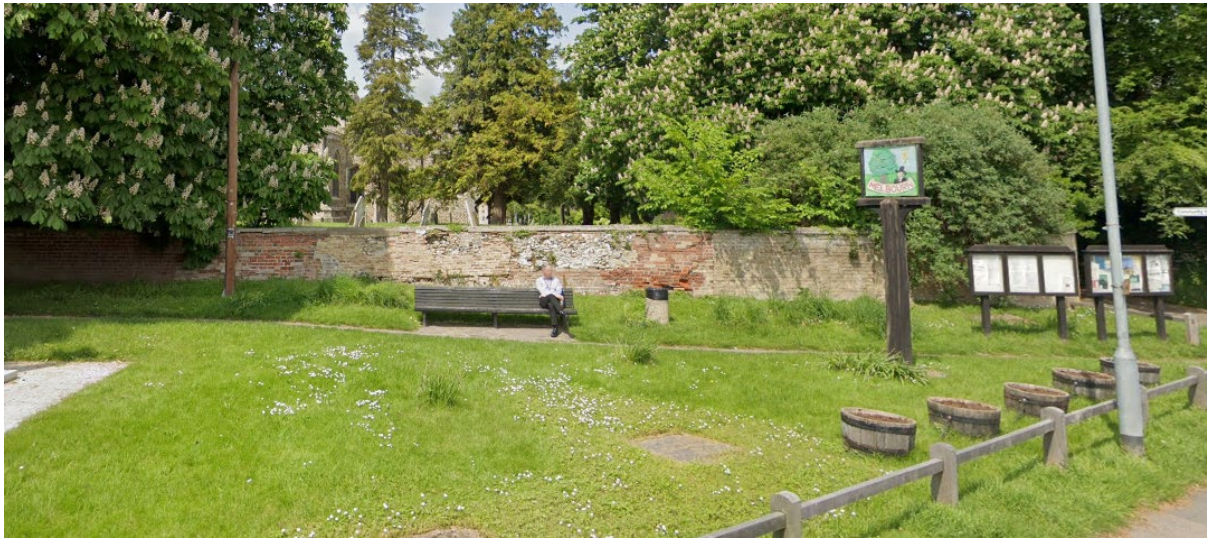


Issue Ongoing concern about the state of the All Saints wall facing the High Street.



Correspondence from All Saints – 1 August 2025

The southern section of the churchyard wall at Melbourn is currently in a state of disrepair.

Following the closure of the churchyard in 1901, responsibility for maintaining the churchyard, including its trees and boundary walls, was assumed by the Parish Council. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has invited the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) to visit the site and provide guidance on appropriate repair methods.

The section of wall under consideration measures approximately 11 metres in length and is situated between an early twentieth-century construction to the west and an area of yellow brickwork at the eastern end. It is our view that both adjoining sections are in satisfactory condition and do not require intervention. The portion identified for repair appears to have been constructed and patched at different times, utilising a variety of materials, including numerous types and colours of brick. Additionally, there are small flint patches present; however, these seem to be 'modern' repairs executed with cementitious mortar of substandard quality.

Following discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, The PCC propose that the damaged section be reconstructed using yellow brick to match the east end. To enhance the transition to the modern bricks at the west end, the addition of a buttress as a visual marker is recommended. Most of the existing coping stones can be retained and reused.

As Chair of the PCC, I am writing to formally request that the Parish Council commission a structural engineer to assess the condition of the wall and prepare a comprehensive scheme for its repair.

The churchyard remains the property of the church; therefore, any repairs or alterations require Faculty approval. Applications for such consent should be submitted through me as the Incumbent of the Parish of Melbourn.

Office responded raising concerns over previous talks with the Conservation Officer and asking if any funding would be available through Parochial Church Council (PCC) or Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

Yes, we do have some access to grants that could be considered to apply for the wall to be fixed, but we would need the Parish Council's permission to start approaching those options. If you're happy for me to look at this – like we did when we had the damage to the wall at the rear of the church back in March this year – then please let me know as I can get some quotes done for the repair.

We could engage a structural engineer to report on the wall, but we would need to seek the cost of that back through the PC.

We hope that we can work together to get this sorted as quickly as possible. Sadly I am in the same situation at Meldreth!

Actions so far

- Office contacted the Shared Prosperity Fund to enquire if this project would be eligible to apply for the 'Improving The High Street Grant' from South Cambridgeshire District Council – confirmation received that the project would be eligible [Improving the High Street grant \(open\) - South Cambs District Council](#)

- Previous advice from the Conservation Officer:

The wall is considered curtilage listed to the church which is grade II listed. Rebuilding sections of the wall would therefore require planning permission, as it would be more work than could be considered a repair. Listed building approval would be dealt with by the DAC.*

The section of wall in question shows evidence of centuries of repair with different brick types and flint. The variety of materials generally add to the character of the area, although some repairs are unsympathetic both visually and technically. There is clear evidence of failure, particularly where flint has blown and the wall is bowing. There is no evidence of imminent structural failure however.

My preference would be to salvage as many existing bricks as possible, and include them in a section when the wall is rebuilt. My suggestion for the main brick type is the Cambridgeshire stocks seen to the right hand side, which are more in keeping with the village than the modern red bricks off to the left. Reclaimed bricks might be an option. Lime mortar with a flush joint should be used. Reinstating the stone copings to supplement the existing ones will be necessary.

The application will need drawings of the wall, including any new structure behind the brickwork – e.g. concrete foundations. The general approach to rebuilding should be set out in a method statement, including sketches or annotated photos if possible. The more information included, the less chance of conditions being added to the permission. We might, for example, request a sample panel is built first.

- Concern over graves behind the wall – would need further investigation as to who would be responsible for costs associated with any exhumation and reburial.
- Multiple quotes will be required – PCC or the Parish Council can lead on this. It looks as if all costs will be the responsibility of the Parish Council (either found via funding, asset management reserves or possibly insurance)
- Asked for confirmation of responsibility of Parish Council in the maintenance of the closed churchyard – Office have not yet found evidence of handover – have requested evidence from All Saints.

Consideration

- Council to consider next actions.
- Define lead for gathering quotes
- Consider funding options.

Update October 2025

Email from All Saints: 6 October 2025

Further to the recent correspondence from the Parish Council, we have been able to identify that the churchyard is closed and that the cost of maintaining the churchyard is passed to the local authority.

Attached are 2 PDF's which show two pages from The London Gazette.

You will see Melbourn's closure mentioned on page 1, but the closure itself is dealt with in more detail on the second page. The London Gazette reports that the closure was approved on the 4th of November 1901, to take effect on the 31st of May 1902. The Burial Act 1855 section 18 states (in relation to closed burial grounds):

s18 Burial board to keep in order closed burial grounds, &c.

In every case in which any Order in Council has been or shall hereafter be issued for the discontinuance of burials in any churchyard or burial ground, the burial board or churchwardens, as the case may be, shall maintain such churchyard or burial ground of any parish in decent order, and also do the necessary repair of the walls and other fences thereof; and the costs and expenses shall be repaid by the overseers.....

As you will see from the Lond Gazette the order was passed in Council at St James' Palace.

With the enactment of the Local Government Act 1972, the Burials Board ceased to exist as a separate administrative body. Under the provisions of Schedule 26 to the Act, its functions and responsibilities were transferred to the relevant Parish Council, which henceforth assumed oversight of burial grounds and related duties. This legislative change formed part of a broader reorganisation of local government in England and Wales, streamlining various functions under elected parish authorities to enhance local accountability and governance. From 1 April 1974, the Parish Council became the statutory authority for burial matters previously managed by the Burials Board, in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in the Act.

I trust that this helps to confirm both our positions in relation to the upkeep of the churchyard and its boundary walls and fences.

September, one thousand nine hundred and one, to give notice of such representation, and to order that the same should be taken into consideration by a Committee of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council on the thirty-first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and one, and copies thereof have been affixed as required by the said first recited Act :

Now, therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, is pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered that the following directions be substituted for the directions contained in the said Order in Council of the third May, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, so far as it relates to the new part (added in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one) of the new or additional parish churchyard in Ruthin-road, Wrexham, viz. :—

WREXHAM.—That burials be discontinued forthwith and entirely in the new part (added in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one) of the new or additional parish churchyard in Ruthin-road, Wrexham, in the county of Denbigh, except as follows :—

In such vaults and wholly walled graves as are now existing burials may be allowed on condition that every coffin buried therein be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

A. W. FitzRoy.

AT the Court at *Saint James's*, the 4th day of *November*, 1901.

PRESENT,

The KING's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

WHEREAS by "The Burial Act, 1853," it was enacted that, in case it appeared to His Majesty in Council, upon the representation of one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, that, for the protection of the public health, the opening of any new burial-ground in any city or town, or within any other limits, save with the previous approval of one of such Secretaries of State, should be prohibited, or that burials in any city or town, or within any other limits, or in any burial-grounds or places of burial, should be wholly discontinued, or should be discontinued subject to any exception or qualification, it should be lawful for His Majesty, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order that no new burial-ground should be opened in any city or town, or within such limits, without such previous approval, or (as the case might require) that, after a time mentioned in the Order, burials in such city or town, or within such limits, or in such burial-grounds or places of burial, should be discontinued wholly, or subject to any exceptions or qualifications mentioned in such Order, and so from time to time as circumstances might require ; provided always, that notice of such representation, and of the time when it should please His Majesty to order that the same be taken into consideration by the Privy Council, should be published in the London Gazette, and should be affixed on the doors of the churches or chapels of, or on some other conspicuous places within, the parishes affected by such representation, one month before such representation was so considered : provided also, that no such representation should be made in relation to the burial-ground of any parish until ten days' previous notice of the intention to make such representation should have been given to the Incumbent and Vestry Clerk or Churchwardens of such parish :

And whereas by "The Burial Act, 1900," it

was enacted that the powers and duties of the Secretary of State under the Burial Acts should be transferred to the Local Government Board :

And whereas the Local Government Board, after giving to the Incumbents and the Churchwardens of the parishes hereinafter mentioned ten days' previous notice of their intention to make such representations, made representations, stating that, for the protection of the public health, no new burial-grounds should be opened in the township of Blackfordby, in the civil township of Washington, in the township of Gedney, and in the civil parishes of Shinfield, Melbourn, Yardley and Knipton, without the previous approval of the Local Government Board, and that burials should be discontinued therein as herein-after directed :

And whereas His Majesty was pleased, by His Order in Council of the twenty-sixth day of September last, to give notice of such representations, and to order that the same should be taken into consideration by a Committee of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council on the thirty-first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and one, and such Order has been published in the London Gazette, and copies thereof have been affixed, as required by the said Act :

Now, therefore, His Majesty by and with the advice of His Privy Council, is pleased to order, and it is hereby ordered, that no new burial-grounds shall be opened in the said township and civil parishes without the previous approval of the Local Government Board, and that burials in the said parishes shall be discontinued as follows, viz. :—

BLACKFORDBY.—Forthwith and entirely in the Parish Church of Saint Margaret, Blackfordby, in the county of Leicester ; and in the churchyard, except as follows :—

(a.) In such vaults as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

(b.) In such earthen or partly walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed, at or below the depth of five feet from the surface of the ground, of the bodies of any members of the family of any of the persons heretofore buried in such graves.

(c.) In the churchyard, in any grave space in which no interment has heretofore taken place, the burial may be allowed, at or below the depth of five feet from the surface of the ground, of the body of any member of the family to which such grave space may be allotted.

WASHINGTON.—Forthwith and entirely in the Parish Church of Holy Trinity, Washington, in the county of Durham ; and in the churchyard, except as follows :—

(a.) In such vaults and walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault or grave be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

(b.) In such earthen or partly walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed, at or below the depth of five feet from the surface of the ground, of the bodies of any members of the family of any of the persons heretofore buried in such graves.

GEDNEY.—Forthwith and entirely in the Parish Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, Gedney, in the Parts of Holland, Lincolnshire; and in the churchyard after the expiration of twelve months from the date of this Order, except as follows:—

(a.) In such vaults and walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault or grave be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

(b.) In such earthen graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed, at or below the depth of five feet from the surface of the ground, of the bodies of members of the family of any of the persons heretofore buried in such graves.

SHINFIELD.—Forthwith and entirely in the Parish Church of Saint Mary, Shinfield, in the county of Berks; and in the churchyard, after the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and two, except as follows:—

In such vaults as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

MELBOURN.—Forthwith and entirely in the Parish Church of All Saints, Melbourn, in the county of Cambridge; and in the churchyard, after the thirty-first day of May, one thousand nine hundred and two, except as follows:—

In such vaults or walled graves as are now existing in the churchyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault or grave be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

YARDELEY.—Forthwith and entirely in "Job Marston" Chapel, Hall Green, in the parish of Yardley, in the county of Worcester; and in the chapelyard, except as follows:—

(a.) In such vaults and walled graves as are now existing in the chapelyard burials may be allowed subject to the condition that every coffin buried in any such vault or grave be separately enclosed by stonework or brickwork properly cemented.

(b.) In such earthen graves as are now existing in the chapelyard burials may be allowed, at or below the depth of five feet from the surface of the ground, of the bodies of members of the family of any of the persons heretofore buried in such graves.

KNIPTON.—Forthwith and entirely in the Baptist Chapel at Knipton, in the county of Leicester, and in the burial ground attached thereto.

A. W. Fitz Roy.

AT the Court at *Saint James's*, the 4th day of *November*, 1901.

PRESENT,

The KING's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

WHEREAS by "The Burial Act, 1853," it was enacted that, in case it appeared to His Majesty in Council, upon the representation of one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, that, for the protection of the public health, the opening of any new burial ground in any city or town, or within any other limits, save with the previous approval of one of such Secretaries of State, should be prohibited, or that burials in any

city or town, or within any other limits, or in any burial grounds or places of burial, should be wholly discontinued, or should be discontinued subject to any exception or qualification, it should be lawful for His Majesty, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order that no new burial ground should be opened in any city or town, or within such limits, without such previous approval, or (as the case might require) that, after a time mentioned in the Order, burials in such city or town, or within such limits, or in such burial grounds or places of burial, should be discontinued wholly, or subject to any exceptions or qualifications mentioned in such Order, and so from time to time as circumstances might require; provided always, that notice of such representation, and of the time when it should please His Majesty to order that the same be taken into consideration by the Privy Council, should be published in the London Gazette, and should be affixed on the doors of the churches or chapels of, or on some other conspicuous places within, the parishes affected by such representation, one month before such representation was so considered; provided also that no such representation should be made in relation to the burial ground of any parish until ten days' previous notice of the intention to make such representation should have been given to the incumbent and vestry clerk or churchwardens of such parish:

And whereas by "The Burial Act, 1855," it was, amongst other things, enacted that it should be lawful for His Majesty, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, from time to time to postpone the time appointed by any Order in Council for the discontinuance of burials, or otherwise to vary any Order in Council made under any of the Acts recited in the said Act, or under the said Act (whether the time thereby appointed for the discontinuance of burials thereunder, or other operation of such Order, should or should not have arrived), as to His Majesty, with such advice as aforesaid, might seem fit:

And whereas by "The Burial Act, 1900," it was enacted that the powers and duties of the Secretary of State should be transferred to the Local Government Board.

And whereas the Local Government Board, after giving to the incumbent and the churchwardens of the parish hereinafter mentioned ten days' previous notice of their intention to make such representation, made a representation stating that they were of opinion that the Order in Council of twenty-first August, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, so far as it relates to the church and churchyard of Penkhull, in the parish of Stoke-upon-Trent, should be varied, by substituting certain directions for those contained in the said Order:

And whereas His Majesty was pleased by His Order in Council of the twenty-sixth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and one, to give notice of such representation, and to order that the same should be taken into consideration by a Committee of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, on the thirty-first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and one, and copies thereof have been affixed as required by the said first recited Act:

Now, therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, is pleased to order and it is hereby ordered that the following directions be substituted for those contained in the said Order in Council of the twenty-first August, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, with respect to burials in the said church and churchyard, viz.:—