

# HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



**Agenda Item:** Annual Resident's Survey 2025

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the results of the annual residents' satisfaction survey, conducted between February and May, regarding services overseen by this Committee.

## Background

The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 344 responses were received in total.

While the number of responses is a very small percentage of the population, the results are still an important resource in advising the Council in which areas projects, communications, and future spending should be considered.

## Current Situation

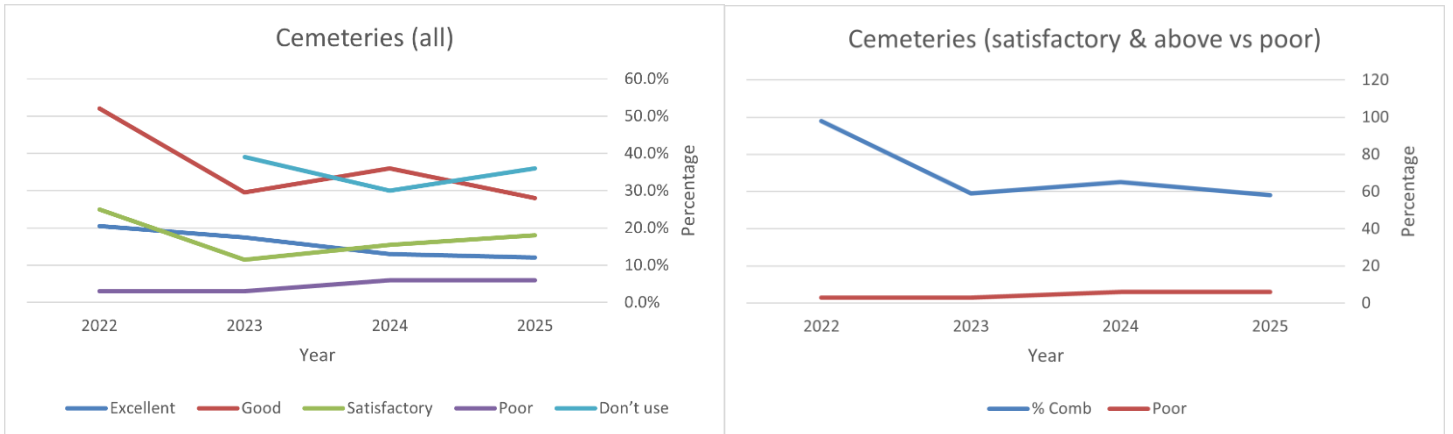
The following table shows how the services scored overall in the survey (with percentages rounded).

As a comparison, the figures/percentages from the previous three years surveys are included. It should be noted that in 2022 there was no n/a option available which is why the figures are vastly different from the last three years.

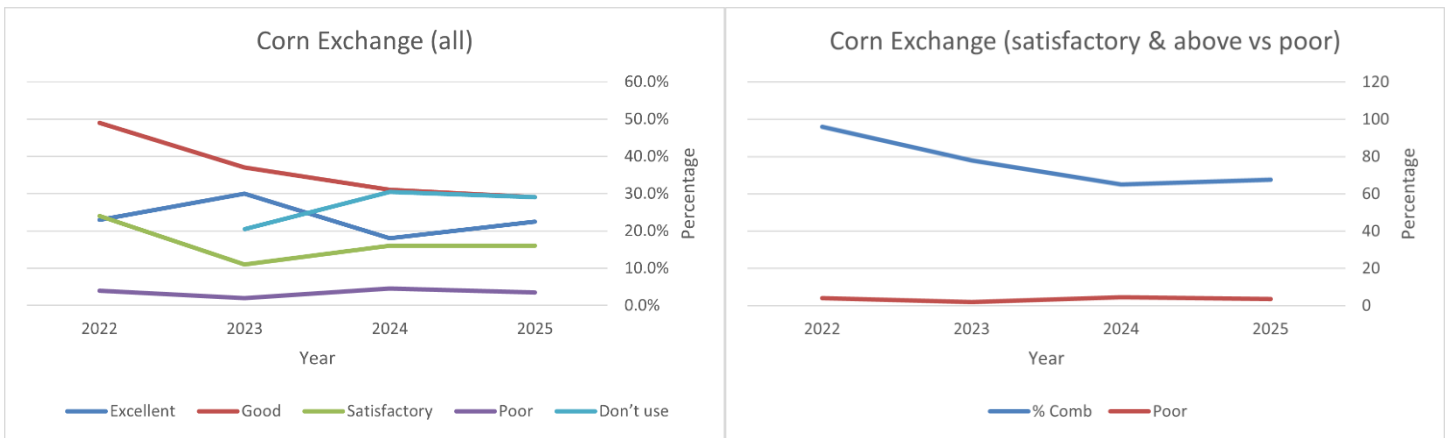
Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	% comb	Poor	n/a	Resp
Cemeteries	2025	12% (40)	28% (95)	18% (61)	58.0%	6% (21)	36% (124)	341
	2024	13% (57)	36% (156)	15.5% (67)	64.5%	5.5% (24)	30% (129)	433
	2023	17.5% (37)	29.5% (63)	11.5% (25)	58.5%	2.5% (6)	39% (83)	214
	2022	20.5% (55)	52% (140)	25% (67)	97.5%	2.5% (7)	n/a	269
Public Halls Corn Exchange	2025	22.5% (77)	29% (97)	16% (55)	67.5%	3.5% (12)	29% (99)	340
	2024	18% (77)	31% (135)	16% (69)	65.0%	4.5% (20)	30.5% (133)	434
	2023	30% (63)	37% (78)	11% (23)	78.0%	2% (4)	20.5% (43)	211
	2022	23% (65)	49% (137)	24% (68)	96.0%	4% (11)	n/a	281
Public Halls Burwell Hall	2025	6% (20)	16% (54)	13% (45)	35.0%	4.5% (15)	60.5% (207)	341
	2024	5.5% (23)	22% (96)	13.5% (58)	41.0%	3.5% (15)	55.5% (242)	434
	2023	7.5% (16)	20.5% (43)	10.5% (22)	38.5%	4% (8)	57.5% (122)	211
	2022	10% (23)	49.5% (115)	34.5% (80)	94.0%	6% (14)	n/a	232

The following graphs track performance over the previous four years for these services and show the levels are broadly the same in the previous three years.

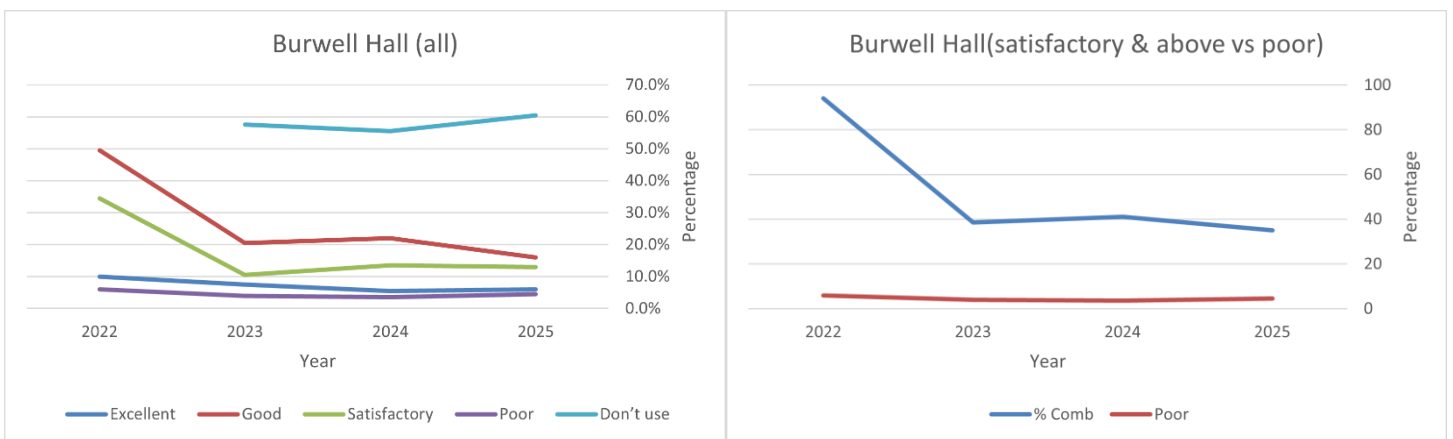
### Cemeteries infographics



### Corn Exchange infographics



### Burwell Hall infographics



In addition to the results above, the survey also welcomes specific comments, all of which relating to this Committee can be seen below:

**Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.**

Have to stop cemeteries being used as play areas for dogs. Dog mess is a huge issue at tower hill and youths using the area to smoking drugs. Need CCTV or lock the area up overnight.

Need more events at the Corn Exchange. Fun evenings around £10.

Make more of warm spaces and do a regular senior gathering where they can get a little meal and have some free entertainment for the afternoon.

We attend the jazz evenings at the Corn Exchange - which we really enjoy :)

I find it surprising that Witney no longer has a hall with a stage. The Corn Ex refurbishments have been a disaster for local drama and music groups

The 1863 cafe is superb and well run by the manager

I witness a lot of illegal activities under the Corn Exchange roof; drugs, sex, It needs to be fenced off plz

The Corn Exchange has been a great addition to the town.

We liked the classic cinema showings in the evening at the Corn Exchange but these films are now on during the day when we work.

The cemetery behind the church at church green make the gravestones more enclosed

Corn Ex. should not show film we could lose cinema

Tower Hill [cemetery] great. Windrush soul destroying & weedy but there are watering cans!

Burwell Hall had no council planting at all - left to locals. Disgraceful.

Cemeteries need to be reused

Stop cyclists in areas such as the churchyard

You have £190,703 in reserves/s106 monies for allotments. Why haven't you spent this on acquiring land and reducing the lengthy waiting list

Allotments?

## **Analysis**

### Corn Exchange

Shows a slight increase from 2024 in satisfactory & above and the positive comments outnumber the negative. The creation of the Corn Exchange business plan should help continue this increase. As seen in Public Halls Report, the new Venue & Events Co-ordinator will review the film club when they begin their employment.

### Burwell Hall

The only comment refers to planting outside the hall and the trend at the hall is aligned with the previous three years. The number of residents replying do not know/do not use has increased so a social media/poster campaign advertising the hall for private hire may be beneficial.

## Cemeteries

The trends show that scores of excellent and good are slightly decreasing but satisfactory has increased which has helped maintain a consistent combined score for 2024/25.

Comments concern dogs in the cemeteries and weeding, both of which were raised last year and action taken – the number of negative comments on these issues has reduced. ASB has also been raised consistently with the Neighbourhood policing team. New posters have been erected in the noticeboards advising residents to call 101.

Comments concerning closed churchyards include one about the churchyard at St Mary's and one about cycling through it. It is suggested a review of signage takes place by officers, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure the prohibition of cyclists on the route is highlighted.

## Allotments

A comment asks why allotments was not included on the survey as a town council service while another raises the question of purchasing land for further allotments. The latter was discussed by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality - The residents' survey helps identify service inequalities and amplify underrepresented voices, supporting fairer, more inclusive decision-making. It may also highlight items which need addressing under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Biodiversity - The survey contains feedback on the cemeteries and closed churchyards, the latter of which are maintained as Eco Churchyards at their request. The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with biodiversity legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - The survey provides the ability to highlight concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey can inform targeted responses, resource allocation, and partnership working with police and community safety teams. It may help identify hotspots, vulnerable groups, and areas needing intervention such as the cemeteries.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The survey supports the Council's climate emergency commitments by ensuring resident feedback can help shape relevant policies and actions.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

There is a reputational risk if the Council does not address comments received in its satisfaction survey as it will be seen as not listening to residents.

The Council's committees will have competing demands on the overall Council budget so any additional project funding has to be balanced and proportionate. Additions should be in line with Councils objectives and adopted policies/strategies.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Listening to residents' feedback on Council services delivers significant social value by showing empowerment, inclusion, trust, and community wellbeing; It affirms that their opinions matter and helps building a sense of respect and transparency. This is especially important for the Council, where inclusive decision-making ensures diverse needs are reflected in service design and delivery.

Internally, it supports continuous improvement across the Council's services and helps identify future objectives thereby demonstrating meaningful change.

## **Financial implications**

- There are no new implications from the contents of this report at this point. The Committee may like to consider further projects based on the feedback or increasing/creating budgets for any item.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. What action is required from the results of the survey for services under the remit of this Committee.