Report on Worcester Road Cemetery and St Mary's Closed Churchyard September 2026

Worcester Road Cemetery

- Extensive hedge-cutting and maintenance works were undertaken by contractors at Worcester Road Cemetery and St Mary's Closed Churchyard during August and September 2026.
- A bench between Sections 4 and 5 at Worcester Road Cemetery was removed because it had deteriorated significantly and become unstable and unsafe for public use.
- The dead Leylandii hedge between Sections 6 and 7 was removed on 28 and 29 September and will be replaced with Carpinus Betulus (Hornbeam). A section near the gate was left in place to screen the mound of cuttings and branches.
- The controlled felling of two mature chamaecyparis lawsoniana (Lawson cypress) trees and one dead Ilex aquifolium (holly tree) at Worcester Road Cemetery was completed in September 2026. The trees had declined following prolonged hot and dry conditions over the previous two summers.
- A quotation has also been received for the felling of a three further mature chamaecyparis lawsoniana (Lawson cypress) trees that declined during the last summer drought. The work is scheduled at the end of November 2026.
- Flowering cherry trees could be planted in the cemetery and would enhance the cemetery's landscape through spring blossom, seasonal foliage and autumn colour, helping to create a peaceful and welcoming environment for visitors. Quotes have been obtained for Flowering Cherry Trees at £125 each:
    - Prunus 'Shirotae' – approximately 3 metres or more in height. A wide spreading tree producing an attractive display of white blossom in spring.
    - Prunus serrulata 'Shirofugen' – approximately 3 metres in height, with pale pink spring blossom.
    - Prunus serrulata 'Amanogawa' – approximately 3 metres in height. Commonly known as the flagpole cherry, this upright variety produces pink blossom in spring.
    - Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis Rosea' – approximately 3 metres in height. A winter-flowering variety that typically produces pale pink blossom from mid-December through to late March.
- A meeting is scheduled for the second week of October to agree suitable replacements for the felled chamaecyparis lawsoniana (Lawson cypresses) and Ilex aquifolium (holly tree) alongside the proposed flowering cherry trees. The meeting will also consider whether the stumps remaining from the six felled trees could be incorporated into a landscape feature or whether stump grinding would be more appropriate.
- A quotation has been sought for the chipping and removal of the large pile of branches and cuttings at the cemetery.

Collapsed Vault at St Mary's Closed Churchyard
The Oxford Diocesan Chief Archaeological Adviser offered a free inspection of the collapsed vault. The inspection was expected in late August, but no confirmation or recommendations have yet been received. A follow-up request has been sent.

Colonnade
The damaged Victorian floor tiles within the colonnade require repair, and quotations will be sought for the necessary works.