

Public to be consulted on future of Malmesbury's Victorian cemetery chapel

Malmesbury Town Council to stage two open days and public meeting

The future of the old Victorian chapel in Malmesbury is in the spotlight, with Malmesbury Town Council asking for ideas on how it could be used by the community.

Located in front of the cemetery on Tetbury Hill, the chapel was built in the 1880s as a non-denominational place of worship, for small services.

In recent years it has fallen into disuse and closed to the public, but now Malmesbury Town Council wants to breathe new life into the historic building.

Councillors are hoping the chapel could once again be used for funeral and interment services, and also be available more widely for community groups.

The Town Council is running two open days at the chapel, to give people the chance to look around, ask questions, and come up with suggestions. These will be on **Saturday April 12, from 11am to 2pm**, and on **Wednesday April 16, from 5.30-7.30pm**.

Then on **Wednesday May 28 from 7-8pm**, the Town Hall will be the venue for a public meeting, to discuss ideas and feedback from the open days, which will help the council develop its plans for the chapel.

The stone chapel, which isn't listed, is about 30 feet long and 16 feet wide, and contains period features, including a wooden vaulted ceiling.

Cllr Ian Wallis, who sits on Malmesbury Town Council's Burial Committee, said: "It is a beautiful building, that has been part of the history of the town for around 140 years, which has fallen into disuse, and it would be nice to make it into a functional space again.

"We have written to all the local churches and funeral directors and have had a very positive response to the idea of having the chapel available when there are burials and interments.

"We have also contacted local groups, like the Warden & Freemen of Malmesbury and Malmesbury History Society, to invite them to the open days, and everyone is welcome to come along and to give their input."

Just over a year ago, a survey was carried out to discover what work would need doing to make the chapel useable again. The building is structurally sound, but will need some restoration, redecoration and other works.

