

Crawley₂₀₂₉

September 2013

Additional Site Consultation Proposal for new cemetery site Consultation Report

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A new cemetery for Crawley

This report examines opinions and views about the proposal to develop a new cemetery on Ewhurst playing fields. It includes the following information:-

- The numbers of people agreeing and disagreeing with the proposal as well as those people who couldn't decide whether it was a good idea or not,
- Profiling information about the type of people responding to the questions,
- Maps showing where agreement and disagreement came from within the borough, and
- A summary of the main issues being raised within the open ended question.

In total 2,068 people took part in the Crawley 2029 consultation. 63% (1298) of those specifically answered the question relating to the cemetery. Percentages within this report are based on the 1298 people who answered the cemetery question rather than the total number of respondents to the consultation.

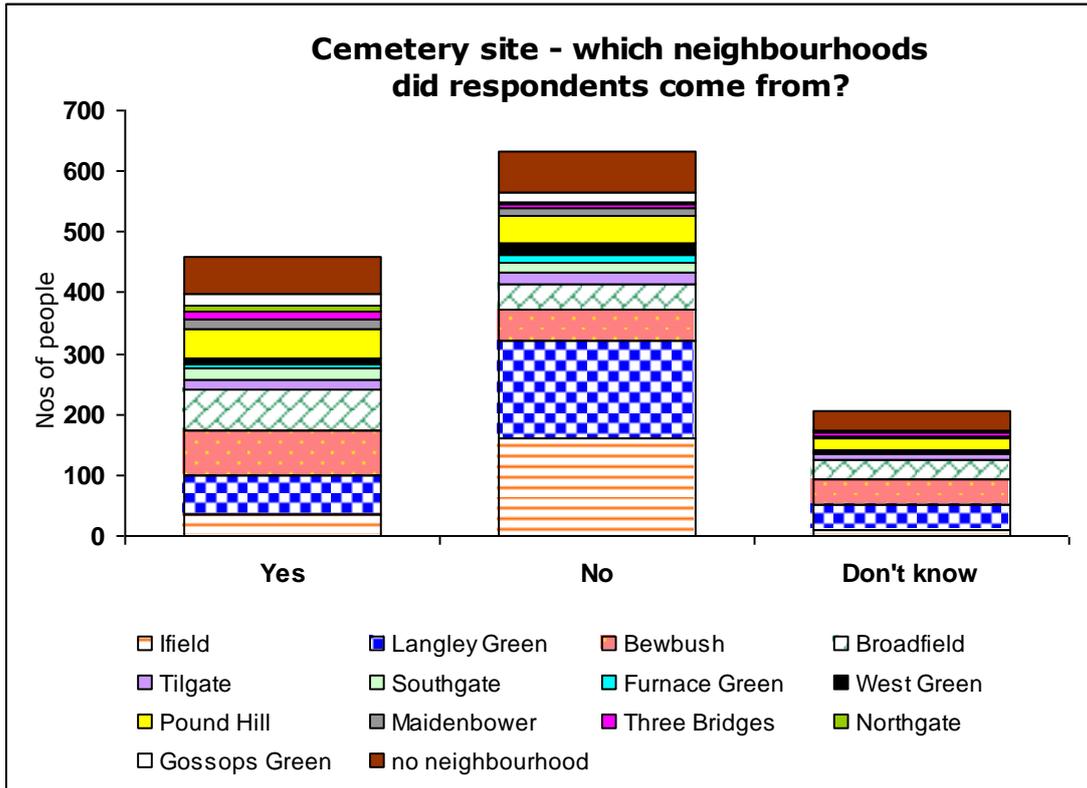
This question received a lot of feedback from respondents. For a full list of those comments received please refer to Appendix C. Within this report a number of comments have been used to give a 'flavour' of the views being expressed; they are not necessarily representative of all comments received.

This report examines the differences of opinion held by those across neighbourhoods and age groups. Findings indicate there was little difference of opinion between ethnic groups and gender profiles.

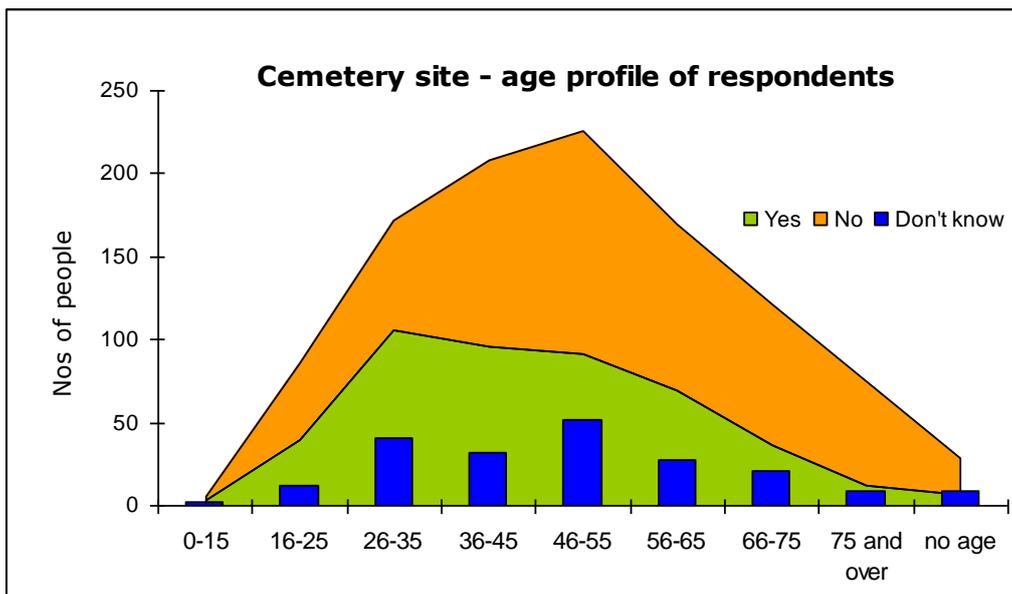
In some cases respondents provided postcodes, this has enabled us to map responses to better understand the geography of the responses. However, because not everyone provided a postcode the maps are not representative of all the views expressed.

Key messages

- Overall people were divided about whether Ewhurst playing field was a good site for a cemetery. 49% of respondents did not agree with the proposal whilst 35% agreed, the remaining 16% didn't know whether a cemetery should be located on Ewhurst Playing Fields. The response to the consultation was not overwhelmingly against the proposal.
- Respondents who completed this part of the questionnaire were mainly drawn from the areas affected by the proposed additional sites in the overall consultation, namely Ifield, Langley Green, Bewbush and Broadfield. However views were captured from people living across all neighbourhoods although they were fewer in number than those listed above. .



- When mapped the postcodes which were received indicate that disagreement with the proposal did tend to be a local issue with a cluster of postcodes being found near Ewhurst Playing Fields. The maps and the neighbourhood data indicate that those respondents who were more likely to agree or be undecided about the proposal were dispersed across the town.
- Younger people were more likely to support the development of a new cemetery on Ewhurst Playing Fields than the older generation; although overall most respondents were aged 46 years or older.



- The issues raised by respondents did not really differ depending on whether they supported or opposed the proposal. The four main issues were:-
 1. the negative impact it would have on local residents
 2. whether playing fields should be used for development, particularly when there is a view that they are well used
 3. problems with the site itself – traffic problems, flooding and noise were all cited as reasons why the site was unsuitable.
 4. whether valuable land should be used to accommodate the dead, when a cremation should be the way forward.

- There is a perception that a cemetery should be located on the edge of town and that Crawley has areas on its perimeter to accommodate this.

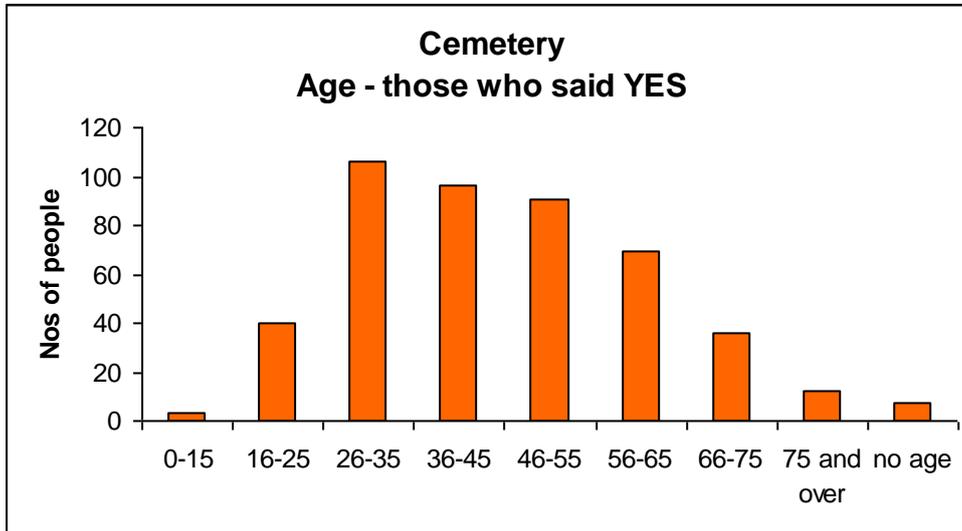
- Some respondents challenged the council to look beyond its boundary to find a site for a new cemetery.

- If the Ewhurst playing field site did come forward the design would need to balance land for burial with the need to continue to provide recreational space. People would like to see some land retained for this purpose. Screening would also be essential to counteract noise from the traffic as well as protect the views of local residents.

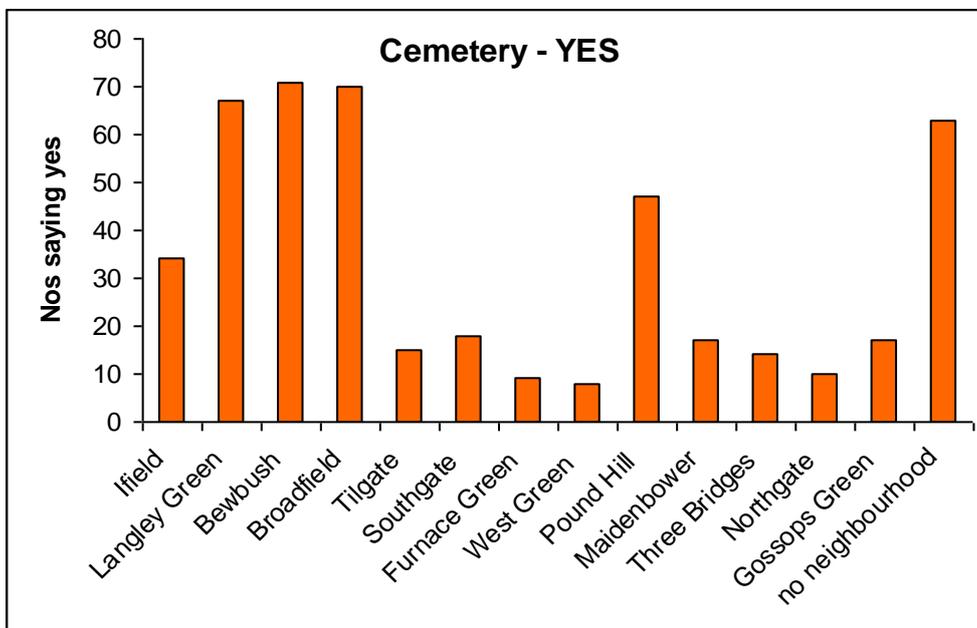
- Respondents did believe there were alternatives that perhaps have not been considered. Goffs Park, somewhere within the north east sector, the Outreach3way site, under the flight path at Gatwick and Langley Walk were some of the suggestions coming forward.

1. Who agreed with the proposal and why did they agree?

- 1.1 460 (35%) people agreed with locating a new cemetery on Ewhurst playing fields.
- 1.2 People who agreed were slightly younger than those who disagreed. 23% (106) of those respondents who said yes to the proposal were aged between 26-35 years of age with a further 21% (96) being aged between 36-45 years of age.

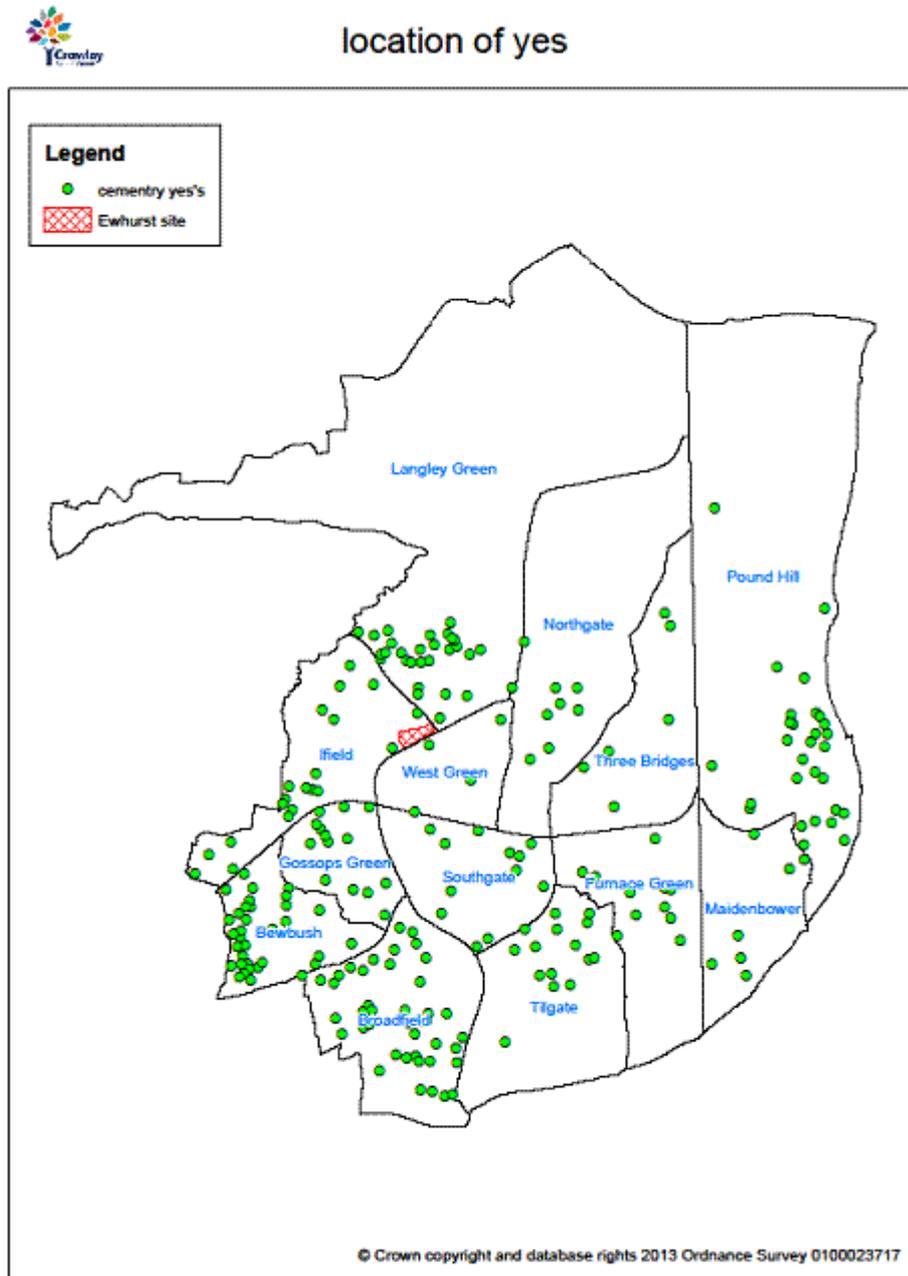


- 1.3 People who were more inclined to agree with the proposal were spread across the town compared to those who disagreed although the majority lived in Langley Green (15% (67)), Bewbush (15% (71)), Broadfield (15% (70)) and Pound Hill (10% (47)).



- 1.4 Half of the respondents who agreed that Ewhurst playing fields should be developed as a cemetery provided their postcode. This enables us to plot them on a town map to understand where support was strongest across the town. We already know that most people who agreed with the proposals live

in Bewbush, Langley Green, Broadfield and Pound Hill. What the map illustrates is that support for the proposal was generally dispersed across the town but there was a concentrated cluster of support around the Breezehurst Drive area of Bewbush. The Pound Hill support was also more likely to be concentrated in the Worth area rather than the neighbourhood as a whole.



- 1.5 Comments from those who agreed with the proposal were not overwhelming in their support. Comments fell into the following categories:
- 1) If a new cemetery is needed then the town needs to find somewhere **"Seems a 'no brainer'. If Snell Hatch is full and we want a cemetery in the town then this has to be a good proposal."**
 - 2) There were a number of people who although they agreed with the proposal would have preferred the cemetery to be developed elsewhere.

They agreed that if Ewhurst playing field was the only site available then they would accept that.

"If another location in Crawley can be considered then that is preferred. However, if not then I would rather the cemetery stay in town."

3) There was also concern from some people about the impact a cemetery might have on the local community. Those who raised issues were concerned about the view local residents might have whether the car park was adequate and whether properties would lower in value as a consequence of a cemetery being developed there.

4) Although there was hesitancy from some respondents who said yes to the new site, there were also a number of people who felt it was a good central location, who weren't concerned about losing recreational space and felt relieved that it wasn't being developed as housing.

"The site would probably be a good location for a new cemetery especially as it also has the bushes already surrounding the proposed area."

"We currently have a few recreational areas in Crawley (if you don't build houses on them!) so extending the cemetery so local residence can be laid to rest is a good idea."

"At least here it would stop any more housing on this plot of land."

1.6 Those people who agreed with the proposal also gave a few suggestions as to how the site could come forward. Some people thought that not all the site should be used and that provision should still be made for a park or recreational space. Others suggested that it would be essential that the site be screened off to offset the noise from the A23 and neighbouring roads. A number of people also suggested that stricter rules about the upkeep of the area should be implemented if a new cemetery came forward.

1.7 A number of other alternatives were also suggested by those agreeing with the proposal suggesting perhaps that it was not wholly viewed as an ideal site. Land at the side of Goffs Park, the North East sector, the site at Tinsley Lane were all suggested as viable alternatives. There were also a number of suggestions that land outside of the Crawley area could be purchased outside the borough to accommodate a new cemetery.

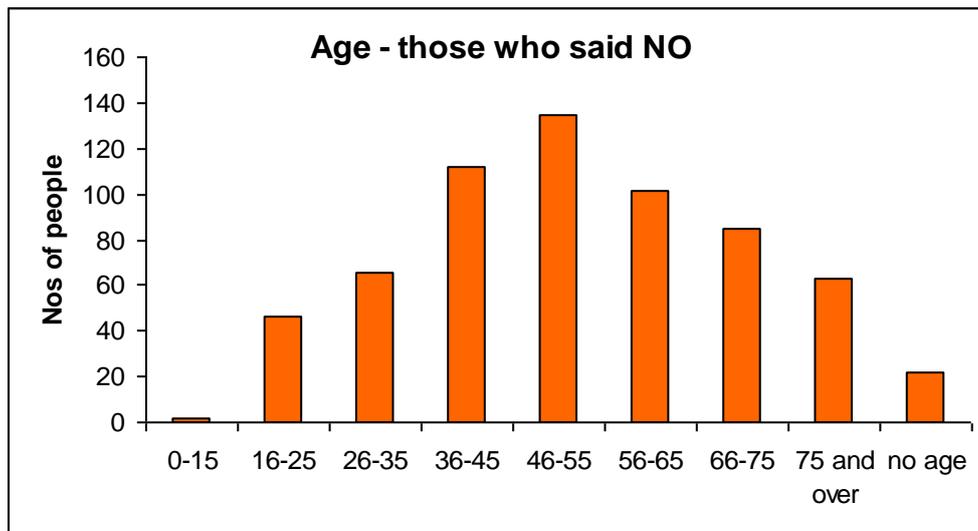
"Can this proposal not be incorporated into the NE sector development?"

"Could the land at the side of Goffs Park just over the railway line from Snell Hatch be utilised first?"

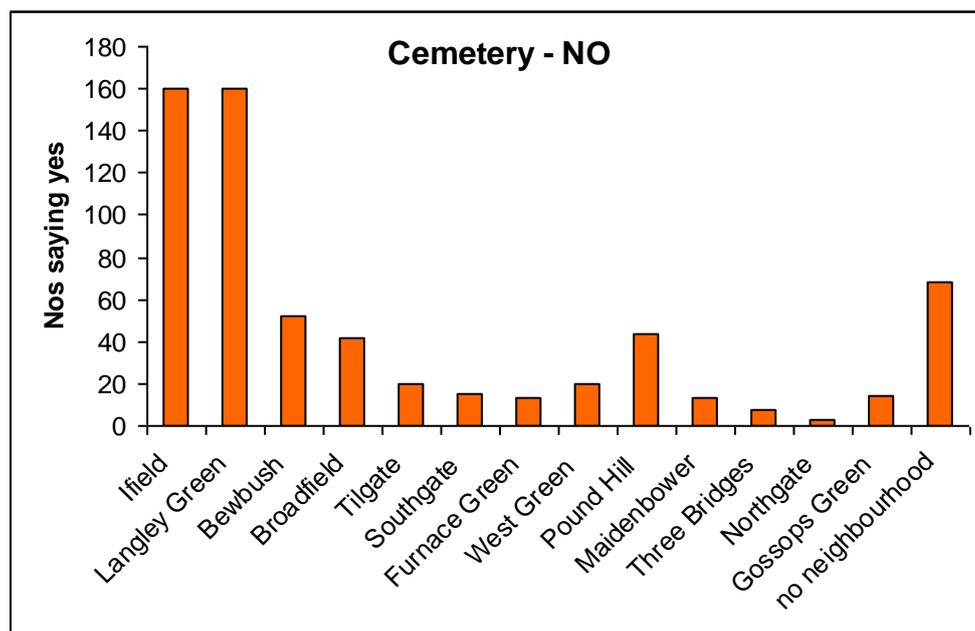
"But I suggest to look outside the borough for burial grounds also. This is in my view as viable an alternative. Land in Crawley is scarce and we need any spare land to build homes for Crawley people (affordable homes not private)."

2 Who disagreed with the proposal and why did they disagree?

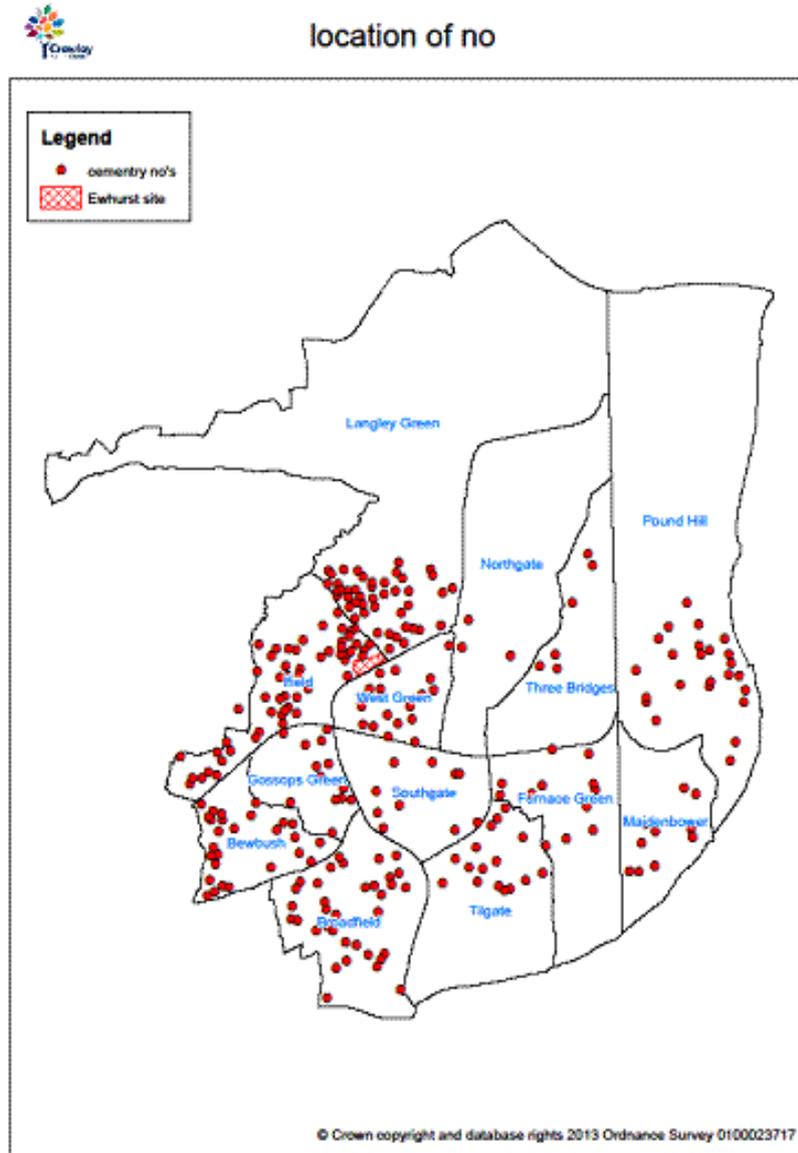
- 2.1 632 (49%) people indicated that they did not agree with locating a new cemetery on the Ewhurst playing field site.
- 2.2 People who disagreed with the proposal tended to be older than those who agreed as the graph below illustrates. 21% (135) were aged between 46-55 years of age, 17% (112) were aged between 36-45 years of age, 16% (101) were aged between 56-65 years of age and a further 13% (85) were aged between 66-75 years of age.



- 2.3 Most people who said no to the proposal came from Ifield (25%) and Langley Green (25%).



- 2.4 In total 44% (275) of respondents provided postcodes that could be plotted. However, when mapped you can see that opposition appears to be concentrated immediately around the site as well as the Langley Green area.



- 2.5 A lot of comments were received from those people who disagreed with a new cemetery on Ewhurst playing fields. These reflected a number of themes.

1) There was a real sense that playing fields and green space should not be developed on; it simply shouldn't be an option. In one comment they were referred to as the 'lungs of the town' and needed to be protected. Some people aligned their disagreement with government policy questioning that if playing fields were removed how this would impact on the nation's ability to tackle obesity levels. Others linked the removal of the playing field with the Olympic legacy questioning how this could be achieved in Crawley if recreational space was removed.

"This Playing field was considered by the planners of the new town in the 50's to be an important part of Crawley's recreation and open space and has served us well for many years. It is totally unacceptable to deny future generations of young and older people the opportunity of enjoying this playing field for a whole host of recreation activities. To destroy one amenity to provide another is criminal in my view and this crazy idea should be rejected. "

"Community green spaces/playing fields should not be considered for the new location of a new cemetery. The Government and the Health services are always talking about the rise of childhood obesity, therefore to take away this popular playing field makes no sense at all. If we lose our green spaces we will become a concrete jungle like Croydon."

"Ewhurst playing fields are enjoyed by many young and old people, enabling them to exercise and enjoy their sport. Obesity in the young is a major problem in this country, playing fields should be preserved to help fight this serious problem and the Olympics legacy should be encouraged."

2) Lots of people also mentioned that Ewhurst playing field is very well used. Children regularly use the park, football is played many times during the week, people walk their dogs there and there was also a sense that it is used by the wider community for picnics and informal play.

3) Some people strongly felt that the land should be there for the living and that to use it to accommodate the dead was unacceptable. This was often coupled alongside the idea that burials should not be considered in the future and that people should be more prepared to accept cremation.

4) There were a number of practical considerations which people suggested made Ewhurst playing fields an unsuitable site. People pointed out that traffic was likely to be a major concern; both in terms of the volume of traffic using the access roads and the inadequacy of the car park to accommodate a different use of the site. A number of people pointed out that the site is prone to flooding and there was also concern about the noise levels and whether that alone made it a suitable site for a cemetery where people might expect a quiet environment. Some people also felt the toilets would be inadequate for higher levels of use.

" The area is already congested with traffic and the car park next to the field will only hold up to around 10 cars. What will you bring for the residents when there is a funeral and the street is congested with cars parked on the road, blocking traffic?"

"As a lifetime resident of West Green and Ifield I was appalled to learn that a new Cemetery would be situated in Ewhurst Park, I agree with ** that a Cemetery should be a quiet restful area to say goodbye to loved ones, and being sandwiched between the A23 and Ifield Drive is certainly not the right area."**

"It is definitely NOT a good site for a cemetery because it floods every time it rains causing a big drainage problem. This is because there was a natural pond there which was fed by underground springs and STILL

is.”

5) Significant numbers of people felt very strongly that locating a cemetery next to a residential area was unacceptable and would have a detrimental impact on residents. Some people felt that locating a cemetery next to a retirement community was very insensitive. Others felt that it was unfair on local children to be educated next to a cemetery let alone go and use the local play area there. There were some concerns about the affect it might have on the value of people’s properties. Not all these comments came from people living next to the site.

”Site is overlooked by a retirement home. This proposal shows a lack of consideration for resident and is a potential cause of a fall in property value.”

”To be that insensitive to the new elderly flats that have just been built and overlook this proposed site beggars belief.”

”Too close to school. Children shouldn’t see grieving families.”

2.6 Those respondents who said ‘no’ to the proposal came up with lots of suggestions as to where a cemetery could be located instead. Comments strongly suggested that a cemetery should be ideally located on the outskirts of town; a central location was not ideal. There was a perception that there was ‘other’ space on the edge of town that could be used instead although in most cases respondents didn’t actually come up with a suggestion. There was support for exploring the option of the Borough Council looking for a more suitable site outside the boundary of the town. A number of alternative sites were also suggested and these are listed in the table below.

Alternative sites suggested by those people who disagreed with the proposal		
Outreach3way site	disused office space near CAA building	Goffs park – suggestions included the pitch and putt and the meadow area near the train line.
Under the Gatwick flight path	Somewhere with the North East sector – along the Balcombe Road, Gass holder site or within the new development itself	Old Bewbush Leisure Centre site
Langley Walk	Land near ifield Church	Rear of Rusper Road
Ifield Park	East of Brighton Road	Ifield Brook Meadows
Land at Meldon	Land at Tinsley lane	Other playing fields – Rathlin Road and St Mary’s Drive

2.7 There were a number of people who felt that the arguments conveyed in the consultation were not strong enough to support the development particularly

around the length of time the site would be suitable and it's proximity to the existing cemetery.

"This site may last a few years but as it is has a defined boundary; it also will run out of space."

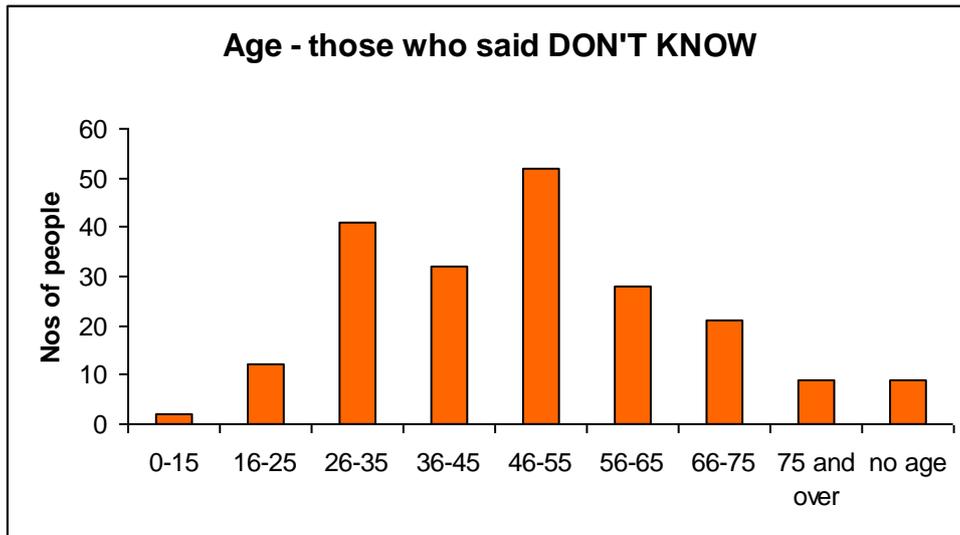
"This then raises the future question of which Crawley green field site in 2065 will the council have to use then."

"Why is it so important that the proposed cemetery is close to Snell Hatch."

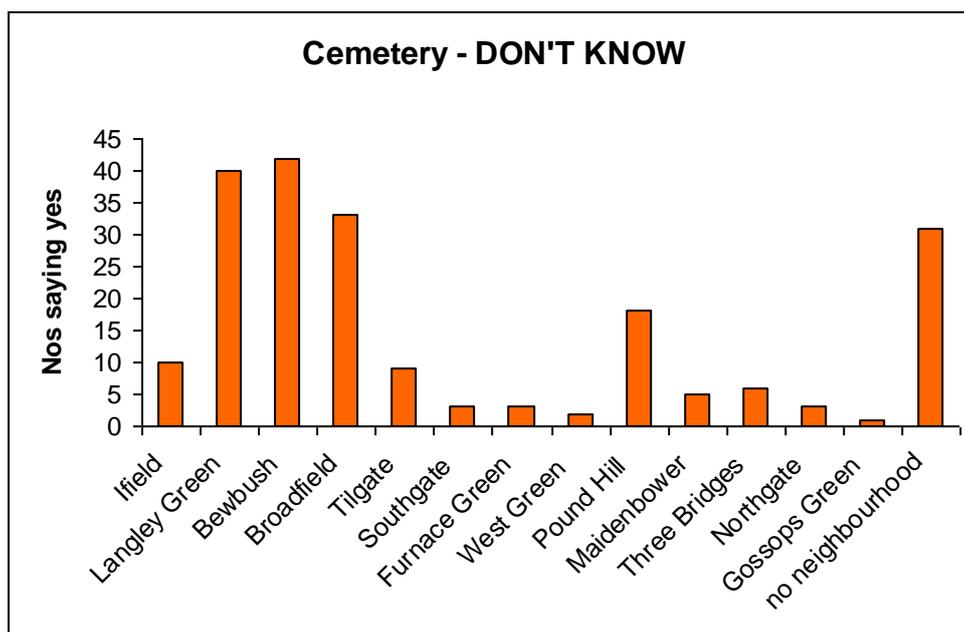
3. Who didn't know whether Ewhurst Playing Field was a good site and why were they undecided?

3.1 206 (16%) people didn't know whether Ewhurst playing fields was a good site or not.

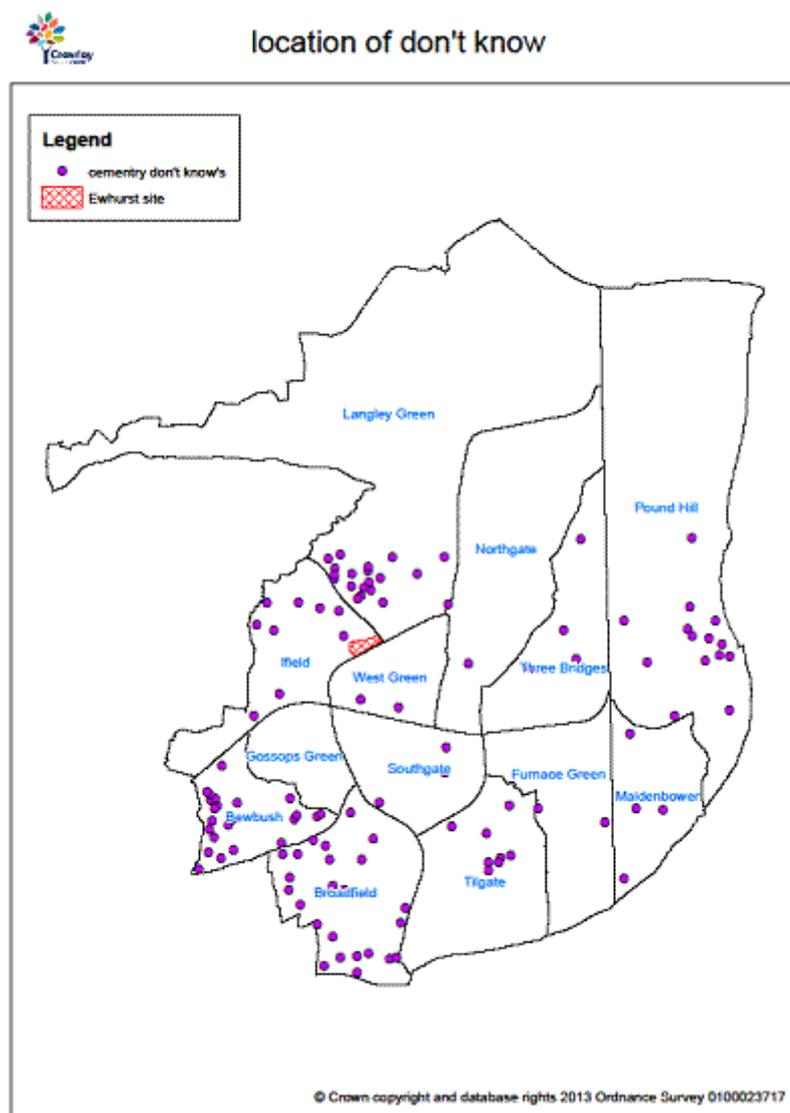
3.2 While a quarter (25% (52)) of respondents who didn't know whether this was a good site or not were aged between 46-55 years of age 20% (41) were aged between 26-35 years of age and a further 15% (32) were aged between 36-45 years of age.



3.3 20% (42) of respondents lived in Bewbush, 19% (33) lived in Langley Green and 16% (18) lived in Broadfield. This profile is similar to those people who agreed with the proposal.



- 3.4 55% of respondents (114) provided a postcode that could be mapped. Like those that agreed with the proposal there were no particular concentrated areas.



- 3.5 Like those people who agreed and disagreed with the site comments raised a number of concerns. There was a feeling by some that recreational space should not be lost and it was a concern to them although others felt that if a cemetery was needed then one had to be provided for.
- 3.6 Again, the impact the development would have on local people was raised with the same arguments being put forward. Traffic and noise issues and the dilemma of using land to accommodate the living were all views expressed by those people who didn't know whether this was a good site or not. A few comments suggest that the dead should be cremated and that land should be there for the living to use.

- 3.7 There were a number of comments which focussed on ideas for the new site. Again the idea of incorporating recreational space within the development was suggested and that screening might help to separate the two areas. The current car park would need to be extended and improved.