

Taking at-risk heritage assets out of the past and into the 21st Century and beyond!

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Presentation Format

- 1. The architectural and historic importance of St John's and Westgate Hill cemeteries.**
- 2. Creating a haven for the community and wildlife.**
- 3. Ensuring long-term survival.**

1. History of St John's and Westgate Hill Cemeteries



Newcastle

- Newcastle takes its name from the “new castle” built in 1080.
- England’s most northern city.
- Frontier against Scots to the north.
- Geordie accent highly rated!



Cemetery Locations – Westgate Hill



Site History

- Both cemeteries date from the 19th century and are Registered Parks and Gardens, Grade II.
- Westgate Hill was the first commercial cemetery in the city, and one of England's first Garden Cemeteries.
- There are several listed buildings in St John's, two chapels and two lodges.
- A decade ago a project to revitalise the buildings in St John's failed due to financial difficulties after only one building was completed.
- There are no buildings left at Westgate Hill, the chapel/lodge was demolished in the 80's.





Present Day Challenges – St John's

- Large in scale, site covers 28 acres
- Budget pressures and priorities
- Derelict and vacant listed buildings



Present Day Challenges – Westgate Hill

- Significant anti-social behaviour.
- No buildings to repurpose.
- Disconnected from local community.

T+WBPT and NCC Partnership

- Historic England matched NCC funds for a pilot: April 2023 – Sept 2024.
- Began community engagement, focusing on recent burials at St Johns and sharing stories.
- Creative Practitioners delivered Arts, Nature & Heritage themed workshops and events.
- Created mini-interpretation boards for both sites and a website for wider reach.
- Successfully obtained £177K from The Heritage Fund (plus £10K CIL match) to do more....



Current Project: April 2025/26

- Growing a 'friends of group', research and creative writing – inc library display.
- Site visit inspired artwork with local schools & young people.
- Exploring ideas and consulting on building reuse – St Johns chapels & lodges.
- Exploring ways to tackle ASB – Steering Group for Westgate Hill.
- Expert research into history of the sites landscape and buildings.
- Condition survey of the buildings & costings for reuse.



What's Next?

- Decide on appropriate re-use of buildings.
- Explore funds for restoration.
- Support & sustain friends group.
- Apply for two-stage bid (The Heritage Fund) & secure match.
- Any suggestions welcome





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Historic England

