



January 5, 2026

**Statement for the Islands Trust re: Inclusion of Provisions
for a Green Burial Cemetery in the Official Community Plan**

To Gabriola Island Trustees Susan Yates and Tobi Elliott,

The Gabriola Island Memorial Society (GIMS) is writing to encourage the inclusion of provisions for a new cemetery on Gabriola Island—specifically one that supports green and natural burial practices—in the Official Community Plan (OCP) currently under discussion.

Gabriola's existing cemetery capacity is limited, and the island's population is aging. At the same time, there is increasing community interest in burial practices that are environmentally responsible, culturally inclusive, and aligned with long-term land stewardship. Green burial offers a low-impact approach that complements the Islands Trust mandate to preserve and protect the unique environment of the Trust Area.

At present, the Gabriola Island Memorial Society has not yet secured an appropriate site for a new cemetery. We continue to actively explore both public and private land options on the island, recognizing that site identification, community dialogue, First Nations consultation, and regulatory alignment will take time. Inclusion of provisions for a green burial cemetery within the OCP would provide an important planning framework to support this ongoing work and ensure that future opportunities can be meaningfully considered as they arise. We understand that there is no specific zoning for a cemetery in the current OCP but it may be a permitted use under *Institutional, Parks and Recreation Uses*. Having clarity around that in the new OCP would be helpful.

Explicit recognition of the need for a green burial cemetery in the Official Community Plan would help ensure that end-of-life infrastructure is addressed proactively, rather than reactively, and that people with a strong connection to this land and community have the option to remain connected at end of life. It would also support broader goals related to environmental sustainability, community wellbeing, and responsible land use.

We respectfully urge the Islands Trust to include policies or land-use considerations that enable the future development of a green burial cemetery on Gabriola Island.

Sincerely,
The Board of the Gabriola Island Memorial Society

About Us: The Gabriola Island Memorial Society is a community non-profit and charitable organization committed to establishing and maintaining a green burial cemetery for the use of residents and former residents of Gabriola, Mudge and Decourcy Islands as well as members of their families and members of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. We also work to advance education and understanding of green or natural burial in the community and holistic deathcare practices. For more information please visit our website: naturalburialgabriola.ca