

Grandfather's body could be exhumed after relatives of Muslim buried alongside complain he was an unbeliever

The employee of Tell Mama may witter on about how scared Muslims are, but the antics of Sunday, [national press](#), which is good because I fear that the nervous local council will not give a resounding decision against when they meet tonight, and thus the demand will be made to the Ministry of Justice.

Chris Grayling, the Justice Secretary, could be dragged into a messy legal battle after a Muslim family demanded that a “non-believer” who was buried next to their relation be exhumed for religious reasons. The unnamed Muslim family raised objections after an 89-year-old Roman Catholic man was buried in a plot adjacent to their relation.

Shadrack Smith was buried in the multi-denominational Lychgate Lane Cemetery in Burbage, Leics, following his funeral on Jan 30. Mr Smith had lived in an official gipsy camp in nearby Aston Firs for more than 20 years, and in excess of 400 relations and friends attended his funeral.

His family later received notice that relations of the man buried alongside him had complained because Mr Smith was not an adherent of the Islamic faith. Islamic religious authorities say that it is forbidden for non-Muslims to be buried alongside Muslims under normal circumstances.

Mr Smith's family have now been warned by town hall officials that Mr Smith's grave may be moved.

If Burbage parish council decides to overrule Mr Smith's

family's wishes, it would fall to Mr Grayling's Ministry of Justice to approve the application to exhume and relocate his remains.

His family, which includes eight children, 25 grandchildren and 40 great-grandchildren, have vowed to fight "tooth and nail" to stop any exhumation taking place.

His daughter-in-law, Tracey Smith, 46, said: "This whole thing has devastated our family. We were told when we bought the plots that it was a multi-faith cemetery, but the council has been so unsupportive. I feel for the Muslim family because they obviously thought they were only going to have other Muslim families buried around them. But that's not our fault. The council has tried to bend over backwards to please the Muslim family.

"We have been told we might have to exhume Shady if the council decide to side with them. There is no way Shady will be exhumed. If they suggest it, we will take them to the highest court in the land. We will fight tooth and nail to stop the grave being dug up."

His family paid £2,500 for three plots at the cemetery, including one hand-picked for its position, facing towards Mr Smith's home, a Romany tradition. Burbage parish council confirmed that the cemetery is unsegregated, adding that: "So that people of all denominations can use Burbage Cemetery, the graveyard ground at Lychgate Lane is unconsecrated."

Travellers are also a 'minority'. But I fear I know which minority will triumph.

Update 6pm

Burbage Parish Council have issued a statement in answer to numerous complaints from members of the public. To paraphrase, the council insiste that local newspaper The Hinckley Times reported inaccurately. At a council meeting on 10th february

the council policy that Burbage Cemetery is a non-denominational, multi-faith facility and all local communities will be treated equally and fairly.

It still doesn't say that Mr Smith will continue to rest in peace. or that the Muslim family have been told to accept their choice of burial place.

From today's