



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN BURIAL AT POUNDBURY CEMETERY

Green burial is not for those who require a formal grave with a traditional headstone. It will be attractive to people who love birds and wildlife and who wish to create a natural meadow area which will provide environmental benefits for future generations.

For additional information please contact:

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Why Green Burial?

Green graves offer an alternative form of burial, which will, in time, provide an area which will provide natural habitat for native flora and fauna.

The area in which green burials will be carried out has been sown with wildflowers. The turf over a grave space will be carefully lifted before each grave is dug and replaced after the interment in it has taken place. In addition, each spring more wildflower seeds will be sown on the graves where interments have taken place. While trees and shrubs are not allowed on individual graves they are planted in special areas where interments will not take place so gradually nature will create an attractive wildflower meadow surrounding wooded areas.

Poundbury Cemetery

Poundbury Cemetery is the newest cemetery in Dorchester, opening in 2001. It is located to the west of Dorchester, between the historic town and the Duchy of Cornwall's acclaimed Poundbury development and is accessed from Poundbury Road (turn into it from Bridport Road in front of The Keep Military Museum).

Some of the cemetery, initially the section nearest the road, will be used for traditional burials but part of the cemetery is available for green burials since more and more people seem interested in them. If you want to do what you can for the environment, the Council is happy for burials in the traditional area to take place in environmentally friendly coffins or shrouds.

Eventually the land to the west of the cemetery will be built on. As far as we know there are no plans at present to build on the land to the south of it but the cemetery as a whole, and the area for green burials in particular, will make sure that, whatever happens in the future, there will always be an open space and wildlife habitat in the vicinity.

Our green burial area at Poundbury Cemetery has been carefully designed with help from the Dorset Wildlife Trust and includes mainly wild flower species for which Dorset is noted. All of the plant species that have been selected will attract butterflies and other insects to help create a habitat area for birds and small mammals.

Green Burial Code for Poundbury Cemetery

As with all interments the location of the grave is recorded on the site plan and in accordance with statutory requirements. Even though the ground will not be marked in any way we shall still be able to accurately locate graves.

It is important that families do not attempt to mark or tend individual graves once an interment has taken place, and the funeral flowers removed. The grave will be left unmarked apart from an initial slight mounding and the turf which was removed before the grave was dug will be carefully put back. Every Spring we shall sow more wild flower seeds over the whole area but paying particular attention to new graves.

Visitors are asked to respect the choice made by the deceased or their next of kin and to refrain from putting plants or memorial items that would mark individual graves. The site of each grave will be allocated by the Cemetery staff to minimise disturbance of the planting.

Rules Regarding Coffins

Burial may only take place in a biodegradable coffin, casket or shroud (for any other container prior agreement must be obtained from the Cemetery staff). Standard coffins used by funeral directors (chipboard) are acceptable, also natural wood coffins provided the supplier is able to confirm in writing that they are made from timber originating from managed tree forests. Metal lined or metal coffins or caskets will not be accepted on this section. To protect the environment embalmed bodies will not be accepted unless there is accompanying certification to confirm that the embalming was carried out on medical health grounds.

Funeral Arrangements

Graves will not be reserved for specific religions and the dead of varying faiths will be buried in the same area.

It is your decision as to whether you arrange a religious or secular service at a separate venue, to have a graveside service or to have no service at all.

The Chapel at Weymouth Avenue Cemetery can be booked for a fee; contact Sue Cheeseman for details.

Maintaining the Area

The green burial area will be managed primarily for the benefit of wildlife. Grass mowing may vary from nil to five times per year, depending on the species of wildflowers that develop on the section and the animals and birds which are present. Horticultural chemicals will not be used, except where a serious noxious weed develops. This would only involve spot treatment, a policy endorsed by the Woodland Trust.

It must be appreciated that the traditional 'neat and tidy' appearance of our cemeteries will not apply to the green burial area.

Dogs will not be allowed into this part of the cemetery, as their presence may disturb the natural wildlife.

Memorials

To encourage wildlife, wildflowers and trees, it is necessary to impose a number of restrictions. People walking to individual graves would create paths and trample the wildflowers, destroying the living memorial. Individual graves will not be identifiable and no memorials or unauthorised planting of trees and shrubs will be allowed within the green burial area. However if you would like to have a memorial in a different part of the cemetery, please contact the Cemetery staff.