



## PRIVATE BURIALS

Didcot Town Council recognises that for a variety of reasons not everybody wishes to use the services of a funeral director in arranging a funeral. The Town Council wants to respect the wishes of such people so this leaflet is designed to advise on how to go about doing so

### How do I book a burial?

There are up to three forms you may need to take to book a burial:

- 1. Exclusive Right of Burial**

In order for a burial in a full or cremated remains plot to take place it is necessary that somebody owns the exclusive right of burial. This is the right for somebody to determine who goes into the plot, and what memorial is put up afterwards. If no exclusive right of burial is owned, one must be purchased and can be done so by filling in the Exclusive Right of Burial form. This attracts a fee.
- 2. Interment Booking**

Once you have a burial plot, you will need to arrange the interment. To do this you must fill in our Interment Booking form and return it with a green Registrar's form for burials, or a white certificate of cremation for cremated remains. The green form is obtained from the local registration office, and the white form is provided by the crematorium following the cremation.
- 3. Private Burial**

The person booking the burial must also submit a Private Burial form. Due to the additional work involved for the Town Council in a private burial, this service attracts a fee.

Fees are updated on an annual basis so please speak to Town Council officers for clarification on what the total fee will be for the burial. All fees and paperwork must be submitted and complete two working days prior to the burial.

### Where can I get a coffin?

Even if you do not wish to use a funeral director for the rest of the funeral, you may wish to consider approaching local firms to see if they are willing to supply coffins. Alternatively, there is a list here of places that sell coffins to the public.

<http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk/index.php?page=coffins-and-urns-2>

Didcot Town Council's grave policy requires a coffin to be used for all burials. Please do be aware of the Town Council's maximum coffin size when ordering a coffin. Please contact the office for advice on the exact measurements.

### **How do I dig the grave?**

The Town Council digs cremated remains plots itself, which is included as part of the fee for the interment. Full burials, however, will require a grave digger.

Grave digging is a very technical skill, which is subject to a lot of laws and regulations. Consequently, Didcot Town Council does not allow graves to be dug by anybody but a registered grave digger. The Town Council will contact a suitably qualified grave digger on your behalf when checking availability for the time of the interment, but it will be up to you to pay them directly. Please arrange with the Town Council ahead of the funeral to be shown where the burial plot is.

### **Are there any legal formalities at the graveside?**

The name on the coffin plate must be checked against the name on the registrars green form by a Town Council officer. If correct the graveside ceremony can begin. Care must be taken around other existing graves & mourners should stand on pathways & not on other graves. Care must be taken by pall bearers to ensure coffin is lowered evenly into the grave & the straps are pulled out once the coffin has reached final resting place.

### **Can I hold a ceremony by the graveside?**

Absolutely. We welcome any form of religious or non-religious ceremony by the graveside. However, we do request that the burial, including any service, does not take longer than two hours. Please inform the Town Council of the estimated time the burial will be finished.

For the current section of the cemetery, no more than 40 people should be in attendance. For the older/historic sections, no more than 20 people should be in attendance.

These numbers are for safety reasons regarding the physical space around the grave itself, and in consideration for the surrounding graves.

### **Can I fill in the grave afterwards?**

Yes, you may fill in the grave afterwards as much or as little as you would like. Please let us know and we can provide the equipment to do so. For safety reasons there cannot be too many people moving by the graveside, so we request that a maximum of six people be filling in at the graveside at any one time.

### **How do I erect a memorial?**

Only the registered owner of a grave spot may apply to erect a memorial. Memorials must be put up in accordance with national standards, meaning that the owner of the grave cannot put up their own memorial. It must be erected by a BRAAM or NAAM qualified stonemason and they will be able to do the application process for you.

There are a number of memorial masons locally; please contact the office for an advisory list.

Please do be aware that following a burial the earth needs to settle. We advise, therefore, that for a coffin burial in particular that at least six months is left between the date of interment and the erection of a memorial.