

## **Newcastle-under-Lyme Bereavement Services**

### **Burials in Private Land** **Guidance and Procedure**



1. The death should be registered either direct with the Registrars for Births Deaths & Marriages and a Certificate for Burial & Cremation obtained.
2. If reported to the Coroner, a Coroners Certificate for Burial/Cremation will be issued prior to registering the death with the Registrars.
3. If you own the land concerned you must check the deeds to ensure there are no restrictions on what the property may be used for.
4. Before funeral arrangements are made it is recommended that the utility groups (water, gas, electricity) are informed to ensure pipes and cables will not interfere with the proposed burial area.
5. It is also recommended that the Local Authority Bereavement Services Department and Environmental Health are notified to ensure correct procedures and practices are carried out.
6. A funeral director may be appointed to assist you and carry out all your funeral arrangements.
7. The grave to be excavated must comply to the following Environmental Agency Guidelines:
  - It is recommended that 1 metre of subsoil below the bottom of the grave is allowed before reaching the water table.
  - The grave should be excavated deep enough to allow for the total number of interments required in the grave and allowing for at least one metre of soil to cover the coffin of the last interment to ground level. The bottom of the grave must also be free of standing water.
  - Be at least 250 metres away from any well, borehole or spring that supplies water for human consumption or is to be used in farm dairies.
  - Be at least 30 metres from any other spring or water course.
  - Be at least 10 metres from any field drain (draining to a water course).

**When excavating and backfilling the grave it is recommended that two people are in attendance, any machine work is carried out by a qualified person and the grave has adequate shoring equipment installed.**

8. Following the interment a register of the burial must be completed in durable black ink with the following details:
  - Number (consecutive numbers of burials)

- Date of Burial
- Name In Full
- Age
- Address
- Grave or Vault Number
- Other Particulars (relevant information regarding deceased. e.g. occupation, death registration district and certificate number).
- Signature of Person Directing or making the Entry.

A location plan showing the exact position of the grave including measurements from two fixed points will also be needed.

A copy of the burial register and location plan needs to be kept with the property deeds and it is suggested that an amendment is added to the land registry so a permanent record is available to future purchasers.

There is a general responsibility to allow any person access/inspection of these burial records at all reasonable times and free of charge. It would be advantageous to keep an additional copy of the above records at the property for reference/access purposes.

9. It is suggested that the police are notified of the intended date and time of the interment in case the burial is reported as a suspicious activity.
10. Within 96 hours of the interment the tear off slip of either the Certificate for Burial/Cremation or Coroners Certificate must be completed with details of the interment and returned to the appropriate Registrars Office.
11. If a memorial is planned, planning permission may be required from the council's planning department to have the memorial erected as it is considered a building under Planning Law. If there is likely to be more than two interments or multiple graves the ground may constitute a change of use to burial ground and require planning permission.
12. Once remains have been buried they may not be disturbed without authorisation, a Ministry of Justice Licence to Exhume. There is no guarantee that future owners of the property would allow a burial to rest in peace and could apply for an exhumation. In addition future owners may refuse access to relatives who may wish to visit the burial site.