

NEWPORT GENERAL CEMETERY
WOODLAND BURIAL INFORMATION PACK

“A Return to Nature”



August 2021

INTRODUCTION

Newport (Shropshire) Town Council is aware of the concern felt by many people at the loss of trees and wildlife.

The Council has recognised that burial facilities can be designed to help reverse this loss, and offer benefits to wildlife, whilst also introducing greater choice for the bereaved when planning funeral arrangements.

Woodland Burial offers a “return to nature” for those who wish to be buried amongst birds, mammals and wild flowers and providing a tree as a living memorial which will offer pleasures and benefits to future generations.



NEWPORT GENERAL CEMETERY

The Cemetery in Audley Avenue, Newport opened in 1859. The grounds contain many beautiful mature trees and bedding, all maintained to a high standard. Wildlife abounds, including squirrels and a wide variety of birdlife. The Council plans other initiatives to improve the wildlife potential of this valuable tract of “green” land within Newport. There is a small chapel set within the heart of the Cemetery which is available for funeral services of any religious denomination or for those wishing to hold a non-religious commemoration of the deceased.

WOODLAND BURIAL

The woodland graves are located in an area of land acquired by the Council as an extension directly adjoining the cemetery. This burial area will be planned to recreate in time a traditional oak woodland scene considered one of the finest habitats for wildlife. The graves will remain forever in newly created woodland.

The woodland graves will be carefully recorded on plans, each grave being identifiable by a unique microchip placed adjacent to the memorial tree. Each grave is designed for a single interment but graves are grouped together to allow family members to be buried in close proximity.

PLANTING

After the burial, the soil will be allowed to settle prior to planting. *Memorial trees will be selected by the Town Council from the following list of native species of a decorative nature. Groups of graves will reflect a balance of decorative trees and each group will have a native oak at its centre. The oak on maturity will form the basic of the oak woodland, the decorative trees by that time having fulfilled their natural lifespan:-*

Wild Cherry
Rowan
Holly
Crabapple
Whitebeam (Service Tree)
Aspen

The trees will be under planted with native spring bulbs, and a perennial wild flower mix will be allowed to self seed (see later section titled “Maintaining the Area”)

COFFINS AND CONTAINERS

All burials in the woodland area should take place in biodegradable body containers including cardboard and wicker coffins, but not home made or shrouds and this must be stipulated to the funeral director if you choose to have the burial managed in this way. Cremated remains can also be buried in this area and the same requirements will apply to caskets used to contain these. Ashes should certainly not be enclosed in any polythene inner container. Embalming is strictly prohibited.

MAINTAINING THE AREA

The woodland burial area will be managed for the development of the trees and benefit of wildlife. Grass mowing may vary from nil to five times per year, depending on the species of wild flowers which establish themselves on the site. Horticultural chemicals will not be used except where a serious noxious weed develops e.g. ragwort. This would be dealt with by spot treatment, a policy endorsed by the Woodland Trust.

It should be appreciated that the traditional “manicured” appearance of the remainder of the cemetery will not apply to this burial area.

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 service, a secular service or have no service at all. The traditional funeral pattern does not have to be rigidly followed and funerals can be carried out without the guidance of a funeral director, but you should seek advice before taking this option.

For those who have no relatives able to care for a traditional grave and memorial or who are opposed to their children or relatives being committed to caring for a grave, a woodland burial offers a new choice. Nature will care for the grave and the neglect of an unvisited memorial will not arise.

MEMORIALS

To encourage wildlife, wildflowers and the inter planted oak trees, it is necessary to impose a number of restrictions. People walking to individual graves would create paths and trample the wildflowers we are trying to encourage, thereby destroying the very living memorials celebrating the lives of the departed. The leaving of flower tributes at the graveside will therefore not be permitted and relatives are courteously requested not to visit the grave following the interment, other than viewing from the main pathway. You may

however place an entry in the Book of Remembrance maintained by Newport Town Council. Details can be obtained from our offices.

ENQUIRIES

Any enquires relating to Woodland Burial can be made at:

Newport (Shropshire) Town Council
The Guildhall
High Street
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 7AR

Telephone Number: 01952 814338
Email: Enquiries@newportshropshire-tc.gov.uk