



Management rules for woodland burials in Monkton and Prestwick New Cemetery

Introduction

A woodland burial is a natural form of burial which provides important environmental benefits, as well as giving a true sense of creating life from death. This type of burial is not for people who want to visit a neat and tidy grave and leave floral tributes or have a traditional memorial stone. It is for people who want to become part of a natural growing process after they die.

The site

The new woodland burial section is at the back of Monkton and Prestwick New Cemetery in Monkton, beside mature woodland and open farmland. Within the section, there are semi-mature woodland trees which were planted six years ago.

The grass is only cut back once a year, which gives the area a natural feel. We are regularly planting natural bulb species to improve and add to the woodland plant life.

The funeral

The area will be non-denominational (that is, it will not enforce the principles of a particular religion or faith) and no part of it will be reserved for specific religious groups. It is your choice whether to have a religious service, a service personal to you, or no service at all.

Coffins

We will accept biodegradable coffins for burial – this means coffins which are made of materials such as wicker, bamboo, wood (as long as it is not varnished and has been taken from a renewable source), cardboard and so on. Bodies that are buried in the woodland must not have been embalmed (except if repatriated), and must be wearing all natural fibres, for example, wool or cotton.

The graves

The law in Scotland allows councils to sell the 'Right of Burial in a Lair'. This means the actual ground continues to belong to us, but the 'lair holder' (the person who 'buys' the lair) has the right to bury one person in that woodland burial grave. We will record the grave on a plan and each grave will be numbered. We will place a microchip at the head of each grave to make it easy to identify in the future. Each grave will be used for one burial only (or to bury one set of ashes).

Plots for cremated remains (ashes)

There is a special area for burying cremated remains within the semi-mature woodland. Cremated remains will be buried round the existing trees, which will be used as markers. As a result, we will maintain and replace these trees if any of them become diseased or blown over by wind.

Memorials and floral tributes

We will remove funeral flowers from the grave after around two weeks. Floral tributes cannot be placed on graves after this time. We have the right to remove any item which has been placed on or near a grave without notice

Memorial plaque wall

We have built a wall to allow people to put up a small memorial plaque made out of natural materials, such as bronze or granite. The plaque must be no larger than 200 millimetres by 150 millimetres (8 inches by 6 inches). You can arrange this through a monumental sculptor.

Reservations

Because of the woodland layout, it will not be possible to reserve a grave or buy a grave in advance. However, when you come to bury your husband, wife or partner, you can buy the grave next to it if you want to.

Woodland maintenance

We manage the woodland differently to how we would maintain regular grounds. We aim to disturb the woodland as little as possible, as we want to encourage wild flowers and nature to grow and develop. The woodland burial section will look very different from the neat and tidy appearance of a traditional cemetery.

Trees

As burials progress, we will plant a native mix of woodland trees in the area. We will supply the trees and plant one native species at the head of the graves during autumn and winter. We have allowed enough room for the trees to form a woodland canopy in the future. We expect the developing woodland and wild flowers to create a peaceful area that future generations can enjoy.

Please carefully consider the restrictions on the woodland section before you decide whether to go ahead with this burial option. We will apply these rules strictly.

These woodland burial management rules have been added to our existing 'Management rules for cemeteries', and relate particularly to rules 10 and 13.