

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL



Poundbury Cemetery

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Interments

Poundbury Cemetery offers a number of choices for full burial.

The Traditional Area

Part of the cemetery will be reserved for traditional interments where families will be able, with consent, to have erected the full range of memorials, including headstones, kerb sets and free-standing vases.

All grave plots in the traditional area will be available for exclusive rights of burial for 50 years to be purchased.

The Lawn Area

Another part of the cemetery will be maintained as a lawn area where only headstones (which can have an integral flower vase) will be permitted, again with consent. At present here are no new lawn plots available.

The Children's Area

Part of the cemetery close to the entrance will be reserved for the burial of children. Again, with both consecrated and unconsecrated plots. The graves in the children's area are smaller and any memorials erected (for which consent is required) will also be smaller than in the rest of the cemetery. You will only be able to have memorials erected if you have purchased exclusive rights of burial for 50 years but there will be plots in this area which do not have to be purchased.

Green Burials

The south-western corner of the cemetery will be reserved for environmentally friendly burials where no memorials will be permitted. There are certain rules about what coffins can be used and the area will be maintained as a wildflower meadow.

Muslim Burials

A small area of the cemetery has been reserved for burials to be carried out in accordance with the rites of the Muslim faith.

Cremated Remains

The cemetery also includes a number of options for disposing of cremated remains.

Ashes Plots

Part of the cemetery, which includes both consecrated and unconsecrated land, has been divided into small plots for burying caskets of ashes. You will not have to purchase exclusive rights of burial in respect of an ashes plot, but you will only be able to have a memorial erected if you have purchased the plot and obtain prior consent.

Ashes Chamber

Beneath the central building is a chamber into which cremated remains can be placed. This is unconsecrated.

Green Burials

There will also be the facility for ashes to be buried in the green burial area. Again, no memorials will be permitted in it and the area will be maintained as a wildflower meadow.

Memorials

All memorials erected have to be provided by properly qualified people who are fully insured for carrying out the work. The Council's consent is required to the erection of all memorials and fees are payable. **All unauthorised memorials in whatever form will be removed.**

The Traditional Area

All graves in the traditional area have to be purchased. Subject to that (and to the Council's consent and to payment of the requisite fees) headstones, kerb sets, flat stones and free-standing flower vases will be permitted in this area. **All unauthorised memorials in whatever form will be removed.**

The Lawn Area

Memorials will only be permitted in the lawn area on graves which have been purchased. Only headstones (which can incorporate integral flower receptacles) will be permitted in this area. Again, the Council's consent is required, and fees are payable. **All unauthorised memorials in whatever form will be removed.**

The Children's Area

Memorials will only be permitted in the children's area on graves which have been purchased. Subject to this, the Council's consent and payment of the appropriate fees, headstones, kerb sets, flat stones and free-standing flower vases will be permitted in this area. However, no memorial will be permitted which exceeds 60 centimetres in overall height. **All unauthorised memorials in whatever form will be removed.**

Plaques

Most of the kerbs around the roads and paths in the cemetery have recesses in them for brass or bronze plaques of a uniform size and similar design. The Council will need to approve the wording to be used and a fee will be payable. These can be used as memorials to people who have been buried in the green burial area (where no memorials are permitted) or to people whose remains have been placed in the Chamber. They can also be used as memorials to people whose remains are not even interred in the cemetery. **All unauthorised memorials in whatever form will be removed.**

Exclusive Rights of Burial

Please note that it is Council policy that plots are allocated by the Council on the basis of the next available plot at the time of burial. **A specific plot cannot be requested in advance.** This is to ensure all space in the cemetery is fully utilised and for practical reasons in terms of digging a grave. You can, therefore, pre-purchase the right to be buried in Poundbury Cemetery but the exact location will be allocated by the council at the point of burial.

Exclusive rights of burial for 50 years can be purchased. These rights can be transferred to other family members to enable them to be buried in the same grave provided that the grave is not already full. If you do not purchase exclusive rights in respect of a plot you will not be able to have a memorial and other people not related to you will eventually be buried in the same grave.

Funeral Arrangements

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.

Charter for the Bereaved

The Council has adopted a Charter for the Bereaved which identifies the following rights:

1. It is your right to have a burial organised and conducted in a dignified and orderly manner, supported by competent, professional, and caring cemetery staff.
2. It is your right to inspect statutory cemetery records.
3. It is your right to purchase a private grave for a period not exceeding 50 years. (This “Right of Burial” is a grave for one or more burials, and upon which you can place a memorial. To this purchase cost, a burial fee is also payable.)
4. It is your right to choose to be buried in an unpurchased grave. (You cannot reserve space for further burials in this type of grave, nor do you have any right to place a memorial. Further unrelated burials will occur in the future, the grave being “re-cycled”. For each burial, a fee is payable.)
5. It is your right to place a memorial within the constraints of regulations in force or to leave the grave unmarked.
6. It is your right and responsibility to maintain a memorial upon a grave during the period of grave rights granted to you. The memorial cannot be disturbed or moved during this period without your express permission unless it poses a safety hazard. The safe erection and maintenance of the memorial is your responsibility.
7. It is your right to use any memorial mason of your choice, provided they are not prohibited by the Council.
8. It is your right to be offered an individual grave for a baby or infant.
9. It is your right to be able to purchase an adult grave for the burial of a baby or infant, with sufficient depth remaining to allow adult burials.

10. It is your right to choose the form and location of the burial service.
11. It is your right to choose the type and design of coffin, within the constraints of availability, regulations, and safe materials.
12. It is your right to receive a prompt response to any form of communication with the Council.
13. It is your right to be given a table of cemetery fees upon request.
14. It is your right to receive a service that recognises your needs, without unfairness or discrimination e.g., religious belief, ethnic needs, disability, etc.
15. It is your right to organise a funeral without the use of a funeral director.
16. It is your right to expect a reasonable standard of grounds maintenance. Where standards fail to satisfy this commitment, you have the right to complain.
17. It is your right to be given a list of regulations used by the Council.
18. It is your right to be given a written explanation of the reason why a regulation has been used to restrict or otherwise influence your rights.
19. It is your right to receive a quality service provided by trained and experienced staff. Where service standards fail, you have a right to question the level of expertise shown and to receive assurances regarding the ability of those involved.
20. It is your right to be given an inspection of the cemetery at any reasonable time.

A Brief History of Dorchester's Cemeteries

In 1852 Dorchester's Board of Health published a report declaring the graveyards attached to the churches full, which paved the way for new cemeteries to be created and on 3rd July 1854 an Order of the Privy Council decreed "[Burials] to be discontinued from and after the first January, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five, in the churches and churchyards of *All Saints*, the *Holy Trinity*, and *St Peter*" and, in respect of Fordington, "To be discontinued forthwith in the church of *St George*, and in such part of the churchyard thereof as is within five yards of the church, or of any dwelling-house, and one body only to be buried in each grave".

The first proper cemetery to be created was at Weymouth Avenue, on 4 acres 3 roods 30¾ perches of land acquired from the Duchy of Cornwall by the Burial Board of the Parishes of The Holy Trinity, St Peter, and All Saints in 1856 at a cost of £515 0s 2d. The cemetery was subsequently extended by the purchase for £400 of an additional 2 acres 2 roods of land at the northern and southern extremities of the cemetery to give the shape of the cemetery with which we are familiar today.

Pressure for burials in Fordington (which was not at the time part of Dorchester) was increased following a number of deaths arising from an outbreak of cholera in 1854. This resulted from an enforced intake in August of 700 convicts from the Millbank Prison in London, where cholera was rife, to the Barracks in Dorchester, which were unusually empty because most of the military had been mobilised to take part in the Crimean War. Two women in Holloway Row were contracted to do the laundry for the prisoners and it is believed that this is how the disease was first introduced into Fordington. The Mill Street area was severely overcrowded (ironically because it was the only area of land in Fordington not owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, which refused to release any of its land for development) and the cholera spread rapidly in the appallingly insanitary conditions which existed in the area.

At least 30 people died of the disease in September 1854 alone, and all of them are likely to have been buried in St George's churchyard, adding further to the pressure on burial space there which had already been recognised. In 1866 the Duchy of Cornwall gave 2 roods 38 perches of land (formerly part of the

Farthinghold Tenement) to the Fordington Burial Board for use as an extension of the churchyard and this is the area which we now know as 'Old Ground'. The 'New Ground', 1 acre 8 perches of land, was purchased by the Burial Board in 1885 for £587 to complete the Cemetery as we know it today. Part of the cemetery occupies a site which had been used for burials in Roman times.

In the early 1990s the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee (which succeeded the independent Boards for Dorchester and Fordington in 1927) had formally closed Fordington Cemetery and realised that Dorchester Cemetery was approaching capacity. It therefore entered into negotiations with the Duchy of Cornwall which resulted in the provision of land at Poundbury and approval of the design which we see today. The site is 4.7 acres in extent and the Council has a 999-year lease of it, for which we have paid £25,000.

Dorchester is grateful to the Duchy of Cornwall for its assistance in meeting the Town's burial needs.

The Dorchester Joint Burial Committee voluntarily wound up on 30 June 2011, having transferred all its responsibilities and assets to Dorchester Town Council.