

Muslim Burial Policy

Canterbury Cemetery
Westgate Court Avenue
Canterbury CT2 8JL

Canterbury City Council's **Muslim Burial Policy**

Canterbury Cemetery, Herne Bay Cemetery and Whitstable Cemetery, are administered by Canterbury City Council's Cemetery Services in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s214 and Schedule 26, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (amendment)1986.

All enquiries to the Cemeteries should be addressed to:

Cemeteries Manager
Canterbury City Council
14 Rose Lane
Canterbury CT1 2UR

Telephone **01227 862 490**

Email: **cemeteries@canterbury.gov.uk**

Introduction

This policy document is supplementary to the Cemetery Burial Regulation document and contains additional information useful for when a Muslim burial is required.

In this document you will find information regarding:

1. How to book a burial
2. Types of graves available
3. Purchasing the burial rights
4. Cemetery fees
5. Legal requirements
6. The burial procedure
7. Contact details including Mosque representatives
8. Ground maps and directions – Canterbury Cemetery

1. How to book a burial

When a burial is required, please telephone or email the office, as soon as possible, to book a provisional time and day. Interments may take place between the hours of:

- 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday
April to September; and
- 9am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday
October to March.

Outside these times on weekdays, weekends, and bank holidays cover is subject to the council's 'Out of Hours' policy.

The information we require when a burial is booked

Please note that only Canterbury cemetery has a dedicated muslim section

Funeral date and time

The date and time the funeral cortege will arrive at the cemetery gates. The entrance required will be specified upon booking.

Details of the deceased

Full name, address, and age.

Type of burial

Either a coffin, a casket or a shroud is to be used. We must have the coffin size as soon as possible to ensure the grave is the correct size. Coffin/shroud base sizes must be given in writing, via email. The council will not accept responsibility if this information is later found to be incorrect.

Burials without coffins are permitted provided that the deceased is brought to the grave in a temporary coffin, and screening must be provided and used to afford decency during the burial (screening via mourners is acceptable).

If it is to be a shroud burial then the council will provide a wooden layer, so that earth will not be placed directly on to the body when the grave is filled with earth. Shroud only burials are not permitted if the deceased has a contagious or notifiable disease.

Please note that all graves will be dug on an angle to face MECCA.

Notice of Interment

A completed Notice of Interment must be received by the office to confirm the booking. The form is available from the office and via email, or on the council's website. This must be completed and received by the cemetery authority before the burial can take place.

The person applying for the burial (the applicant) will be responsible for payment of the relevant fees. This fee **MUST** be paid **BEFORE** the burial can take place.

2. Type of grave

An earthen grave can be provided and are usually single depth (4 ft 6 in) in the Muslim section (XGM) unless a specific request is made for a double depth grave for two. The grave will utilise hydraulic and metal shoring for health and safety purposes, and this needs to be removed prior to closing the grave, or any backfilling of the earth.

Wooden layer graves are like earthen graves, but they will have a wooden layer to accommodate shroud burials. This is to protect the deceased from the earth being placed directly upon them.

3. Purchasing the burial rights

All graves must be purchased prior to burial. Purchasing the Exclusive Right of Burial ensures that no other burials may take place in the grave. A Grave Deed will be issued after the relevant paperwork is completed and about two weeks after the burial. There can be a maximum of two owners, and any subsequent decisions relating to the grave (for example memorial, further burial) will require the written consent of both owners. A memorial may be placed on the grave subject to the completion of a Memorial Permit application and payment of the appropriate cemetery fee.

The Exclusive Right of Burial does not include the ownership of the actual land which remains with the council.

4. Cemetery fees

The fee for a burial must be paid to the council before it takes place. The fees are calculated by adding the interment, maintenance and purchase fees together plus any 'out of hours' or chapel fees. A list of the current fees and charges can be obtained from the council's website or through the council's office.

Fees usually change each April.

For non-residents of Canterbury district, the full price is double the subsidised figure for Canterbury district residents, except for the Transfer of Burial Rights and search fees.

If a person has lived outside the district, had to be moved for medical reasons that were beyond their control and died outside the district, then the residents' discount will be applied on the fees to be charged.

If a person or grave owner has lived in the Canterbury district for 10 out of the last 20 years, they will also qualify for a resident discount.

The council may ask for documented evidence of these circumstances.

5. Legal requirements

A Registrar's Certificate or Coroner's Order for burial must be delivered to the Cemetery Office before a burial can proceed. The burial cannot proceed if the certificate has been forgotten except where the funeral director has signed a declaration (Form 18) in accordance with the Birth and Deaths Registration Act 1926.

6. The burial procedure

An appropriately dressed member of the council's staff will meet the cortege at the cemetery gates at the time arranged for the burial. They will witness the burial, give advice, and assist whenever required. Other staff members may be present and remain in the background.

Lowering the body into the grave

The coffin will be placed upon 'putlogs' positioned over the open grave space.

'Webs' are provided to go under the coffin and to enable the 'bearers' to carefully lower the coffin/body into the grave. Once lowered, the 'webs' must then be removed and left to the side of the grave. The council's staff will then remove the webs, shoring and wooden boarding in preparation for backfilling the grave.

Backfilling the grave

In many cases families and mourners wish to return the soil to the grave themselves. The cemetery authority will provide equipment, should the mourners like to carry out the initial stage of this process themselves. This is entirely optional, and the staff will be on hand to give instructions. The main body of the grave will then be filled in by the council's machinery. This process will be overseen by the cemetery staff and the funeral director. The grave will be left mounded to allow for settlement. Any flowers will be positioned on top of the grave.

In the event of a shroud burial, a wooden layer, provided by the cemetery, will be placed over the deceased, prior to the backfill.

Care must be taken to ensure that mourners are not injured during the back filling process.

Injuries can occur when too many people try to fill the grave at the same time and get in each other's way. Injuries to feet can occur when suitable footwear is not worn. For this reason, we only allow three mourners to backfill at one time.

After the burial

After a period of settlement, the grave space will be grass seeded. A memorial may be added (either full memorial or lawn) after at least six months following the burial. Canterbury City Council would recommend twelve months to allow for further settling of the grave. It is cemetery policy to keep Muslim graves mounded thereafter, where applicable.

Only cut flowers are allowed to be placed on the grave space, with no personal items (for example solar lights, wind chimes etc) being permitted. No fencing is permitted. Anything found to be placed outside of the grave space will be removed without warning by cemetery staff.

7. Useful contacts

The Markaz – Canterbury Mosque
1 Giles Lane
Canterbury
CT2 7LT
Email: info@canterburymosque.co.uk

8. Ground maps and directions – Canterbury Cemetery

