



# *Information for Muslim Burials*

**LONDON ROAD CEMETERY ST ALBANS**

**The cemeteries are administered under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 214 and Schedule 26, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 & the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (amendment) 1986.**

**January 2011**

The Council's cemeteries are administered by the community Services Department of St Albans City & District Council. The Council contracts out the grave digging and ground maintenance in our cemeteries to John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Limited.

All enquires relating to the Cemeteries should be addressed to:

The Cemeteries Manager  
**St Albans City & District Council**

The Cemetery Office  
Hatfield Road Cemetery  
Hatfield Road

St Albans

Herts. AL1 4LU

Telephone: 01727 819362 Fax: 01727 835226

E mail: [cemeteries@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:cemeteries@stalbans.gov.uk)

The **Cemetery Office** is situated inside Hatfield Road Cemetery and is open from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday except bank holidays. It is always advisable to make an appointment if you wish to visit the office because cemetery staff may not be available during burials or on other occasions.

## **Introduction**

This information document is supplementary to the Cemetery Information & Regulations and contains additional information useful 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. How the actual burial takes place.
7. Contact details including Mosque representatives.

## 1. How to book a burial.

When a burial is required please telephone the Cemetery Office on 01727 819362, as soon as possible, to book a provisional time and day. Interments may take place **between** the hours of 9.30 am to 3.30 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30 am to 2.00 pm on Fridays. Saturday morning interments are dependent on staff availability and subject to extra charges. No interments will take place on Bank Holidays.

### **The information we require when a burial is booked:**

**Funeral date and time:** The date and time the funeral cortege will arrive at the cemetery gates.

**Details of the deceased:** Full name, address and age.

**Type of burial:** Whether a coffin, casket or shroud is to be used. If a coffin or casket is to be used we must have the coffin size to ensure the grave is the correct size. Coffin sizes must be given in writing and we cannot be held responsible 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 is used to afford decency during the burial (screening by mourners is acceptable). A suitable wood support must be provided by mourners to enable the shrouded body to be lowered into the grave. Shroud only burials are not permitted if the deceased had a contagious or notifiable disease.

### **Notice of Interment:**

A completed Notice of Interment form must be received to confirm the booking. The form is available from the Cemetery Office or on the Council's website and must be completed by 10.00 a.m. on the day of burial. The person applying for the burial (the applicant) will become the owner of the burial rights and the 'grave deed' will be issued in their name.

## 2. Type of Grave: Whether an earth grave or chamber is required.

**Earth graves** are usually single depth (4'6") in the Muslim section unless a specific request is made for a double depth grave for two. The grave will be 7' long X 30" wide and shored with timber for Health & Safety purposes. Should a timber shored grave not be available it may be necessary to use a different type of shoring which will need to be removed prior to closing the grave.

**Chamber graves** are made from concrete rings placed on lintels. Three rings are used to produce a chamber 3' deep. The internal dimensions are 7'5" long x 24" wide. Concrete slabs are then cemented over the top ring to produce a sealed chamber. Burial law requires that a sealed chamber is formed, to prevent obnoxious gases escaping, when the soil above the coffin is less than 3' deep. Mourners must provide suitable quantities of appropriate

cement to ensure a good seal. Soil can then be used to complete the closing of the grave.

### **3. Purchasing the burial rights:**

**Purchasing the Exclusive Right of Burial** ensures that no other burials may take place in the grave. A Grave Deed will be issued following the burial in the name of the applicant stated on the Notice of Interment. A memorial may be placed on the grave subject to the completion of a Memorial Works application form 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.

**General Graves** can be provided in all cemeteries. These graves have no burial or memorial rights and non-family members may be buried in the same grave. It is important to consider the implications of a burial in a general grave.

### **4. Cemetery Fees:**

The fee for a burial should be paid to the Council or a funeral director prior to the burial taking place. The fees are calculated by adding the Interment and Purchase fee together. Receipts will be issued for any money paid to the Council. A list of the current Fees and Charges can be obtained from the Council's website or through the Cemetery Office. Fees usually change each April. Non-residents of St Albans District will be charged double fees for all services except transfer of ownership and search fees. Resident fees will be applied if the deceased had to move into a care or nursing home, arranged by Social Services, outside the District.

### **5. The 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 in accordance with the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926.

### **6. How the actual burial takes place:**

A member of the Council's staff will meet the cortege at London Road cemetery at the time arranged for the burial. They will witness the burial, advise and assist whenever required.

#### **Lowering the body into the grave:**

The grave is prepared with a wooden surround (platform) to enable those lowering the shrouded body or coffin to stand safely on the edges of the grave. 'Webs' are provided to go under the wooden support or the coffin and to enable the 'bearers' to carefully lower the body into the grave. The webs must then be removed and left to the side of the grave. Wooden shoring usually remains in the grave and if a mourner needs to enter the grave, for

example, to adjust the body, a ladder is available to help them to exit the grave.

### **Covering the chamber:**

Eleven slabs will be stacked next to the grave for covering the rings to complete the chamber. Mourners must bring sufficient quantities of good quality cement to seal the chamber. Burial law insists that an air-tight seal must be created to prevent obnoxious gases escaping and the Council reserves the right to carry out this process themselves if it is felt that insufficient care has been taken to comply with the law. Once the chamber is sealed some soil may be returned to the grave and mounded as required.

### **Covering the shrouded body:**

Mourners may bring wood to cover the body prior to returning the soil to the grave. The wood can be positioned diagonally across the body but not in such a way that insufficient room is left for the 3' of soil to be placed above the body. Burial law requires 3' of soil and it is not acceptable to reduce this depth.

### **Returning the soil to the grave:**

In many cases families and mourners wish to return the soil to the grave. Spades and forks will be provided but contractor's **staff are always available** to assist or complete the task if required. 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 back fill the grave at the same time and get in each others way. Injuries to feet can occur when suitable footwear is not worn. The grave should be left mounded to allow for settlement. Contractor's staff will then tidy the grave area, remove excess soil and boards.

## **7. Contact details:**

**Cemetery Office:** 01727 819362 (or mobile 07939 075701) an answer phone is available if Cemetery staff are temporarily out of the office.

? mosque contacts: