
HACKPEN NATURAL BURIAL GROUND



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This is not an exhaustive list - please contact us if your questions are not answered here as we are very happy to help and explain how things work.

What is a Natural Burial?

A Natural Burial is the interment of the body of a dead person in the soil in a way that does not inhibit natural decomposition, but allows the body to be naturally recycled. It also allows for the area, set aside for burials, to revert back to as natural a state as possible, improving bio-diversity and offering a place for meditation and contemplation for everyone.

Hackpen Natural Burial Ground is a six acre field that was primarily used as pasture. It will now be allowed to transform into a flower meadow and woodland. The higher ground has been set aside for Natural Burials and a 'succession fund' is being added to with each burial, to ensure that the future maintenance of the Burial Ground is maintained.

How do we arrange a burial at Hackpen?

Please contact Tim and Teresa at hello@mellowgrove.org.uk or telephone us on 07759 839877 and we will be happy to discuss your situation. Alternatively you can ask your chosen Funeral Director to contact us.

We can also take reservations, which provides a Right of Burial certificate for you to keep in your records, for your family to use at the time of your death.

Can we choose the exact spot?

No, generally this is not possible; the exception being when you have reserved a family or couples plot next to another family member already buried.

Can couples be buried together?

Yes. We will reserve a second plot for the partner of the deceased next to that grave, if required. We do not carry out double burials on the same plot (see grave depth below) but side by side.

What kind of coffins and clothing are allowed?

Coffins must be from bio-degradable materials eg. wood, woven willow or cardboard. A coffin is not obligatory as natural-fibre cloth or felted wool shrouds can also be used.

Bodies should be clothed in natural fibres.....please discuss with us if this causes any difficulty.

How deep are the graves?

Graves are dug so that the top of the coffin or body is at least 2 feet / 61 cm below the surface, in accordance with statutory requirements. A shallower grave than the traditional '6 feet' aids the natural healthy decomposition of the body as the soil contains more oxygen and life.

Our graves are hand dug as the use of powerful digger machinery disturbs the grassland around the grave too much.

What grave furniture / memorial is allowed?

No man-made memorials or stones are allowed. The idea behind a natural burial ground is that graves will gradually disappear and it will revert to pasture. Over time the field will be re-wilded.

A wooden plaque can be placed on the Memorial Board.

A Memorial Tree can be planted in the area below the burial ground and a small wood or metal plaque placed on the tree guard.

How do we find a specific grave?

The location of each burial plot is recorded by taking the distances from three fixed 'trig' points. These measurements are then kept in our burial plot records, to allow us to accurately pinpoint the centre of each grave.

We are always happy to mark a specific grave, after it has become less obvious, for when you wish to visit, if you contact us in advance of your visit.

Can flowers be planted on and around the grave?

Only native wildflowers can be planted or sown on the grave. We cannot guarantee their survival as we share the local area with deer, rabbits and other wild animals, and there will be competition from existing flora in the meadow.

Can cut flowers be left?

Yes, but please remove any artificial materials like oasis, wire clips, plastic tape, nylon ribbon etc to avoid them being eaten by the local wildlife or lasting for hundreds of years in the environment with potential to poison waterways.

When can we visit?

You are welcome to visit the Burial Ground at anytime during daylight hours - this includes friends and family, and local residents/walkers who enjoy the tranquil surroundings or find it a helpful place to reflect. It is a place of peace so very noisy activities, unleashed dogs or horses are not appropriate. Please leave it as you find it and close the gates when you leave. Thank you.
