

# Bereavement Services



**Providing a peaceful and dignified place of rest**



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# Welcome

South Staffordshire Council oversees two cemeteries in the district, Sytch Lane Cemetery in Wombourne and Strawberry Lane Cemetery in Great Wyrley.

It is our aim to provide a sympathetic, helpful and considerate bereavement service and ensure this is delivered in a dignified, caring and sensitive manner.

In this brochure, you'll find useful information about our cemeteries as well as grave plots and memorials. It can be a difficult time when you lose someone close to you and it is important to us that we offer you clear information and guidance to help you decide what is best for you and your family.

**Community Services**

**South Staffordshire Council**

May 2019



# Our service standards

## and what you can expect from us

We will:

- Provide dignified and compassionate burial services for bereaved families.
- Ensure that all burials comply with appropriate legislation and codes of working practice.
- Ensure that a member of staff meets each funeral cortege on arrival at the cemeteries.
- Ensure that our staff are trained and qualified to provide a high quality bereavement service to all customers and stakeholders.
- Ensure that our Bereavement Services office is open to the public and funeral directors from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.
- Ensure that our cemeteries are open to visitors every day of the year.
- Ensure that our cemeteries are clean and well-maintained.
- Develop our cemeteries as key green space assets for use by the whole community.
- Develop our cemeteries to a standard that provides a place of comfort, tranquillity and reflection for all those who visit.
- Ensure grave digging and grave preparation operations are carried out correctly and in a timely manner.
- Respond to your enquiry promptly and effectively.
- Treat you fairly and with respect.
- Make our services and any published information easy to understand and use.
- Respond to complaints within 10 working days.



# Cemetery information

Sytch Lane Cemetery and Strawberry Lane Cemetery are situated in the south and north of the district and offer a variety of options from natural meadow burials, through to lawn graves for people of all different religions and cultural backgrounds.

Grave plots are available for residents of South Staffordshire as well as members of the public residing outside of the district and the cemeteries have been thoughtfully designed and set out to provide a peaceful and dignified place of rest.

The cemeteries are managed with passion and pride by the Bereavement Services team, based at the Council Offices in Codsall. The team provides a quality, caring service with professional staff who are sympathetic to the needs of the bereaved and can offer helpful advice and guidance.

If you would like to know more about the cemeteries or if you have any queries, please contact the Bereavement Services team.

Tel: **01902 696111**

Email: **[bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk)**

The Council is a corporate member of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and staff hold the ICCM Diploma in Cemetery and Crematorium Management.



**[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services)**





## Opening times

The cemeteries are open every day of the year at the following times:

**1 April to 30 September** 9am to 8pm

**1 October to 31 March** 9am to 4.30pm

Anyone can visit the cemeteries but we do ask visitors to be quiet and respectful and for children under 14 to be accompanied by an adult.

## Burial times

Burials can take place between the following times:

**February to October** 9am to 3pm

**November to January** 9am to 2.30pm

## Car parking

Both cemeteries have free car parks with a noticeboard containing information and a site map to help visitors.

## Toilets

Please note that the cemeteries do not have any toilet facilities.



## Disabled access

Both cemeteries have good access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

## How can I make a booking?

To book a burial or reserve a plot, you or your appointed funeral director can contact us between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: **01902 696111**

Email: [bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk)

A copy of the fees and charges for the different grave plots is available on the Council website or by telephoning **01902 696111**.

## Pre-purchasing a plot

Grave plots at the cemeteries in Sytch Lane in Wombourne and Strawberry Lane in Great Wyrley are now available to pre-purchase in advance or alternatively can be purchased at the time of need.





# Strawberry Lane Cemetery

Strawberry Lane Cemetery in Great Wyrley opened in 2013 and is a 12-acre site adjacent to the Wyrley Essington Canal Local Nature Reserve with the cemetery entrance off Upper Landywood Lane.

The cemetery is a peaceful, picturesque final resting place overlooking the South Staffordshire countryside. The first burial took place in July 2013 and it is anticipated that burial space will be available for up to the next 50 years.

**Strawberry Lane Cemetery**  
**Upper Landywood Lane**  
**Great Wyrley**  
**WS6 7AU**







# Sytch Lane Cemetery

Sytch Lane Cemetery is located on the outskirts of Wombourne and opened in 2009.

This seven-acre cemetery is a tranquil and dignified final resting place for your loved ones and it is anticipated that burial space will be available for up to the next 70 years.

**Sytch Lane Cemetery**  
**Sytch Lane**  
**Wombourne**  
**WV5 0JP**



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# Choosing the right resting place

A variety of grave types are available and we encourage you to visit the cemeteries to help you make an informed decision. If you would like to meet a member of staff to discuss the different types of graves available, please contact us on **01902 696111**.

## Types of burial plot

### Lawn graves

Grave plots are located within an area which is maintained as lawn. Graves can accommodate up to three coffins and up to eight sets of cremated remains. Headstones are fixed to a concrete plinth, which has a gravel channel in front for you to place flowers and memorabilia.

### Graves for cremated remains

There are several options for the interment of cremated remains.

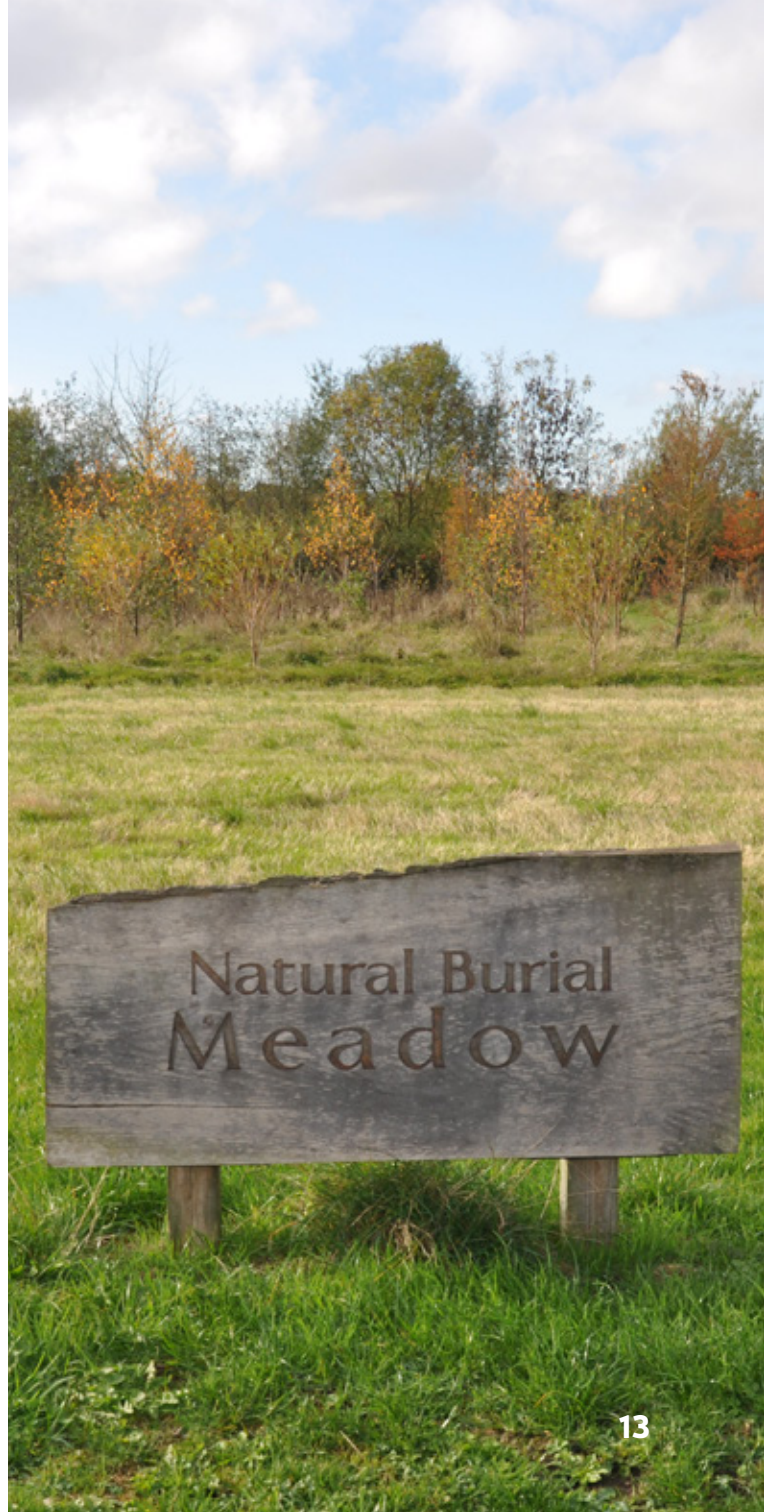
- A lawn section where you can have an upright headstone fixed to a concrete plinth which has a gravel channel in front for you to place flowers and memorabilia.

- A designated section where you can have a flat plaque memorial, which is flush with the ground.
- Interment of ashes within an existing lawn grave, subject to space and with the registered owner's permission.

The first two options can accommodate up to four sets of cremated remains, depending on the size of the containers.

### **Natural burial meadow area**

Both Strawberry Lane Cemetery and Sytch Lane Cemetery provide meadow areas for those who would like a natural burial in an area that helps to create a diverse habitat for wildlife that is attractive to insects, songbirds and small mammals.







### **Strawberry Lane Cemetery - Gilpin's Glade scattering area**

Ashes are scattered in a developing woodland area underneath a section of turf. Gilpin's Glade is named after Gilpin's Basin, which was a wharf constructed on the Wyrley Essington Canal at the rear of the cemetery.

When the wharf was lost to opencast workings in the 1980s, it was filled in and planted as part of the restoration scheme. This open grassland provides a contrasting wildlife habitat to the wooded, enclosed areas of the canal walk and you may be able to spot skylarks and lapwings here.

### **Sytch Lane Cemetery - Four Seasons Woodland scattering area**

Ashes are scattered underneath turf in either spring, summer, autumn or winter sections of the woodland around the perimeter of the cemetery.

Both woodland settings provide a quiet place to visit to reflect and remember your loved ones. To preserve the natural look of the woodlands, we don't allow floral tributes or any other memorabilia to be placed in the scattering areas at either cemetery.

### **Babies and children's section**

At both cemeteries, an area has been set aside specially for the interment of babies and children.



# Purchasing a grave plot

An **exclusive right of burial** (ERoB) gives the purchaser the right to bury in an agreed grave plot. The grave plot cannot be re-opened for another burial without the purchaser's permission.

Purchasing the ERoB for a grave plot does not mean that you own the land. The ownership of the land remains with the Council. An ERoB is sold on a lease basis for a period of 50 years and the only rights with that lease are the rights to bury within the specified grave plot.

The ERoB can be renewed at the end of the 50 year period or can be extended in 25 year increments up to a maximum of 100 years.





# Your memorial options

## Headstones and memorials

A memorial mason can help you decide on a suitable memorial and a permit must be obtained from the Council before installation. We are flexible regarding the shape, colour and design of a memorial and encourage creativity in the choice of headstone or plaque for a grave. Memorials must not exceed the maximum permitted sizes and it is important that they are installed safely.

Only memorial masons that are on the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) and/or the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) are allowed to work in our cemeteries and all memorial work carried out in the cemeteries must conform to the current NAMM Code of Working Practice.

## Memorial bench plaques

A memorial plaque can be leased on a bench at both cemeteries for a three, five or 10 year period. If you would like the plaque installed on a specific date or anniversary then we will be happy to arrange this for you.



## Adopt-a-tree scheme

Both cemeteries offer a selection of trees that you can 'adopt' for either three, five or 10 years. The adoption of a tree includes an inscribed granite plaque installed at the base of the chosen tree. If you would like the plaque installed on a specific date or anniversary we can arrange this for you.

## Bird-bath memorial plaques

*(Sytych Lane Cemetery only)*

The natural burial area at Sytych Lane Cemetery is maintained as a meadow and attracts a range of wildlife. Enjoying stunning views across South Staffordshire and Worcestershire, this part of the cemetery includes a bird-bath and you can lease a memorial plaque in memory of your loved one.

Plaques can be leased for a three, five or 10 year period and we can arrange for the plaque to be installed on a specific date or anniversary if you wish.

**The costs for memorial options can be found on the Council website or you can contact us on [01902 696111](tel:01902696111) for more details.**







# Cemetery rules and regulations

A copy of our rules and regulations is available from the Bereavements Services team and can be viewed on the Council website. Many of these regulations are in place to ensure that the cemeteries are safe, attractive and a fitting place for all those who visit and work in them.

A brief summary of some of the regulations for the cemeteries are given here.

## Flowers

Families usually prefer to remove the flowers following a funeral but they can be left for up to 14 days after which cemetery staff will remove them. Seasonal and Christmas wreaths are removed after six weeks.

We ask that trees and flowers are not planted in a grave plot or in any part of the cemeteries unless agreed with Bereavement Services. This is to ensure that grass cutting and other maintenance can be carried out.

## Photography

To ensure the privacy and dignity of individuals, please do not take images of graves, memorials or funeral services within the cemeteries.

## Dogs

Dogs are allowed in the cemeteries but they must be kept on a lead at all times. Dog owners must take responsibility for cleaning up after their pets.

## Memorabilia

Please ensure that all memorabilia and flowers are kept within the gravel channel provided and that they do not encroach onto the grass or the adjacent grave plot.

The Council does not accept responsibility for any damage or loss of any items left in the cemeteries. Breakable items such as glass and pottery and sharp items are not allowed to be left in the cemeteries as these may pose a health and safety risk to visitors, staff and wildlife.







## Frequently asked questions

### **Who is responsible for the upkeep of a grave plot?**

South Staffordshire Council is responsible for cutting the grass and general cemetery maintenance only.

Please note that it may be necessary from time to time to place soil on graves adjacent to those that need to be prepared for an interment. Usually this is only for a short time and we will remove the soil and leave the area clean and tidy afterwards.

### **Is it possible to be buried in your cemeteries if I do not live in South Staffordshire?**

Yes, anyone can be buried at our cemeteries but if you don't live within South Staffordshire at the time of reserving a plot or the deceased didn't live in the district at the time of death, there is an additional fee applicable. Please contact us for more details.

### **What happens to the grave following an interment?**

Following an interment, a temporary grave marker is supplied. This is removed 12 months after a burial has taken place or when a permanent memorial is installed, whichever is the sooner.



### **Can family members carry the coffin to the graveside?**

The funeral director or family is responsible for providing sufficient bearers to carry the coffin from the hearse to the graveside and lower the coffin into the grave. Family members who wish to carry a coffin should ask for advice from their appointed funeral director on the safe way to do so.

### **Can family members fill in the grave after an interment has taken place?**

Cemetery staff will backfill the grave following an interment. Family members may, at their own risk, backfill the grave but must adhere to instructions from cemetery staff at all times. If you wish to backfill the grave, please let us know at the time of making a booking.

### **Do I need to take out insurance cover for a memorial?**

Whilst vandalism is extremely rare at our cemeteries it can occur from time to time. The Council cannot be held responsible for any damage caused by others and, with that in mind, we recommend that you take out insurance cover for your memorial. Your chosen memorial supplier will be able to give you more details on this.



# Useful information

## What to do when someone dies

A number of people and organisations need to be informed when someone dies.

### Death Registration

To register a death, you first need the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) from a doctor or confirmation from the Coroner that they have issued the documents allowing you to register. You must contact the local Register Office to make an appointment. Deaths should be registered within five days of the death.

In South Staffordshire, death registration is dealt with by Staffordshire Registration Service and you can make an appointment by calling them on **0300 111 8001** or by visiting their website [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/community/lifeevents/death/register-a-death](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/community/lifeevents/death/register-a-death)

### Arranging a Funeral

Most families choose to use a funeral director. When choosing a funeral director, check that they belong to a trade association such as the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) or the National Society of Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF).

Funerals can be expensive so seek quotes from more than one funeral director in order to get a competitive price. 'Your Funeral Choice' is a website that can help you to find sensibly priced funeral directors in your area.

If you wish to arrange an interment of cremated remains directly with the Council's Bereavement Services team, please call **01902 696111** between 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.



## Useful contacts

### **Bereavement Advice Centre**

An extensive range of information on all matters relating to death and bereavement.

Tel: **0800 634 9494**

**[www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)**

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Offers support following the death of a loved one or friend with trained volunteers.

Tel: **0808 808 1677**

**[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)**

### **DirectGov**

Information on what you need to do after someone dies.

**[www.gov.uk/after-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/after-a-death)**

### **Dying Matters**

A national coalition of individuals and organisations which aims to help people to talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement.

**[www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org)**

### **Fair Funerals Campaign**

Run by the Quaker Social Action Group, the aim of this campaign is to tackle the causes of funeral poverty and can help you to find a fairly priced funeral director in your area.

Tel: **020 8983 5059**

**[www.fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk](http://www.fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk)**

### **National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD)**

Tel: **0121 711 1343**

**[www.nafd.org.uk](http://www.nafd.org.uk)**

### **Stillbirth And Neonatal Death Charity (SANDS)**

Provides support, advice and information to bereaved parents.

**[www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)**

### **The Good Funeral Guide**

Offers independent information and funeral advice.

**[www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk](http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk)**



### **The Natural Death Centre**

Offers help, support and guidance when you are planning a funeral.

Tel: **01962 712690**

**[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)**

### **UK Funerals Online**

The funeral information site for the UK.

**[www.uk-funerals.co.uk/funeral-directors/west-midlands.html](http://www.uk-funerals.co.uk/funeral-directors/west-midlands.html)**

### **Your Funeral Choice**

Can help you to select the right funeral at the right price for your needs.

Tel: **01983 754387**

**[www.yourfuneralchoice.com](http://www.yourfuneralchoice.com)**





## **Bereavement Services**

Email: [bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk)

Tel: **01902 696111**

[www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/bereavement-services)

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