

Weekend burial arrangements in Watford

**For members of the borough's
Muslim community**



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Introduction to the service by Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor



“One of Watford’s great strengths as a town and as a place to live is the richness of its diverse community. Whilst we live and work together as one community, there are occasions when we need to recognise those areas of our individual beliefs and way of life that are important and make such a big difference to how we view the town we live in.

“Continuing to supporting our Muslim residents by providing an option for a weekend and bank holiday burial is one such instance. We know this is an issue of great importance, made even more so by the difficult time we all face when we lose a loved one, and so we are pleased to be working with Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors to meet the community needs.”

This leaflet outlines what provision is now in place for weekend and bank holiday burials in Watford and what to do if you are considering using the service.

1. The need for weekend and bank holiday burials

Although providing a cemetery service is not a legal requirement for local authorities, Watford Borough Council, like many councils, chooses to do so for the benefit of our residents. In response to the needs of our community, we have also put arrangements in place for those who, for religious or cultural reasons might require a burial to **take place as soon as possible and at short notice**.

This means that, if all necessary requirements and criteria are met, Muslim burials can be held at weekends or on bank holidays at North Watford Cemetery. These burials can take place between 10.30am - 3.30pm in the summer months (April - September) and between 10.30am - 2.30pm in the winter (October - March). The service is only available to Watford residents and for people aged 12 and over.

2. Arrangements in place for weekend or bank holiday burials

How the service will be delivered

In order to provide this 'out of hours' service for our Muslim residents, Watford Borough Council is working in partnership with Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors.

The team has many years of experience in serving undertakers, cemetery and crematorium owners, councils and churches in Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Oxfordshire, London and the surrounding area. It has also successfully provided a weekend and bank holiday service for other councils and members of the Muslim community. Watford Borough Council was impressed with the organisation's expertise and understanding of the requirements for Muslim burials and is confident that it can provide a quality service for our residents.

The arrangements in place mean Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors will liaise directly with the Funeral Director chosen by the family to discuss the burial requirements. Funeral Directors should call **07888 867 898 or email the team at **bookings@ncfcgravedigging.com**.**

Preparations for a weekend / bank holiday burial

Watford Borough Council will prepare two pre-dug graves within the Muslim section of North Watford Cemetery. These are for weekend and bank holiday burials only. The graves need to be pre-prepared (i.e dug in advance) so that, if required, they are available at short notice. The type of soil at the cemetery is sandy / gravel and very susceptible to collapsing, which means the pre-dug graves have to be shored, or, held up, with metal liners. These liners provide the required support to make sure the graves are in a good condition and ready for a burial. They have been used by the community and the council has been advised they will be acceptable for those wishing to have a weekend or bank holiday burial. There is a cost associated with the liner - see section 5 on costs of the service.

3. How to arrange a weekend or bank holiday burial

The most important point to note about the weekend and bank holiday burial service is that it is NOT administered by Watford Borough Council.

The Cemetery Office and Cemetery Manager should NOT be contacted to make arrangements. Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors should NOT be contacted directly. The council has instructed Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors to only liaise with the Funeral Director chosen by the family.

A. Contacting the Registration Service to receive the required documentation to arrange a weekend or bank holiday burial

Before contacting the Registration Service you must be in possession of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death issued by the Doctor or Hospital.

You should then contact the Registration Service on **0300 123 4045**. The emergency weekend service is available;

- Saturday: 9.00am - 12.30pm
- Sunday: 9.00am - 11.00am

The emergency weekend service is also available every bank holiday between 9.00am and 11.00am with the exception of Christmas Day.

When you contact the Registration Service you will speak to a Registrar who will be able to advise you whether it will be possible for the burial to take place at the weekend or bank holiday. If the cause of death is one that is required to be referred to the Coroner, the Registrar cannot issue the form for the burial to proceed. If the cause of death is not one that must be reported to the Coroner and the burial is to take place at the weekend or bank holiday, the Registrar will make arrangements to meet you at **The Register Office for Hertfordshire, 19b St Albans Road East, Hatfield, AL10 ONG**.

At the meeting you must bring with you the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. The Registrar will issue the form for the burial to proceed (this form is usually known as 'the green').

The Registrar will then advise you to contact your Funeral Director.

The Registrar will also make arrangements for you to register the death at a Registration Office convenient to you, as soon as possible after the burial has taken place.

For more details on how to register the death see:

www.hertsdirect.org/your-community/register/deaths

The Coroner's office does not have a weekend / bank holiday emergency service and so is not in a position to issue documentation outside of normal working hours. However, there may be instances when the white authority to burial is issued on a Friday allowing for a weekend burial.

- B.** When the necessary documentation has been issued, please contact your chosen Funeral Director. The Funeral Directors have been given the correct contact details for Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors and will liaise with them over a burial day and time. The council's agreement with Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors is that ONLY the Funeral Director will be able to arrange a burial. Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors will advise the family of the day and time agreed with Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors.
- C.** Part of Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors' role will be to check that all documentation is correct before any burial takes place. They will do this at North Watford Cemetery in advance of the burial. If, in the opinion of Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors, documentation is not correct, the burial cannot take place.
- D.** Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors will escort the funeral cortege to the grave location for the funeral proceedings and will remain on site until the burial has been completed.
- E.** Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors will undertake all the duties and requirements for the burial. Family / attendees at the funeral can back fill the grave or request Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors back fill (fee involved).
- F.** Payment for the weekend / bank holiday service is to be made to Watford Borough Council who will then make the necessary payment to Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors.

4. Step-by-step guide to arranging a burial

Collect either the green authority to bury form (from the Registrar) or the white authority to bury form (from the Coroner - but not an option at the weekend or on bank holidays)

Contact your chosen Funeral Director and agree proposed date and time for funeral following Funeral Director's liaison and agreement with Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors

Meet Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors at North Watford Cemetery

Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors will check the documentation before escorting the funeral cortege to the grave side for the burial

Burial to take place, supported by Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors

Family / attendees at the funeral to back fill the grave or request Neil Curtis & Sons Funeral Contractors back fill (fee involved)

Watford Borough Council to invoice family for fee for burial

Veolia to check grave and ensure everything is in place on next working day

Once payment is received Watford Borough Council to issue deed for grave to the family

5. Cost and payment for weekend and bank holiday burials

The cost of the weekend and bank holiday burial service covers two elements. This cost is in **addition** to the residents' fees that apply to weekday burials (see Watford Borough Council's website for details of costs: www.watfordcemeteries.co.uk)

- Fees are payable to the cemetery for the metal liner required to support the pre-dug grave metal chamber. This fee can be found on the website above.

Additional fees are payable to the weekend provider to oversee the funeral and additional backfilling costs. Price is on application to the contractor when booking the funeral.

6. Alternatives to short notice weekend and bank holiday burials

The council provides a burial service from Monday to Friday. In some situations it can provide a Saturday burial **if staff are available** but there has to be at least **48 hours'** notice. These funerals should be arranged with the Funeral Director who will liaise with the Cemetery Manager.

General Cemetery Information

Watford's cemeteries are managed by Corporate Strategy and Client Services at Watford Borough Council. Veolia undertakes the maintenance of the cemeteries' grounds and the digging of graves on behalf of the council. Liaison with Veolia to ensure all arrangements are in place for burials is undertaken by the council's Cemetery Manager.

All enquiries relating to cemeteries (excluding contact to arrange a short notice weekend and bank holiday burial) should be addressed to:

**The Cemeteries Manager
Watford Borough Council
The Cemetery Office
North Watford Cemetery
North Western Avenue
Watford WD25 OAW**

Tel: **01923 672157** / Email: **cemeteries@watford.gov.uk**

All information on the council's cemetery service is available on its website:

www.watfordcemeteries.co.uk



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