



Contract specification for the provision of burial services at Bear Street Cemetery, Barnstaple and Marlborough Road Cemetery, Ilfracombe.

1.0 Background Information

North Devon Council manage two cemeteries in North Devon, Bear Street Cemetery in Barnstaple (13 acres) and Marlborough Road Cemetery in Ilfracombe (8.8 acres)

1.1 Bear Street Cemetery, EX32 7HW

The main vehicle access to Bear Street Cemetery is actually on Derby Road, there is another pedestrian entrance on Bear Street. The cemetery features a range of grave types in a mature landscape setting including areas for the burial or scattering of ashes. There is also a small chapel where funeral services can be held.

Cemetery opening times:

- Winter (1 November to 31 March): the cemetery is open between 8am and 5pm Monday to Sunday.
- Summer (1 April to 31 October): the cemetery is open between 8am and 8pm Monday to Sunday.
- The main areas of the cemetery and chapel are wheelchair accessible



1.2 Marlborough Road Cemetery, EX34 8PD

Marlborough Road Cemetery can be found at the top of Marlborough Road just outside Ilfracombe Town Centre.

The cemetery features a range of grave types in a mature landscaped setting, including areas for the burial or scattering of ashes. There is also a small chapel where funeral services can be held.

There are no formal parking facilities at this cemetery, though there are areas where cars may remain for short periods. In the event that visitors drive onto the site please do not obstruct roadways as funeral corteges may need to have access for a burial service.

- The main cemetery gates are open Monday to Thursday 8am to 4pm and Friday 8am to 3.30pm
- The cemetery is accessible at all times through two pedestrian entrances
- The main areas of the cemetery and chapel are wheelchair accessible



Contract Opportunity

North Devon Council is seeking a contractor for a three year fixed term contract (with the option of a 1 year extension) to carry out grave digging operations prior to burials at both cemeteries. The contract will also be required to back fill the graves immediately after the burial has taken place.

The contract will be for 3 years from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026

BURIAL SERVICE GENERAL CONDITIONS

The Service Provider will at all times refer and adhere to the Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries as provided by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

The Service Provider to provide trained and experienced staff with a very good depth of local knowledge, their duties are to liaise directly with the cemetery records officer to ensure accurate location and alignment of all graves, prior to any excavation works. Prepare all graves as instructed by the SO (Supervising Officer)

SUPERVISING & ATTENDING FUNERALS

The Service Provider shall check the grave plot half an hour before the interment to check the following:

- a) That it is the correct size and length.
- b) That it has been prepared properly i.e. put-logs, tapes, wheel bier, earth etc.
- c) That it is the correct grave plot number as allocated on the paperwork.

Once all legal, fees and administrative requirements for burial have been received by North Devon District Council, the authority to dig the grave (the Digging Instruction) will be emailed directly to the Service Provider. The instruction will provide all the information needed for digging the grave and the overseeing of the burial. If there is an issue the Service Provider is expected to make immediate contact with the relevant SO. You will also offer assistance where necessary in order that the interment goes smoothly.

Whilst the funeral is in progress, and until all mourners have left, you shall remain in the 'background' to offer assistance and answer questions. If you are unable to answer any questions then refer them to the relevant SO. Any difficulty/problem that arises from the interment shall be recorded in writing and passed to the relevant SO as soon as practicable.

EXCAVATION OF GRAVE PLOTS GENERAL CONDITIONS

A minimum of 48 hours prior to the interment, or in the case of Jewish and Muslim interments 24 hours, the Service Provider shall receive an instruction from the SO giving details of the grave to be excavated. This shall provide the grave number, date and time of funeral, size of the coffin, casket depth of excavation and the name of the deceased. This grave shall be fully excavated at least one day prior before the interment.

The grave to be excavated shall have been located and marked by the SO at least 48 hours before the interment except for Muslim and Jewish burials.

A stonemason engaged by the undertaker dealing with the funeral shall remove any memorial on the grave to be excavated. The Service Provider shall immediately inform the relevant SO if any memorial has not been

removed from the grave he has been instructed to excavate. Under no circumstances shall the Service Provider interfere with and/or remove a memorial unless so instructed by a SO.

Any memorials adjacent to the grave to be excavated shall be covered and all necessary precautions shall be taken so as not to damage these memorials. Should any memorial in the process of excavation or back-filling become damaged or soiled the Service Provider shall make such repair as the relevant SO directs at the Service Provider's expense.

The Service Provider shall cut and lift turves (from the marked grave) to the correct measurement. After cutting, the turves shall be carefully transported to a secure storage place and maintained in good condition until they are required for re-laying.

Having removed the turves the Service Provider shall proceed with the excavation of the grave to the dimensions given by the relevant SO for full size burials and children's grave.

All excavated material shall be stored and neatly covered (with grass matting, in good condition, supplied by the Service Provider) in such a manner as to cause as little interference with access to and from other graves, and in a manner which will not hinder, obstruct or distress mourners attending the funeral, any surplus materials shale or/topsoil from new graves will be transported and stored within the cemetery areas as identified on the location plan, for reuse as directed by the relevant SO.

During excavation all necessary steps shall be taken to ensure that no adjoining or underlying graves and/or remains are disturbed and the Service Provider shall ensure that any full size grave is adequately shored.

When it is necessary to excavate a grave before the weekend and/or Bank Holiday all soil is to be removed from the adjoining graves.

Any grave digging machinery shall have been submitted and approved as part of an Operational Plan submitted by the Service Provider

If any adjoining or underlying graves and/or remains become disturbed this shall be reported immediately to the relevant SO. That SO shall assess the situation and give the Service Provider any necessary instruction before he carries out any further excavation.

Having completed the excavation, the grave shall be locked down using the lock down polypropylene safety cover supplied by the relevant SO, all tools and equipment shall be removed to the Service Provider's depot. Any spoil on paths or roads shall be cleaned up as an ongoing process throughout the excavation and the site shall always be clear and clean before the funeral.

Prior to the funeral, the grave shall be left completely covered at all times using the lock down polypropylene safety cover supplied by the relevant SO.

During, or soon after excavation, the relevant SO may visit the grave and check the dimensions. Should any alterations be necessary, these shall be carried out immediately by the Service Provider in accordance with that SO's instruction.

HEALTH & SAFETY GENERAL CONDITIONS

There shall always be a minimum of two persons working on the digging of a grave when the depth is in excess of two feet and at all times when back filling is taking place.

Sufficient shoring equipment shall be available at all times to properly protect gravediggers and any other persons in the vicinity of the grave. All shoring equipment shall be supplied by the Service Provider and must be suitable for its purpose. Each SO may regularly inspect the equipment and reserves the right to insist that any faulty items are immediately replaced at the Service Provider's expense.

Ladders, provided by the Service Provider in good and safe condition, shall always be used to get in and out of graves in excess of two feet deep. The ladder shall be firmly fixed in position and should protrude above the grave by about one metre. Any struts and/or braces shall be fit for their purpose and properly secured when in use.

All shoring equipment, when not in use, shall be properly, tidily and safely stored in a place approved by all of the SOs. It shall be maintained in good condition and immediately replaced if there is any doubt as to its effectiveness.

Whenever possible, excavated spoil, machinery etc. shall be kept away from the edge of excavations (minimum 2m to be safe).

Operatives involved in grave digging shall wear safety hats and safety boots.

If a machine is being used for excavation no-one shall be in the grave whilst it is in use.

A banksman shall be employed whenever the excavator driver is unable to see all parts of the excavator jib and bucket.

Use of Pumps to Extract Water

When water is being pumped from a grave the Service Provider shall observe the following:

- (a) Keep the suction hose as short as possible.
- (b) Keep the outlet hose as low as possible.
- (c) Never site pumps in a grave where men are working.
- (d) Ensure that the pump is discharged in a safe manner and in such a way as not to endanger the safety of the gravediggers.
- (e) Whenever possible, dig a sump at one end of the excavation to insert the end of the suction hose. This ensures that as much water as possible is extracted and increases the efficiency of the pump.

Disinfecting Graves

The Service Provider shall always have sufficient strong disinfectant immediately to hand at the graveside when re-opening any grave.

INTERMENTS (BURIALS) GENERAL CONDITIONS

The grave shall be fully prepared not less than 45 minutes before the time of the funeral.

Daily and two hours before the scheduled interment time the grave shall be checked by the Service Provider for any collapse and remedial action shall be carried out to ensure that the correct dimensions are available to accept the coffin, casket or urn.

Two hours before the scheduled interment time, the grave shall have any standing water pumped from it and in very wet conditions the pumping shall continue until the cortege enters the cemetery gates. All pumping equipment shall be removed from sight prior to the interment.

Further to the above, the base of the grave shall be covered by a layer of straw /sawdust (provided by the Service Provider) to a depth sufficient to cover any water that still exists prior to the cortege arriving at the grave.

A raised platform shall be fitted around the top of any full size/child's grave to provide a firm footing for the funeral party, using suitable green matting and boards approved by the relevant SO.

Not more than 90 minutes, but not less than 45 minutes, prior to the scheduled interment time the platform and the graveside walls shall be sufficiently draped with grass matting. The grass matting shall be pegged down as required, leaving the area in a presentable condition in readiness for the funeral cortege.

Not more than 90 minutes, but not less than 45 minutes, prior to the scheduled interment time for full burials, two lowering straps and two put-logs shall be placed across the grave. In certain circumstances extra straps or put-logs shall be made available at the request of a SO.

A suitable container of dry, finely sifted soil shall be placed at the graveside for the mourners to use when sprinkling on the coffin at the time of committal.

The Service Provider shall ensure that two members of his staff are on site 30 minutes prior to and throughout the funeral to provide immediate assistance should it be required. Any other staff at the cemetery during the funeral shall remain a respectable distance (out of sight) from the mourners and shall not operate any machinery or cause any unnecessary disturbance.

Immediately after all mourners have left the cemetery any lowering straps, put-logs and all grass matting shall be cleared from the immediate working area together with any tributes, flowers etc. and the grave back filled with the

original spoil. During back filling the soil shall not be allowed to fall directly on to the coffin, casket or urn in such a manner that it may cause damage.

Whilst back filling the soil shall be firmed up in stages by lightly treading and any shoring removed. For full size graves the surface shall finally be mounded, with topsoil containing no clods, to produce a uniform and smooth mounded area across the grave, which shall not exceed the dimensions of the grave, nor exceed 200mm above ground level at its highest point.

When back filling is complete all surplus soil shall be removed to the Service Provider's storage area having first topped up any sunken graves in the area. Only reasonable quality soil shall be used for this purpose.

All floral tributes shall be taken from the laying area and placed on the grave in a careful and attractive manner.

The Service Provider shall immediately reinstate any damage to surrounding graves caused through grave digging or associated work at this own expense.

Muslim Burials

The mourners backfill, therefore the Service Provider shall provide extra shovels and be on hand to assist if necessary.

Shoring Equipment & Grave Protection Covers

The Service Provider shall, as part of his Operational Plan, submit and regularly update the list of shoring equipment, grave protection covers etc. which he intends to use to comply with the Contract.

E – Exhumations

The Service Provider may be requested by a SO to carry out exhumations (the licence/faculty will have been arranged by the relevant SO where appropriate). The Service Provider shall be paid for exhumations at the same rate as the normal grave digging/backfilling rates for routine burials.

Any conditions/precautions attached to the licence/faculty shall be adhered to. (These conditions/precautions shall be known on receipt of the licence/faculty).

The disinterment shall take place at 0600 hours on the appointed day.

The ground in which the disinterment is to take place shall be properly screened by 6' high screens from the public gaze while the exhumation is in progress.

Excavations shall be carried out manually. All soil disturbed shall immediately be freely sprinkled with freshly ground lime.

The coffin and any fragments of human bones shall, immediately after being lifted from the earth, be placed in an outer shell or case (purchased and arranged by the funeral director, approved by the relevant SO) and a copy of the inscription plate (or the original if it is in good condition) shall be fixed on

the outer shell.

The remains shall, without undue delay, be re-interred in another grave (marked and located by the relevant SO). In any intervening period they shall be kept safely, privately and decently.

A nominated person from the Environmental Health Department may witness the exhumation so that they are satisfied this is carried out in accordance with any licence/faculty conditions and in accordance with any additional conditions that may be imposed.

Orientation of the Deceased

All coffins, unless otherwise agreed by the relevant SO, shall be interred so that the deceased's head is at the western end of the grave.

Depth Checks

Carry out depth checks as requested by the relevant SO.

Lowering Straps & Put-logs

All lowering straps, put-logs and grass matting shall be cleaned after use and kept in a good, clean and serviceable condition.

Certification

The service provider must provide the following documents on application:

- Health and Safety and the Burial Process (ICCM) for each operative
- Valid First Aid at work Certificate
- Copy of Public Liability Insurance cover
- At least 3 years previous experience of grave digging operations to include references.

Pricing

The service provider should provide a cost to carry out a complete burial as per specification. Please note that these will obviously vary from year to year (the last 10 years has averaged 45 burials a year, this includes both cemeteries)

Payment

Payment will be one month in arrears following the previous months burials.

Please submit any clarifications or queries via our procurement portal
www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk

Closing date for submissions is midday on Friday 3rd March 2023