

National Assistance Burial Procedure

Cabinet Member Cllr Neal Davey
Responsible Officer Nick Sanderson, Head of Housing and Property Services

Reason for Report: To inform members of the Council's proposed procedure when dealing with a National Assistance burials.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the Cabinet approves the National Assistance Burial Procedure attached at annex A.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This is a statutory service.

Financial Implications: It is essential that the National Assistance Funerals carried out by the District Council are cost effective; there is currently an increase in the demand for this statutory duty.

Legal Implications: The Council has a statutory duty to carry out National Assistance Burials under The Public Health (Control of Disease Act 1984 Section 46) and the National Assistance Act 1948 Section 50

Risk Assessment: If there is no National Assistance Burials procedure or if the procedure is not followed a funeral may take place without the knowledge of relatives.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 National Assistance Burials have been arranged efficiently by the Bereavement Services section over a number of years without a written procedure, with the increase of requests for funerals and with consideration of budgetary restrictions it is considered prudent to formalise the current procedure. See Annex A.
- 1.2 National Assistance Burials are sometimes referred to as "Paupers" Funerals: Mid Devon may be informed by the Exeter Coroner's Office, a Nursing Home, Housing Association' a relative or a friend, when a resident of the district has died and there is no one prepared or able to make arrangements for the deceased funeral.
- 1.3 The number of National Assistance burials carried out by Mid Devon has steadily increased over the past decade; there have been 17 since 2006.
- 1.4 Mid Devon have a statutory duty to 'cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead within the district where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority'.

2.0 **Funeral Arrangements**

- 2.1 All National Assistance funerals arranged by Mid Devon shall be an interment in either Crediton or Tiverton Cemetery, unless specific instructions have been left by the deceased.
- 2.2 Burial plots within these cemeteries are double depth and has the capacity for two coffins, this will result in unrelated persons being buried in the same grave.
- 2.3 A will may state the preference to be buried in a family plot, this should be complied with as long as the difference in cost can be paid by a relative or there are sufficient funds in the deceased's bank account.

3.0 **Funeral Director**

- 3.1 The current funeral director employed by Mid Devon is Le Roy Funerals who have offices in Exeter and Crediton; Le Roy Funerals won the contract in open competition between all the undertakers on the council's approved contractors list.

4.0 **Genealogy Searches**

- 4.1 In advance of arranging a National Assistance Burial a genealogical search shall always be carried out, this ensures that any next of kin are aware of their relatives' death and that they are offered the opportunity to make the necessary funeral arrangements.

Contact for more Information: A Cook, Open Spaces and Bereavement Services
Tel: 01884 234339, acook@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report: Cllr Neal Davey, Management Team