

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001963
Date 19 February 2018

Burials

Request:

Please respond to the following, under FOI regulations:

- 1) How many cemeteries are operated by your council? How many burial plots does this total?
**We operate 7 cemeteries.*
- 2) How many cemeteries still have spaces and how many burial plots are remaining? (Please provide the names of each cemetery and how many spaces it has in total and the number remaining)
**Three have adult full burial space available, namely: Bushbury, Beacon Hill and Danescourt Cemeteries.*
- 3) What proportion of this is through existing burials and advance plot purchases?
See question 2.
- 4) How many are full/ at capacity?
Four cemeteries are full to new burials.
- 5) How many burials were undertaken in the following years: 2017, 2016, 2007, 2006, 1997, 1996, 1987, 1986, 1977, 1976.
**Exemption applies – See below.*
- 6) What was the charge/cost to people for burials in each of these years?
**Exemption applies – See below.*
- 7) How many cremations for the same years as above?
**Exemption applies – See below.*
- 8) What was the charge/cost to people for cremations in each of these years?
**Exemption applies – See below.*
- 9) How many years of capacity for burial do you anticipate you have remaining?
This varies at each site.
- 10) How many people did not get their first choice of cemetery for burial?

This is unknown factor as families request to be buried where they know there is space, normally via a Funeral Director.

- 11) Did the council have to refuse requests for burials? If so, how many?
None whatsoever.
- 12) What is the furthest distance of burial plots from any of the parish church?
There are parish churches very close to all Local Authority cemeteries. Less than two miles max.
- 13) Are you actively looking to source new burial plots? If so, what measures have been taken, at what cost and what have been the results?
Not at present.
- 14) Have you opened any new cemeteries in the last 30 years? Please provide details of names and number of plots?
Hall Green Cemetery was opened in 1992 and Penn Cemetery in 1993.
- 15) What alternatives, if any, do you offer for the disposal of human remains? For example, woodland burials, alkaline hydrolysis (dissolving) etc
We offer cremation, scatterings, interment in cremated remains graves, interment in columbarium features, interment in special features. We offer woodland burials, full burial interment in graves, vaults, chambers and Muslim burial graves.

* Your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of

complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) Determining whether it holds the information,*
- (b) Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
- (c) Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
and
- (d) Extracting the information from a document containing it.*

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

The information appertaining to your questions is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information would require a full scale look into all individual records. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

Excess cost removes the City of Wolverhampton Council's obligation under the Freedom of Information, however under Section 16 – (the duty to provide advice and assistance, the Council may be able to provide answers to the request, should you wish to submit a refined request.