
















Cremation, Burial or Nature Reserve Burial : Sustainability Choices

While some have an instinctive aversion to cremation or burial, many choose cremation simply because they believe it is easier, cheaper, or because it is what is expected. Here are some reasons why you might choose burial instead of cremation – and why you might choose a nature reserve burial ground like Sun Rising.

Key Issues	Negative and Not Sustainable		Positive and Sustainable
 Energy Consumption	At an average of 1000°C for 75 minutes per person, cremation uses about the same amount of energy as a household might use in a month.		There is no comparable energy consumption for burial.
 Global Warming	Crematoria generate a huge amount of CO ₂ ; they are very seldom run for fuel efficiency, and waste heat is not captured and re-used.		Burial is carbon-capture, releasing no CO ₂ at all. The planting of trees further balances the human impact.
 Pollution	Despite modern standards, crematoria still generate pollution. Pollution is decreased by raising temperatures, but this increases fuel use and emissions of CO ₂ .	When buried, non-biodegradable coffins, synthetic clothing and embalmed bodies add to soil pollution.	When using only natural and biodegradable materials for burial, there is no comparable pollution.
 Embalming	Embalming is the replacement of the body's blood with a formaldehyde-based fluid. It is usually unnecessary, contributes to pollution and adds to the funeral bill.	Embalming using biodegradable chemicals – this is equally invasive, more expensive and seldom available as an option.	No embalming.
 Coffins	Veneered chipboard coffins made with formaldehyde resin: manufacture, burial or cremation of these is polluting. Other non-biodegradable coffins, plastic liners, varnishes, nameplates and other coffin furniture.	Solid wood or otherwise biodegradable coffins that are manufactured with poor social and environmental ethics and imported to Britain.	Biodegradable coffins or shrouds from ethical manufacturers and distributors.
 Flowers	Large floral tributes made of hothouse and imported flowers, using cellophanes, plastic trays, wire, and oasis, all of which is sent to landfill.	Imported and non-seasonal bouquets grown in hot-houses, using plenty of pesticides and other chemicals.	Locally-grown and garden flowers, tied up with raffia, all waste going to the burial ground's own compost heap.

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 Time	<p>A crematorium service that is limited to one or two time slots, with other funerals held immediately before and after: it can feel like a production line.</p>	<p>Many conventional cemeteries are not places where it is comfortable to stay for long.</p>	<p>With no time constraint, and in a beautiful natural environment, a funeral can have a deeper and more personal feel.</p>
 Graves and Land Use	<p>Conventional cemeteries are unnatural environments, requiring expensive intensive management. Many rely on annual bedding plants grown in peat, and chemical weedkillers. Graves not tended can look abandoned, provoking a sense of guilt or obligation to visit with flowers.</p>	<p>Some cemeteries have small wildlife areas. Some natural burial grounds have areas of woodland, pasture or meadow.</p>	<p>A nature reserve burial ground significantly adds to local ecological biodiversity, restoring natural habitats and helping wildlife, contributing to the well-being of those who live within it and those who visit it.</p>
 Transport	<p>The hearse, limousines and guests' cars all use fossil fuel, wherever the funeral takes place.</p>	<p>Using a hearsette instead of a hearse, and other fuel-efficient vehicles where possible.</p>	<p>Car-sharing, and holding the funeral service and committal in the same place reduces travel miles.</p>
 Ashes after a Cremation	<p>The scattering of ashes can have a hugely negative impact on beautiful natural places, altering the pH of the soil, killing native wildflowers and badly affecting wildlife.</p>	<p>Many don't know what to do with ashes and suffer guilt leaving them with the funeral director or in a cupboard, often for years. After scattering ashes, many find they have nowhere to 'visit' their loved one, which can prolong the pain of grief.</p>	<p>Interring ashes.</p>
 Memorials	<p>An expensive headstone, the stone imported from environmentally damaging quarries in China and other developing nations.</p>	<p>A plaque of slate, stone or wood that has been crafted within Britain.</p>	<p>A living memorial of a tree and wildflowers.</p>
 Cost	<p>Funerals can be very expensive, and in a conventional setting such as a crematorium it is easy to increase the cost by adding extras that make it more special and personal. In a conventional cemetery, there is the additional cost of a headstone.</p>	<p>It is possible to keep the cost down with a simple funeral, using a local funeral director who is willing to provide only what is required.</p>	<p>A simple and inexpensive funeral is always more acceptable in a naturally beautiful environment. There is the option of not using a funeral director.</p>
 Sustainability	<p>Given the cost of fuel – economically and environmentally – cremation is not sustainable.</p>	<p>Given the rising population, the cost of land, the cost of quarried stone for headstones, conventional cemeteries are not sustainable.</p>	<p>Simple burial in a reputable natural burial ground is wholly sustainable, especially where the land is managed as a nature reserve.</p>