

Burial and Cremation Ash space Requirements in Wool Parish

1. The response to the 2022 community infrastructure survey for this neighbourhood plan highlighted a potential requirement for further burial spaces to be provided by 2031 based on current available supply.

Projected requirements

2. In order to understand the potential requirement more clearly, the Neighbourhood Plan has projected future population of the parish based on 2021 Census of Population for the Parish using the Office for National Statistics 2020 Mid-Year Estimates which projects population to 2043. This has provided data to the end of the Neighbourhood Plan Period and beyond to provide a strategic and long-term understanding of future population.
3. Planned development has the potential to significantly add to the population of Wool Parish. A scenario based on planned development of 470 homes and 65 units of extra care accommodation set out in the Emerging Purbeck Local Plan has been included. Whilst the Emerging Dorset Local Plan is less advanced and proposals for new planned development are not firm, 300 units have been assumed within the planned development scenario. Given that decisions about providing new burial space requirements are long term, it makes sense to assume some growth from future plans given Dorset Council published draft proposals.
4. Based on the average multiplier defined nationally in the 2021 census, each household created by these developments would contain an average 2.4 persons (an arbitrary lower figure of 1.5 persons has been adopted for the extra care accommodation).
5. Death rates generally fell over a long period of time prior to 2011 and have since increased and at no time since 2010 have they been lower than before this. Projections of future deaths incorporate scenarios of low, central and high mortality rates based on actual variations occurring in Dorset death rates since 2010. These are a lower rate of 9.5 deaths per 1,000 population per annum, a central death rate of 10 deaths per 1,000 population per annum, and a higher death rate of 10.5 deaths per 1,000 population per annum. Death rates were higher than all scenarios during the COVID-19 Pandemic, but the projections have not been based on this.
6. Available Census data provides a breakdown of the expressed religion of persons living in the parish. This has been applied as an unchanging proportion of the population going forward, though in practice it will change slowly over time.
7. The burial and cremation practices of Christians, Bhuddists, non-specified religions and Non-Religious people (which includes where Religion was not stated) are assumed to be similar with 75% of these groups cremated and 25% buried. For Muslims and Jewish faiths, it is assumed that 100% are buried. For Hindu and Sikh faiths, 100% cremation is assumed. The numbers of people in these groups are small in Wool Parish.
8. With regard to the interment of cremation ashes, a relatively small proportion are interred in cemeteries. It has been assumed that only 30% of cremation ashes are interred in the Holy Rood Churchyard.

9. The single or double occupation of graves is a consideration. Burial spaces are provided in either single or double plots. When people acquire double plots, this renders the second space that plot exclusive for their (usually) family use. This may or may not be used and so it is difficult to predict if and when it will be used. It is more sensible to plan for new requirements based on single plot use which will therefore potentially include an element of oversupply if subsequently some plots contain two burials.
10. Muslim and Jewish faiths are assumed to require single graves. In the context of Wool's population, the potential for some smaller religious groups to grow as a proportion of the population, from a very small base, would create a need for more single plots. For the purposes of long-term planning in Wool, it is reasonable to assume future requirements based on single plots.
11. The Ecclesiastical Parish extends to adjoining parishes and creates an additional demand for interment with the Holy Rood Churchyard in Wool. This is based on a right of interment in the churchyard for residents of East Stoke Parish and Coombe Keynes Parish. These parishes also have their own resources which are not available to residents of Wool Parish.
12. In addition, former residents of Wool no longer living in the Parish have a right of interment in the churchyard. Relations of people who are interred in the Churchyard also have a right of interment in the churchyard, regardless of whether they have ever lived in the Parish.
13. Demand for interment arising from adjoining parishes, from former residents and relations of those already interred is in practice, small. However, there are a number each year, which has been assumed to be a constant annual requirement for 1 burial and 3 ash interments, based on information supplied by the Ecclesiastical Parish Office.
14. Based on forecast population growth, reflecting the significant population change that could result from planned strategic development, and including assumptions about spaces taken up from residents outside Wool Parish, Table 1 shows that a cumulative 931-1,029 deaths would result over the remaining part of the Neighbourhood Plan period April 2023 to March 2038 and this would require 209-231 spaces for ash interment and 235-259 spaces for burial.

Table 1 – Cemetery interment requirements with planned development

Mortality assumption	Total Deaths	Total ash spaces required*	Total burial spaces required
Remaining Neighbourhood Plan period April 2023 to March 2038			
Central	980	220	247
Low	931	209	235
High	1029	231	259
Period to the limit of projections April 2023 to March 2043			
Central	1522	305	342
Low	1446	290	325
High	1598	320	360

*Assumption that 30% of cremation ashes are interred in cemeteries and churchyards.

Source: Andrea Pellegram Ltd, 2023

15. With no further planned development assumed beyond 2038, then additional requirements between 2023-2043 would be an additional 81-89 spaces for cremation ash and 90-101 burial spaces in the period 2039-2043. This relatively high number for a five-year period reflects that situation that, if planned development occurs as projected, there would be a greater ongoing annual requirement for interment within the parish based on a significantly larger local population.

Current provision and use

16. An estimate of current burial space supply was obtained from The Ecclesiastical parish of Wool, East Stoke, Coombe Keynes, Bovington and East Burton. At March 2023, The Parochial Council Area has 250 burial spaces within Wool Parish at the Holy Rood Churchyard, which provide resources for the residents of Wool Parish, East Stoke Parish and Coombe Keynes Parish (the other parishes also have their own churchyards available to them, but not to those with a connection to Wool Parish).
17. The main Churchyard is attached to The Church of the Holy Rood, Wool. A current resident of The Ecclesiastical parish of Wool, East Stoke, Coombe Keynes, Bovington and East Burton can be interred in the Churchyard of Holy Rood Church if they have ever lived in any of the parishes or have a family member already interred at the Churchyard.
18. There is a Churchyard at East Stoke which is used only for those who have a link with East Stoke, ie either currently living or have a family member interred in this churchyard. But it is their choice between Holy Rood Churchyard or East Stoke Churchyard.
19. The Churchyard in East Burton is closed but again if there is a link with East Burton or having lived in East Burton then you are permitted to have your ashes buried there. But it is their choice between Holy Rood Churchyard or East Burton Churchyard.

20. The Churchyard at Coombe Keynes, if there is a link with Coombe Keynes or you have lived in Coombe Keynes, then you are permitted to be buried there. But it is their choice between Holy Rood Churchyard or Coombe Keynes Churchyard.
21. This means that there is use of the churchyard in Wool from those with a connection to East Stoke and Combe Keynes Parishes. It is not clear how often this occurs over time. In 2022, 4 interments took place of this kind, but these were into existing family graves.
22. Within Wool, the only resource is within the Holyrood churchyard with a total remaining capacity of 150 plots for ashes and 250 plots for burials. There were 12 burials and 16 ash interments in the churchyard in 2022.
23. As indicated in the survey, the Parochial Council estimate around nine years supply remaining. The projections provided in support of the Neighbourhood plan are shown in relation to the available supply.

Timeline for use of available burial spaces and spaces for ash in Wool Parish

24. Table 2 shows how the available cremation ash interment and burial space resources will be used up over the plan period from 2023 to 2038 and further to 2043. On a central scenario, this projects burial spaces to become exhausted at the end of the plan period during 2037-2038 Cremation ash spaces would be exhausted in 2032-2033.
25. If death rates were at the higher rate projected, burial spaces would become exhausted in 2036-2037 and cremation ash spaces in 2031-2032. A lower death rate as projected would result in cremation ash spaces becoming exhausted in 2033 and burial spaces in 2039.

Requirement for additional supply

26. Given the current availability of spaces and the rate at which these will be used up, there is a need to add to existing cremation ash and burial space supply in Wool Parish to meet long term needs. The acquisition and development of land for use as burial space is a long-term process. Given a likely increased annual requirement resulting from a larger local population, it would make sense to provide new space for the long term.
27. By the end of the plan period, annual burial space requirements in Wool Parish could be of the order of 19-21 burials and 19-21 Cremation Ash interments per annum.
28. Provision of a similar extension to the Holy Rood Churchyard would create around 300 burial plots and if used at a rate of around 20 per annum, this would last 15 years. This would necessitate a processing of preparing further extensions fairly soon after, if possible or desirable.
29. A longer-term solution might need to be considered in the form of a new burial and cremation ash resource for a much longer period of time, say 40 years. Assuming a constant rate of use, this would require 800 burial spaces and 800 cremation ash plots. This would require a new site in the Parish.

**Table 2 – Forecast availability of cremation ash and burial spaces in Wool Parish****Capacity profile for Wool Churchyard with Development on the Central mortality rate**

	end March 2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043
Ash Spaces	150	135	119	104	88	71	54	37	19	1	-17	-36	-55	-75	-95	-115	-135	-155	-175	-195	-215
Burial Spaces	250	235	220	205	190	174	157	140	122	104	86	67	48	28	8	-12	-32	-52	-72	-92	-112

Capacity profile for Wool Churchyard with Development on the Lower mortality rate

	end March 2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043
Ash Spaces	150	135	120	106	90	75	58	42	25	7	-11	-29	-47	-66	-85	-104	-123	-142	-161	-181	-200
Burial Spaces	250	236	222	207	192	177	161	145	128	111	93	76	57	39	19	0	-19	-38	-57	-76	-95

Capacity profile for Wool Churchyard with Development on the Higher mortality rate

	end March 2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043
Ash Spaces	150	134	118	102	85	68	51	33	14	-5	-24	-44	-64	-84	-105	-126	-147	-168	-188	-209	-230
Burial Spaces	250	235	219	203	187	170	153	135	116	97	78	58	38	18	-3	-24	-45	-66	-87	-109	-130

Source: Andrea Pellegam Ltd, 2023