

Our Ref:

Your Ref: WR983

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**Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill: CALL FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE**

Thank you for inviting Inverclyde Council to submit written evidence in consideration of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill.

In response to the six questions you asked in your call for evidence:

1. We support the proposals for the restoration of lairs.
2. We do not support the re-use of headstones.
3. We agree with the appropriateness and extent of the roles which should be undertaken by inspectors of burial, cremation and funeral directors.
4. We agree with the appropriateness of the proposed regulation of funeral directors, however we would suggest the extent be amended to include:  
Return of ashes – unclaimed ashes: it is relevant that funeral directors have a duty to complete appropriate documentation and submit it to the cremation authority along with, and at the same time as unclaimed ashes are returned to the crematorium. Said duty should also include that funeral directors maintain a register containing appropriate details of any ashes returned to a crematorium in order that any subsequent enquiries to funeral directors by the applicant or family may be responded to satisfactorily.
5. It is not certain to what extent the Bill could address funeral costs as a whole given disparate range of costs associated with the various elements that make up the cost of a funeral. In particular, the duty a local authority has to provide and develop suitable land for burial grounds, the cost of which will vary depending on local circumstances.
6. We do not support the removal of existing provisions restricting the proximity of new crematoria to housing. We recommend that the Bill reaffirm the existing provisions.

A Scottish Government official met with local authorities as part of the consultation process on the Bill and several issues were raised, we would take this opportunity to confirm the main issues we raised at the time.

## **Burial: Part 1**

Section 5 – places to keep bodies before burial: this section should be removed from the Bill. It is practice that the body is brought to the burial ground immediately ahead of burial, so there is no need for it to be stored at the burial ground ahead of burial, even temporarily.

Section 8 – application to carry out burial: Inverclyde Council agrees that there should be a standard application form to carry out burial and that further consultation with local authorities is required in order to produce an appropriate form.

Sections 10 & 11 – burial register: the potential resource implications for burial authorities must be acknowledged and any implications should be considered and addressed in the drafting of the regulations and guidance. The term burial register should include the electronic storage of records.

Section 12 – right of burial: We would support an exclusive right of burial being issued to one individual named person only.

We would not support local authorities being under a duty to sell a lair, except in the circumstances where it was for immediate use. Additional lairs may be sold subject to a local authority's policy on the management of burial capacity in its burial grounds.

## **Cremation: Part 2**

Section 41– cremation register: the potential resource implications for cremation authorities must be acknowledged and any implications should be considered and addressed in the drafting of the regulations and guidance. The term cremation register should include the electronic storage of records.

We trust that our response to the six questions and the further comments provided here are of assistance to the committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'W. Rennie', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William Rennie

Environmental and Commercial Services

Inverclyde Council