

## South Staffordshire Council Celebrate Green Flag Award Success!



South Staffordshire Council is the proud recipient of the prestigious Green Flag award for the Sytch Lane Cemetery. Rebecca Morgan, Bereavement Services Officer, is a key member of the team that put together the successful application for the award – which was given on first application. Rebecca found that the particular challenge for Sytch Lane was to be able to demonstrate community involvement in the cemetery, a key part of the Green Flag application process. Many longer established facilities have Friends of the Cemetery Groups which clearly cover this heading: but Sytch Lane doesn't yet have that type of involvement, having only opened in 2009. The team held an annual bulb planting event and flag-raising ceremony in November 2024, with over 50 people taking part and a celebration of the Green Flag success. High on the agenda are other such one-off events, including making bird boxes. The process prompted Rebecca to think about volunteering and community involvement in a different way – that one-off projects and events could really promote the Cemetery.

# South Staffordshire Green Flag Success

Rebecca commented “I was particularly proud of how well we worked together as team. The cemetery grounds have to be well looked after. Every aspect of the cemetery was looked at in detail – such as refreshing the information board and updating the cemetery plan. The maintenance team was encouraged to take ownership of the site and use their initiative to keep the site looking its best, to create the right impression not just for the judging, but also for all the visitors to the cemetery”

Marketing for cemeteries can be quite niche, and at the Green Flag judges referred to the Authority’s forthright marketing strategy, raising awareness of the cemetery and sign-posting where the public can get help and advice.



Well done to all the team at South Staffordshire Council on their Green Flag award for Sytch Lane Cemetery!

Bulb planting at Sytch Lane Cemetery

## ICCM Training dates

All courses are online (unless otherwise stated):

Public Health Funerals: 19<sup>th</sup> March

Exclusive Rights of Burial: 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April & 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June

Exhumation of Human Remains: 14<sup>th</sup> May

Establishing & Managing Gardens of Remembrance: 13<sup>th</sup> May

Cemetery Management & Compliance: 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May

ICCM and Cruse Loss and Bereavement: 17<sup>th</sup> June

Management of Memorials: Inspection workshops:  
on-site training at various locations April- June

Click: <https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/training/other-training/>



# Burial Authority News Update

## Wreath Recycling – looking for the eco alternative?

It is around this time of year that grave wreaths, left over the Christmas period, are removed by Burial Authorities. It can be the case the Cemetery Rules and Regulations set out that such items will be removed by for example the end of January, or that the planned removal is advertised at the Cemetery. **How best to dispose of the wreath that may be made up of natural foliage, with plastic, wire and florist sponge (or oasis) the prime components?** Commonly, the entire wreath ends up in landfill with consequences for the environment and also at a cost to the Burial Authority. Separating flowers and crumbling plastics makes effective waste separation very difficult.

Many florists now offer floral tributes which are biodegradable, often of a hand-tied style with natural ribbon. The use of foam-free designs is crucial, as florists' oasis is made from non-renewable petrochemicals and is a single use plastic. As the foam breaks down it releases micro-plastics that can leach into the soil and water table with unwanted consequences for humans and animals.

The increase in natural burials also necessitates fully biodegradable floral tributes if they are to be buried – for example a garland for a wicker coffin. Many florists also focus on using locally grown flowers to add to the eco-friendly design.



**Wigan Crematorium has introduced a scheme to recycle large floral tributes and also encourages recycling in line with residential collections, thereby saving £2000 per year in skip hire fees.**

Burial Authorities have a part to play in encouraging the bereaved to think about the environment when purchasing wreaths and floral tributes, and facilitating recycling where possible.

We'd love to hear from you:  
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IMPROVING STANDARDS