

Fairhall Cemetery

Natural Burial Areas



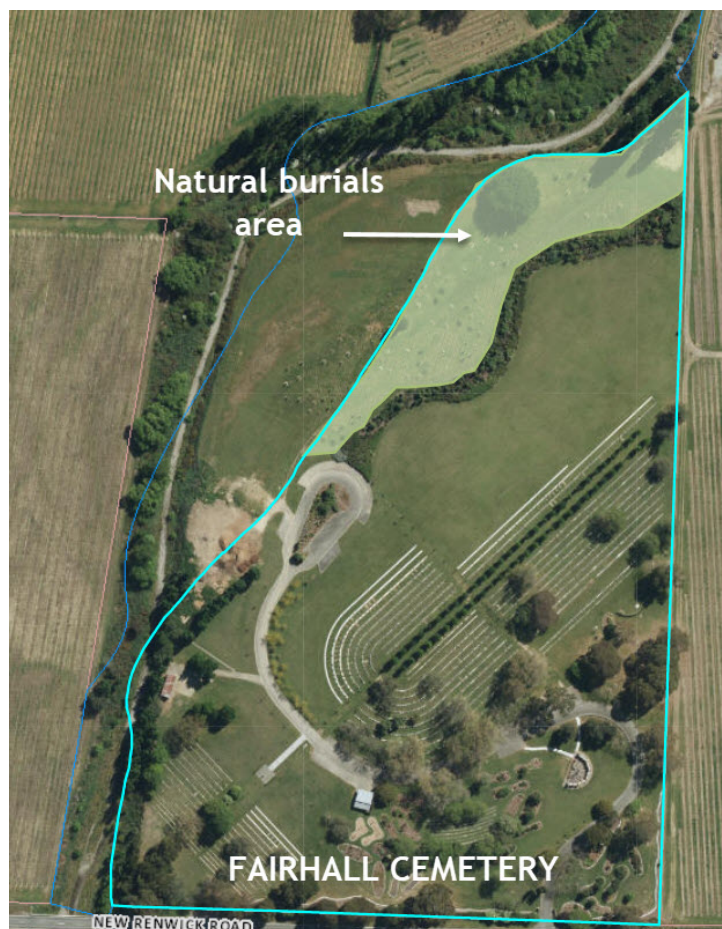
Natural Burials - Fairhall Cemetery, Blenheim

A natural burial is commonly described as the burial of a person in a way that maximises the opportunity for natural decomposition processes to work - the body is allowed to recycle naturally. Bodies are not embalmed, caskets are manufactured from untreated, sustainably-grown fibre or wood, burial is within the active soil layer, there are no permanent headstones and the site is actively planted to encourage regeneration of a bush or forest environment.

The choice of a natural burial is available at the Marlborough District Council's Fairhall cemetery near Blenheim. The Council has set aside a dedicated area within the existing cemetery at Fairhall for those who prefer a natural and environmentally-friendly approach to burials.

The Council has developed the natural burials area in conjunction with Natural Burials NZ - a not-for-profit organisation who help create and operate natural burial cemeteries around New Zealand. The organisation (an accepted authority for natural burials) has determined the Fairhall cemetery qualifies to be "Certified by Natural Burials". The certification provides the public with an assurance about the credibility of the natural burials cemetery and as a consequence there are a range of protocols the Council is obliged to conform with.

The natural burials area at the cemetery is in an attractive location on the north-western boundary of the cemetery, providing open views to the north and south. The cemetery is flanked by vineyards on the eastern and western boundaries. The Council's Fairhall Cemetery master plan proposes an informal walkway connecting the natural burials area and the Fairhall River through to the rest of the cemetery.



The natural burials area is separated from the traditional area of the cemetery by a well-established boundary planting of mixed native shrubs and trees. Pocket-plantings will continue as the cemetery progresses to an attractive permanent native bush park, which will encourage native bird species such as the Tui and the wood pigeon. This in itself will become a memorial to those interred in the cemetery and be an attractive place for family to visit.

Protocols for a natural burial

The following protocols are intended to assist the public, funeral directors, contractors and staff who are involved in the management of a natural burial. Families are asked to read and understand the components of a natural burial and what is involved with interment in the natural burials area at Fairhall cemetery. Interment in this area constitutes acceptance of the following:

- No embalming of bodies will be permitted

- Only one interment takes place in each burial plot
- Caskets must be manufactured from biodegradable materials
- A native shrub or tree is planted on or near the plot
- Memorialisation will be provided by the Council in the form of a temporary, simple, untreated wooden marker

Detailed Information

Plots

- Plot dimensions are 2.2 m long x 0.8 m wide and only one burial will take place in each plot.
- Individual plots cannot be pre-purchased, however at the time of an interment, a second plot may be pre-purchased as a partner plot alongside the first. Plots cannot otherwise be reserved.
- Burial takes place within the active soil layer and microbial activity in the soil is allowed to take its course uninhibited. The actual depth of burial will vary according to the existing soil conditions. Plots will be back-filled with nutrient-rich organically active soil.
- For safety reasons, graves will be dug by the Council's approved contractor. Family and friends may backfill a grave if they so wish, otherwise this will be done by the Council contractor.

Caskets

- Natural burial caskets must be made of biodegradable materials from a sustainable source approved by Natural Burials NZ. Caskets must be made without the use of chemicals or artificial compounds used in the treatment of the wood or in the manufacture of the casket or accessories.
- No artificial artefacts may be interred with the body.

Preparation

- The use of embalming fluids is **not** permitted. Sanitising compounds approved by Natural Burials NZ can be used. The use of natural clothing fibres is encouraged and non-biodegradable jewellery/accessories are discouraged.

Memorials

- The placement of artificial memorials or commemorative artefacts on the site is not permitted in the natural burials cemetery.
- Grave marking is by way of temporary non-treated wooden markers provided by the Council. These may be installed at the head of the plot and will not be replaced once deterioration occurs. Dimensions for the markers are 150mm x 100mm in size and these are placed 250mm above ground level on an untreated timber post (100mm x 100mm), pushed into the soil. The details of the deceased are routed into the top surface of the marker.
- The plot location and details of those interred in the natural burials cemetery can be found on the Council's Cemeteries Smart Map at www.smartmaps.marlborough.govt.nz

- Families may select a native tree or shrub to be planted as part of the burial process. This will be planted at an optimal time to ensure survival, which may not necessarily be at the time of burial. Families are welcome to be involved in the planting. Further planting will be undertaken by Council throughout the cemetery to promote the native habitat and attract bird-life. The species list can be found on the next page.

Ongoing site management

The natural burials area is being developed as a regenerating bush environment, therefore the planting and maintenance of the area will reflect this. Plant selection and actual planting is intended to encourage native fauna and flora. Formalised maintenance, which is evident in the remainder of the cemetery, will not be practiced in the natural burials area. In time, access to plots may become difficult due to plant growth, but visitors will be encouraged to make use of the walkway that is planned and seating areas to be provided. Maintenance of planted areas will be kept to a minimum and the emphasis will be on creating a peaceful, informal native bush area.

Fees

The fees for a burial in the natural burials area of the Fairhall cemetery are set out on the Council's website at <https://www.marlborough.govt.nz/services/cemeteries/cemetery-fees> . The fees cover the costs of a plot, the interment, a registration fee with Natural Burials NZ and a plant and planting costs.

Further information

If you need further information about the natural burials process please do not hesitate to contact the Cemeteries Administrator at the Council on 03 520 7400 or by emailing cemeteries@marlborough.govt.nz. You can also find information on natural burials on the Natural Burials NZ website at www.naturalburials.co.nz.



Tree and shrub list

Small
trees
8 - 20 m



Kowhai

Sophora microphylla



Cabbage tree

Cordyline australis



Ribbonwood

Plagianthus regius



Lacebark

Hoheria angustifolia

**Medium
Trees
20 - 25m**



Black Beech

Nothofagus solandri



Miro

*Prumnopitys
ferruginea*



Totara

Podocarpus totara



Celery Pine

*Phyllocladus
trichomanoides*

Shrubs



Kawa Kawa

Piper excelsum



Ake ake

Dodonea viscosa



Manuka

Leptospermum scoparium



Kanuka

kunzea ericoides



Five finger

*Pseudopanax
arboreus*



Koromiko

Hebe salicifolia



Coprosma
robusta

Coprosma



Broadleaf

Griselinia littoralis