

# The Jewish Joint Burial Society



# About us

The Jewish Joint Burial Society (JJBS), founded in 1969, provides funerals for synagogue members as one of the benefits of belonging to a synagogue. Currently JJBS covers over 17,000 members in 37 synagogues (27 Reform, 6 Masorti, 2 Liberal and 2 Independent).

JJBS has burial rights at the Western Cemetery at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire which primarily serves London synagogues; in the rest of the country synagogues use dedicated Jewish areas in municipal cemeteries. In 2011, JJBS acquired additional land adjacent to the Western Cemetery in Cheshunt, to create the Woodland Cemetery.

When a member dies in the London area, the JJBS, in conjunction with the synagogue, makes all the arrangements for the funeral, whether it is a burial or a cremation, and covers the basic cost of the funeral. Outside London, the JJBS reimburses the synagogue for the cost of the funeral up to a fixed amount which will provide a substantial contribution toward the cost of the funeral.

Bird's eye view architect's impression of the woodland cemetery (*MR Partnership*)



- 1 Woodland area
- 2 Lawn Cemetery
- 3 Prayer Hall and Columbarium
- 4 Memorial Garden
- 5 Car park
- 6 Woodland area

# How JJBS benefits you

## • How does the scheme work?

As a member of one of our synagogues, your membership of the JJBS burial scheme is automatic. Your synagogue pays an annual, non-refundable fee to JJBS, both to cover the actual cost of the funeral and the plot and to provide and maintain the cemeteries at Cheshunt. If you live within the Home Counties area this provides you with the right either to a burial at Cheshunt or a cremation at Golders Green Crematorium. In the rest of the country, JJBS will provide a substantial contribution to the funeral costs. Members of synagogues further away from London may also be buried in the cemeteries at Cheshunt, if they so wish.

These rights begin immediately, but if a member dies during the first 6 months of membership a charge for the cost of the funeral will be made. Please contact your synagogue or the JJBS Office for further details.

## • How are funerals arranged?

All funeral arrangements are the responsibility of each synagogue in conjunction with JJBS. You must notify your synagogue when a death occurs and then the synagogue and JJBS will make all the arrangements.

## • What is covered by the scheme?

The basic cost of the funeral is covered by the Scheme. This includes the cost of undertakers, transportation, cremation fees, *taharah*, plain coffin and shroud, plot and cemetery costs.

## • What is not covered by the scheme?

The JJBS cover only allows for either the cost of a cremation or a funeral. It does not cover any costs relating to the provision or placing of a tombstone. When ashes are deposited in the Columbarium in the Woodland Cemetery, there will be a charge for interment of ashes plus the cost of any plaque.

There are extra charges for using the woodland sections as woodland burials take up additional space and trees have to be planted. A woodland burial does not require a costly full tombstone and there is no future maintenance of a grave. However, the family may arrange for a small, low cost, memorial plaque to be placed on the grave.

Funerals can take place at a cemetery or a crematorium of your choice and JJBS will make a contribution towards the costs, but these are limited to the 'notional funeral allowance'. Please contact your synagogue or the JJBS Office for further details.



The first trees begin to grow at the woodland cemetery (*photo: JJBS*)

There are various extras and additional services, which are not covered by the scheme. To find a full list of what is and what is not included, as well as the related charges, please visit the JJBS website ([www.jjbs.org.uk](http://www.jjbs.org.uk)) or contact the JJBS office.

- **What about stone-settings?**

The setting of a tombstone and related costs are the responsibility of the family. All arrangements are made in conjunction with the synagogue, rabbi and JJBS office. Stone settings on Sundays are very popular, so advance planning is recommended. Your Rabbi must approve the wording on the tombstone. Your synagogue or the JJBS office can provide a list of licensed stonemasons. Once the tombstone has been laid, it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that it is kept clean and in good order. JJBS does not cover maintenance, repair, vandalism or re-setting of tombstones. For woodland burials, there can be a special memorial service at the graveside instead of the conventional stone setting service.

- **What if I join the scheme later in life?**

Your entitlement to a funeral is included with your synagogue subscription. The annual fees paid by your synagogue to JJBS are the same regardless of your age when joining the synagogue. However, if you were 50 or over when you joined the synagogue, there is an additional contribution to be paid.

- **Are the benefits transferable?**

If you move from one JJBS member synagogue to another without a break, your burial rights are transferred. The rights are not transferable to a non-JJBS synagogue.

## **The Woodland Cemetery**

The Woodland Cemetery allows members to choose to be buried in an environmentally-friendly way, in a beautiful natural environment, surrounded by newly planted trees and instead of a large costly headstone, a small memorial plaque is used. The burial can include a coffin made from plain wood, bamboo or wicker – which decompose naturally.

For the first time, JJBS can arrange to bury Jews with their non-Jewish partners in line with the fundamental progressive Jewish value of inclusiveness. These burials take place in double-depth graves in either the woodland or lawn sections of the Cemetery.

The Woodland Cemetery includes a modern prayer hall planned for construction in 2013/2014 which will be built of environmentally friendly materials. The site will also include a columbarium built in a separate landscaped area where cremated remains may be interred with a memorial plaque, a facility not possible in the Western Cemetery.

Members can pay tribute to a loved one by helping to sponsor the costs of construction of either the prayer hall or the columbarium and memorial garden.

Commenting on the revolutionary new woodland cemetery, Rabbi Paul Freedman of the Assembly of Reform Rabbis UK said: "Woodland burials meet all the *halachic* requirements for a Jewish burial and also help us to perform the *mitzvah* of *Bal Tashchit*. By developing a series of laws designed to improve the environmental quality of life, we are beginning to turn the negative meaning of this *mitzvah*: 'you shall not destroy', into the positive command 'you shall maintain'."

A woodland burial involves a minimal use of resources and helps to provide and preserve a natural habitat for native flora and wildlife.

Woodland burials also meet the *halachic* requirements of Liberal Judaism and the Association of Masorti Synagogues.

### **• What if I am a member of another burial scheme?**

If you pay into another burial scheme, as well as being covered by the JJBS scheme, when you die, your synagogue will receive a sum from the JJBS, which would normally be paid to your estate.

### **• Can plots be reserved?**

The family can reserve plots at the time of a burial in either the Western or the Woodland Cemeteries for other family members or a friend. There will be a charge for this. You cannot pick any spot in the cemetery, only a space next to a deceased relative or friend.

- **What if my partner's not Jewish?**

Jewish members and their non-Jewish partners can be buried in single, double-depth graves in either the woodland or the lawn sections of the Woodland Cemetery.

Non-Jewish partners can become Burial Subscribers of participating synagogues and pay an annual fee towards their funeral costs; alternatively they can receive a non-member's funeral at a discounted rate.

- **What are the arrangements for children?**

There is no cost for the funerals of members' children under the age of 21. After a child reaches 21, they must join a member synagogue in their own right to be covered for burial or cremation. There is a dedicated area in the Western part of the cemetery for burial following neo-natal deaths.

- **What about funerals for non-members?**

JJBS will undertake the burial or cremation of a Jewish person who is not a member of the synagogue at a special charge. Burial can be in either the Woodland or Western Cemeteries.

- **Flowers and wreaths**

Flowers and wreaths are not customary at Jewish funerals. Family and friends may consider a donation to a suitable charity.

- **How can I find out more about the scheme?**

You can either contact your synagogue office or the JJBS directly (contact details on back page) for more detailed information about the scheme, including a full list of additional charges.

Architect's impression of the new prayer hall in the woodland cemetery (*MR Partnership*)



## *Tradition and ritual*

### **Chevra Kadisha**

The term *chevra kadisha* or holy fellowship refers to the group tasked with preparing the bodies of Jews for burial, according to tradition, and protecting them from desecration until the time of burial. This group is called upon to ensure the proper respect for the deceased is shown, and they carry out the ritual cleansing of the body and subsequent dressing for burial (*taharah*).

This is considered a *mitzvah* worthy of high praise, since tending to the dead is a favour that the recipient cannot return – a favour without ulterior motives or a *chesed shel emet*, 'a good deed of truth'. This phrase comes from the Book of Genesis where Jacob asks his son Joseph, "do me a 'true' favour" and Joseph promises to bury his father in the Land of Israel.

JJBS has an up-to-date, fully-equipped facility for carrying out *taharah* at Cheshunt and now has its own *chevra kadisha*, made up of volunteers from member synagogues, to prepare the bodies of those who have passed away. If you would be interested in learning more about this *mitzvah* please contact your synagogue administrator or the JJBS office (contact details below).

Funeral group at burial in cemetery (*Jewish Museum in Prague*)

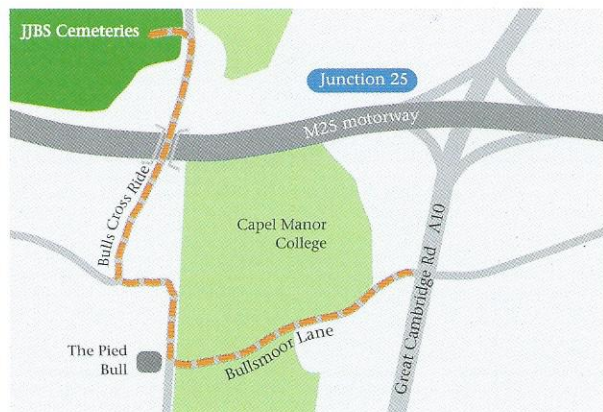


# Contacting JJBS

## Directions to the JJBS Cemeteries

Leave the M25 at exit 25 and take A10 in direction of Central London but almost immediately turn right at traffic lights into Bullsmoor Lane (past Capel Manor). At the mini-roundabout turn right into Bulls Cross and follow for about 50 yards bending sharp left onto Whitewebbs Lane. Turn first right into Bulls Cross Ride and follow road over M25 to the Cemetery which is approximately 150 yds on left.

From south use A10 for about 4 miles north of the junction with the North Circular Road. At the traffic lights signposted Crews Hill turn left into Bullsmoor Lane (and follow above directions).



## Contact details

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liberal judaism



The movement of  
REFORM JUDAISM

Layout of JJBS cemeteries at Cheshunt site

