

For information only. Parts of this correspondence will have changed since its issue.

Dear Funeral arranger/director

This is our first update since 30 March.

The following statement was added to our website and to Wandsworth council social media on Thursday...

Closure of Cemeteries – Coronavirus

From Thursday 9 April, 6pm, Putney Vale Cemetery and Battersea New Cemetery in Morden will be closed to all visitors until further notice. Please note that this excludes arranged funerals.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and understand that this is an unsettling time for everyone.

For full details, please visit [this webpage](#).

The above link to Wandsworth council's website states...

Cemeteries with crematoria ordered to be closed to visitors

Published: Thursday, April 9, 2020

As part of the national response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, the Government has issued an instruction that all cemeteries with crematoriums attached should now be closed to visitors.

This means that both Putney Vale Cemetery and Battersea New Cemetery in Morden, which is managed by Wandsworth Council despite its location, will be closed to visitors at 6pm today (Thursday).

This does not apply to funerals or cremations, which can still be held. The instruction only applies to people planning to visit these two cemeteries.

The order, made by the Ministry of Justice under Section 5 (8) of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 only applies to cemeteries with a crematorium.

This regulation does not apply to other cemeteries which can remain open to visitors.

The council's director of environment and community services Paul Chadwick said: "This will clearly be upsetting for those who were planning to visit the final resting place of a relative or loved one over the coming days, especially if it coincides with a poignant anniversary. People in this situation have my deepest and utmost sympathy.

"However the legal order from Government makes it clear that these two cemeteries and many others up and down the country, must be closed to all visitors until further notice.

"We hope to be able to reopen both as soon as we are able to."

Access to Putney Vale

The main vehicle gates are now controlled by a security company who are maintaining site security for the RBSH (see below). Please note the following...

- Funeral vehicles (hearse and limousines) will not be challenged at the gate and will be given immediate access
- Family members arriving for funerals will be asked for the name of their loved one before being granted access. Please see the section below regarding parking
- Funeral staff on official business will be granted access (for funerals, dropping paperwork and collecting cremated remains)
- Memorial masons will be granted access to carry out their normal works as long as they are following social distancing guidance

No other persons (including members of the public expecting to visit graves/gardens will be permitted) until further notice.

To assist us at this time please ensure that only immediate family (strictly maximum of 10 persons) attend funeral services. Please aim to arrive 15 minutes before the service is due to start and no sooner. Please also ask families to arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before the service starts.

We thank you for your continued support in protecting families and staff.

Putney Vale regional body storage hub (RBSH)

Putney Vale has been selected by government to host a Regional Body Storage Hub. This has, over the Easter weekend been built in the car park of the crematorium and it is expected to be operational by the end of this week. The hub will act as a mortuary for deaths in the community and it is expected that it will also be used to ease pressure from hospital mortuaries. I expect that further guidance for funeral directors will be issued this week. The hub will be staffed by a government contractor.

Car parking

The RBSH is situated over the entire car park and therefore there is no official parking. Can I please ask that funeral operatives who arrive in their own vehicles/non funeral vehicles park in the cemetery. We will initially ask families arriving in their own vehicles to park along the main drive and I will be exploring using part of the rose garden as a temporary car park this week.

For burials at Putney Vale please ask families to park on the drive by the office. Funerals will then, as usual be escorted to the graveside by the cemetery inspector.

If you have any questions on the above please drop a line to bereavement@enablelc.org.

Take care and stay safe.

Kelvin.