

CORRIGIN DOG CEMETERY

Guidelines and Procedures

The Shire of Corrigin acknowledges that losing a much loved pet dog can be difficult and emotional. The Corrigin Dog Cemetery provides a place where pets can be respectfully laid to rest and remembered in a meaningful way. The Shire is committed to maintaining a space that allows the community to celebrate the bond between people and their dogs, while also ensuring the cemetery remains safe, respectful and sustainable for future generations.

These guidelines and procedures support the Corrigin Dog Cemetery – Management and Burial Policy by providing clear, practical information for Shire of Corrigin staff, community members and visitors on how burials are arranged, what is permitted at the cemetery, and how the site is managed.

These guidelines are designed to support the unique character of the Corrigin Dog Cemetery as a vibrant, creative and heartfelt place of remembrance. The intent is to balance respectful burial practices with the community's tradition of celebrating the lives of their dogs through personalised and colourful memorials, while ensuring the site remains safe, well-maintained and sustainable for future generations.

These guidelines are intended to ensure that the cemetery remains a respectful, safe and sustainable place for current and future generations.

Overview of the Corrigin Dog Cemetery

The Corrigin Dog Cemetery is located approximately five kilometres west of the town of Corrigin along Brookton Highway. The cemetery's origins trace back to Paddy Wright, a Corrigin local whose dog 'Strike' passed away in 1974. Seeking a suitable place to bury his companion, he chose a patch of soft earth west of town. This simple act resonated with others, and soon more locals began burying their dogs at the same site.

By 1975, the area had become an informal but recognised burial ground. The Shire later acknowledged its significance, and it gradually evolved into a dedicated cemetery. The cemetery is located on a road reserve and private land. The Shire of Corrigin has a Memorandum of Understanding with one land owner for the use of the land.

The Corrigin Dog Cemetery is a unique and much-loved community and tourism attraction, widely recognised for its colourful, creative and highly personalised graves. It reflects the deep connection between people and their dogs in rural life and has become an iconic destination for visitors to the region. The cemetery is not only a place of remembrance, but also a place of storytelling, creativity and community pride.

Burials at the Cemetery

The cemetery is for dogs only. The Shire does not permit the burial of other animals at this location. Both residents of the Shire of Corrigin and non-residents are eligible to apply for a burial, subject to approval and payment of applicable fees.

How to Arrange a Burial

All burials must be arranged through the Shire prior to any works taking place. The process is as follows:

- Contact the Shire Administration Office on 90 632 203 or email shire@corrigin.wa.gov.au to discuss your requirements and availability of a grave.
- Complete an Application for Burial and Instruction of Grave form available from the Shire Administration Office or Shire website.

- Confirm the burial date and time with Shire staff.
- Arrange payment of applicable fees.

If a dog passes away outside normal working hours, applicants should contact the Manager of Works and Services on 0447 137 749. After-hours fees will apply where Shire staff are required to attend.

Do not proceed with burial or any works without first seeking approval.

Allocation of Graves

Graves are allocated in sequence based on availability. This ensures fair access and efficient use of limited space. Reservation of specific plots is generally not permitted. In limited circumstances, where a dog is very old or unwell, the Shire may consider preparing a grave in advance.

Fees and Charges

Final fees will be adopted annually by Council:

- Grave Allocation -\$50
- Grave Digging - \$200 (+ 50% if on weekend or public holiday)
- Concrete Slab - \$150 (shire supplied and install)
- Monument \$100 – (shire supplied and install)

Grave Allocation

Plot fee – for standard burials and for ashes or where no excavation of grave required

Grave Digging

Weekday, includes excavation of grave by shire.

After-Hours Grave Digging

Excavation of grave by shire on weekend/public holiday/RDO standard grave digging fee plus 50%.

Concrete Slab

Supplied and installed by shire.

Monument

Standard monument (hexagon or heart) supply and installation by shire.

Additional Services

Ashes interment in existing grave

Fees are intended to cover staff time, plant and equipment, and ongoing management of the cemetery.

Grave Preparation and Burial Requirements

Graves will be excavated by the Shire of Corrigin to ensure safety, correct depth and consistent layout across the cemetery. Pet owners wishing to dig graves themselves must seek permission from the Shire of Corrigin prior to burial.

Standard grave dimensions are approximately 1000mm long, 700mm wide and 1000mm deep. Dogs must fit within these dimensions. If a dog exceeds these dimensions, owners must discuss alternative arrangements with the Shire.

Pet owners are responsible for filling in the grave following the burial and must bring appropriate tools to do so. Owners must take care when filling graves and during burial activities to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Each grave is generally for one dog only. Two dogs may be buried together at the same time if they fit within the standard grave size. Removal and replacement of a memorial to bury a second dog in an existing grave at a later date is not permitted.

Ashes

Dog ashes may be placed in an existing grave at any time with prior approval from the Shire. A small fee may apply. Ashes interment must be coordinated to avoid disturbance to existing graves.

Memorials, Decorations and Personal Items

The Corrigin Dog Cemetery is renowned for its individuality, personality and creativity, and pet owners are encouraged to create memorials that are as unique as their dogs. The cemetery's character is shaped by these personal and meaningful tributes, with each gravesite telling its own story through thoughtful, colourful and sometimes playful expressions of remembrance. This diversity of styles is a defining feature of the cemetery and reflects the strong connection between people and their pets.

Memorials often reflect the personality, role and memories of each dog, and may include elements that tell a story or capture their life on the farm, at home, or within the community. Owners may choose to include a wide variety of memorial elements such as headstones, plaques, engraved tiles, painted rocks, decorative pebbles, collars, leads, toys, statues, photographs, or other small personalised items that reflect the life and personality of their dog. These examples are not exhaustive and owners are encouraged to discuss ideas with the Shire if they are unsure about suitability.

All memorials and personal or decorative items must comply with the following requirements:

- Be contained within the standard grave dimensions of 1000mm x 700mm
- Maximum height of any memorial is 1000mm
- Securely fixed or positioned to the base slab or memorial prevent movement
- Maintained in a neat, tidy and respectful condition
- Be contained within the grave boundary and not interfere with neighbouring plots
- Not pose a risk to visitors or staff.
- Not create a trip hazard, environmental risk or fire hazard

The following restrictions apply:

- No glass items are permitted
- No trees or plants are to be planted on individual grave sites.

Concrete slabs may be installed by the Shire or supplied by the owner to Shire specifications. Other materials such as pavers, stones or pebbles are permitted.

The Shire of Corrigin can provide standard monument options such as hexagon or heart shapes or owners may supply their own monument subject to approval.

Memorial items may be added over time provided they are securely fixed to the base slab or monument and continue to meet the Dog Cemetery Guidelines.

The Shire reserves the right to remove any items that are unsafe, damaged, unsecured, untidy or that impact on the overall amenity of the cemetery.

Maintenance Responsibilities

Pet owners are responsible for maintaining their gravesite, including keeping it tidy and ensuring decorations remain safe and secure.

The Shire will undertake general maintenance of the cemetery including raking, rubbish collection, weed control and overall site management in collaboration with local community volunteers. Items that become loose, damaged or are found outside the cemetery area may be removed by the Shire.

Visitor Conduct

Visitors are expected to respect the dog cemetery and must not damage, alter or interfere with any graves or memorials.

Pets are permitted but must be under control and must not disturb graves. All rubbish must be removed or placed in bins provided.

Prohibited Activities

The following are not permitted at the Corrigin Dog Cemetery:

- unauthorised burials;
- oversized monuments or structures;
- use of hazardous materials such as glass;
- removal or disturbance of existing graves; and
- any activity that poses a safety or environmental risk.

Environmental and Site Management

The cemetery is also a recognised tourism attraction and its presentation contributes to the visitor experience in Corrigin. Maintaining a balance between creativity, order and safety ensures the site remains welcoming for both the local community and visitors.

The cemetery operates on limited land and is managed by the shire and community volunteers to maximise capacity and ensure long-term use.

The Shire determines the layout of graves, spacing between plots and future expansion areas. Community cooperation in following these guidelines ensures the longevity of the cemetery.