



Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association,
C/O Community Centre,
Stray Park,
Yealmpton,
PL8 2HF.

15th September 2024

Proposal to apply to register the Association as a charity with the Charities Commission

Dear Members and Representatives,

The Yealmpton Woodland Burial Association (YWBA) was set up in 2003 by Roger and Linda Durman as a solution to the lack of burial facilities in the parish of Yealmpton. Since 2003 we have welcomed over 1,200 members of whom around 600 have been interred at Lower Heddon. Our activity over the last 20 years has turned an arable field, with limited biodiversity, into a thriving ecosystem with many birds, mammals and insects finding their homes in amongst the 30 or so varieties of trees and shrubs that have been planted. Visitors to the field will agree that it has become a haven of tranquillity, benefitting from the wonderful views out to Dartmoor and down to Cornwall. It is truly a special place.

Initially, Roger and Linda set up the Association in their personal names. Recognising that the Association was growing and building up a significant financial reserve to preserve the future of the burial ground, in 2013 the YWBA was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee managed by a Board of Directors. The Association then became subject to the requirements of company law. This meant that the bank account, lease, reserves and other assets could be held in a secure legal structure that protected the interests of the members and the board members.

Since 2013 the YWBA has continued to grow and we now hold significant financial reserves. Over the last year the management team has carried out a strategic review of our operations and we have concluded that, at our current rate of activity, we will have capacity in Lower Heddon to accept new members for a further 40-50 years from now. If we continue to build our financial reserves at the same rate as over recent years we will have sufficient funds at the end of that period to be able to continue to inter existing members and to continue to manage the transition of the site to permanent woodland. We can therefore conclude that our Association is in excellent financial health and has a robust and credible long-term plan.

As part of this strategic review the management team, the Board of Directors, has considered whether the time is right to apply to register the Association as a charity. Although requiring some additional administration, this move would provide the following benefits:

- Compliance with the strict regulatory framework enforced by the Charity Commission will provide additional security and peace of mind both now and in the future.
- Moving to a registered charity, will provide further reassurance to the local community, potential new members, funeral directors and other stakeholders that we operate for the public benefit rather than for profit.

- There will also be certain financial and tax advantages in registering as a charity.

Our current constitution, our Articles of Association, set out voting membership arrangements which incur a certain burden of administration and complexity which the Board considers outweighs the value provided to the Association by the current arrangements. We are therefore proposing that we change the rules around entitlement to vote at general meetings to restrict this right going forward to the members of the board of directors of the company. These directors will also become the charity trustees of the Association if charity status is achieved. We feel that this will streamline the administration of the charity as well as ensuring that all decisions are taken in strict compliance with the governance requirements enforced by the Charity Commission.

Moving to charity status will require the Association to adopt replacement Articles of Association suitable for the Association to operate as a charity, and also to make the above change to the membership voting rights. These new Articles have been prepared and approved by the Board and a copy can be accessed on our website: <http://woodlandburial.org.uk/>.

Should you require a copy of the new Articles of Association to be posted or emailed to you instead, please contact Mr Terry Milam at the address shown at the heading of this letter or by email to: info@woodlandburial.org.uk.

Our proposals represent a significant change to the way the Association has been governed in the past and so we will be calling an **Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on 29th October 2024 at 19:30 in the Yealmpton Community Centre** to discuss and, we hope, approve the move to charity status, and if that is approved, the proposed new Articles of Association. All current members of the Association are invited to attend this meeting together as are representatives of deceased members. Some members nominated a representative, often a next of kin, to continue the voting rights after they die. A formal notice of the meeting setting out the resolutions and a proxy form are enclosed with this letter.

Your Board of directors strongly recommends that members vote in favour of the proposals as being in the best interests of the Association.

Assuming the motions are carried, we would then proceed with the formal application for charity registration to the Charity Commission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Susan Anderson
Chair of the YWBA