

5. Cemetery Strategy

5.1 Introduction / Context

Cemeteries and Graveyards are important cultural and historical places within our landscape. They tend to be peaceful and contemplative places that are important to local communities. They also provide trees, meandering paths, manicured lawns and gardens, providing an important green oasis in urban environments and often giving recreational opportunities for local people.

The aim of the Cemetery Strategy is to provide, as far as is possible, a clear vision for the future development of cemetery services across East Ayrshire for the next 10 years. The Cemetery Strategy forms part of East Ayrshire's overall Green Infrastructure Strategy and will reflect the value of these public spaces in their own right as well as their provision of a specific service (burial ground) and the likely changing patterns and trends.

The Cemetery Strategy considers the legislative requirements specific to cemeteries.

The key outputs for the Cemetery Strategy are to provide:

- A detailed assessment of current service standards and cemetery/lair availability and associated service quality issues.
- A prioritised action plan for the future development of Cemetery Services across East Ayrshire for the next 10 years, taking into account usage trends and changing community expectations.

The Cemetery Strategy builds on the main methodology for the Green Infrastructure Strategy which provides an audit of the accessibility, quantity, quality of all open spaces.

There are five parts to the Cemetery Strategy methodology as follows:

- A description of Current Service Provision;
- A Review of Relevant Legislation and Policy
- An Assessment of Current Trends
- Quality Assessment of Cemeteries and Crematoria within East Ayrshire.
- A vision for Future Provision of Cemeteries

Current Service Provision

There are 45 public cemeteries and churchyards within East Ayrshire which are maintained by East Ayrshire Council and are included in the Cemetery Strategy.

All of these public cemeteries and churchyards have been audited and are accompanied by a survey sheet as part of the wider Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Table 1 – List of Cemeteries

SETTLEMENT	CEMETERIES	CHURCHYARDS
Auchinleck	Auchinleck Cemetery Main Street Auchinleck	Auchinleck Churchyard Church Hill Auchinleck
Catrine	Catrine Cemetery Newton Street Catrine	Catrine churchyard (Closed) Chapel BRAE Catrine
Cumnock	Cumnock Cemetery Glaisnock Road Cumnock	
Cumnock	Barrhill Cemetery (Closed) Barrhill Road Cumnock	
Dalmellington	Dalmellington Cemetery Church Hill Dalmellington	
Dalmellington	Dalmellington Old Cemetery (Closed) Off Main High Main Street Dalmellington	
Dalrymple	Dalrymple Cemetery Church Street Dalrymple	Dalrymple Churchyard Church Street Dalrymple
Drongan	Drongan Cemetery Littlemill Road Drongan	

Mauchline	Mauchline Cemetery Barskimming Road Mauchline	Mauchline Churchyard (Closed) Loudoun Street Mauchline
Muirkirk	Muirkirk Cemetery Glasgow road Muirkirk	Muirkirk Churchyard Church Road Muirkirk
New Cumnock	New Cumnock Cemetery Afton Road New Cumnock	New Cumnock Churchyard The Castle Main Street New Cumnock
Ochiltree	Ochiltree New Cemetery Mauchline Road Ochiltree	
Ochiltree	Ochiltree Old Cemetery (Closed) Mill Street Ochiltree	
Patna	Patna Cemetery Fullerton Street	Patna Churchyard (Closed) Main Street
Patna	Patna	Patna
Sorn	Sorn Cemetery Main Street Sorn	Sorn Churchyard Main Street Sorn
Stair	Stair Cemetery Churchyard Stair	Stair Churchyard Churchyard Stair
Darvel	Darvel New Cemetery Manse Brae Darvel	
Darvel	Darvel Old Cemetery Causeway Road Darvel	
Dunlop	Dunlop Cemetery Main Road Dunlop	Dunlop Churchyard Main Road Dunlop
Fenwick	Fenwick Cemetery Skernieland Fenwick	Fenwick Churchyard (Closed) Kirkton Road Fenwick
Galston	Galston Cemetery Cemetery Road Galston	Galston Churchyard Cross Street Galston

Galston		Loudoun Kirk (Closed) Off Glasgow Road Galston
Kilmarnock	Kilmarnock Cemetery Grassy Road Kilmarnock	Laigh Kirk (Closed) John Dickie Street Kilmarnock
Kilmarnock		St Andrews Churchyard (Closed) St Andrews Street Kilmarnock
Kilmarnock	Riccarton Cemetery Hurlford Road	Riccarton Churchyard (Closed) Old Street
Kilmarnock	Kilmarnock	Kilmarnock
Kilmaurs	Kilmaurs Cemetery Kirkton Road Kilmaurs	Kilmaurs Churchyard Kirkton Road Kilmaurs
Newmilns	Newmilns Cemetery Dalwhatswood Road Newmilns	Newmilns Churchyard (Closed) Loudoun Road Newmilns

Stewarton	Stewarton Cemetery Dalry Road Stewarton	St Columbus Churchyard (Closed) Lainshaw Street Stewarton
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Summary

Functionality	Cemeteries	Churchyards
Operational	23	9
Closed	3	10

5.2 Cemetery Standards

In addition to this, an annual quality assessment is undertaken by the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management. This includes a number of essential criteria that the service must meet in relation to service and standards to achieve gold, silver or bronze status. Service standards are also audited externally via the ISO 9000 Audit Management process and certification is personnel to

undertake audits. There is an internal and external process for auditing quality and the service maintain experienced and trained personnel to undertake audits. The criteria within the audits described cover all aspects of the service from customer service, financial controls, training etc. as well as criteria more relevant to service delivery such as Grounds Maintenance and Health and Safety. These criteria have been reviewed and considered as part of the development of the Cemetery Strategy quality indicators, as far as they relate to quality of Green Infrastructure.

5.2.1 Accessibility

Cemeteries within East Ayrshire are open to public access 24 hours per day.

5.2.2 Provision for Baby Burials

Two specific facilities for babies are provided in Kilmarnock and Cumnock. However all cemeteries accommodate the interment of babies/children.

5.2.3 Green Burial

The council operate and provide a green burial site within Galston Cemetery; this includes a woodland and meadowland site.

5.2.4 Specific Faith Requirements

The council have recently set aside an area for our Muslim community within Kilmarnock cemetery after consultation with a local Muslim group.

We are also working closely at this time with colleagues in North and South Ayrshire to survey other religious and non-religious groups to ascertain their needs and views on the bereavement provisions provided across Ayrshire as a whole.

5.2.5 Management Rule

Burials are normally arranged by a contacting a Funeral Director. East Ayrshire Council retains a list of funeral directors. Burials can also be arranged independently by contacting the Bereavement Services Office. A full copy of the management rules is available on request.

5.2.6 Availability

Table 9 (page 168) outlines the demand for burial plots and the Cemetery Capacity.

Notes:

Less than 5 years available

Less than 10 years available

calculation = previous 3 years added together and divided by 3, then divided into lairs available.

Table 2– Cemetery Capacity and Demand

CEMETERY	CAPACITY (Number of Lairs)	LAIRS AVAILABLE as of 01/08/2025	LAIR SALES 2022		LAIR SALES 2023		LAIR SALES 2024		LAIR SALES 2025		Total Lair Sales for Previous 3 Years (not including the current year)		TOTAL YEARS REMAINING BASED ON PREVIOUS 3 YEARS (1921 Average)
			Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full Plot	Crem Plot	
			SORN	225	12	1		1	0	1	2	1	
MAUCHLINE	2492	4	10		14	1	5	0	7	0	29	1	0.41
GALSTON	3691	68	5		8	1	14	0	5	3	27	1	7.56
CUMNOCK	6323	54	22		19	0	19	1	14	1	60	1	2.70
RICCARTON	6844	453	18		24	4	25	10	12	4	67	14	20.28
DALMELLINGTON	1581	267	3		7	1	8	1	4	0	18	2	44.50
DUNLOP	651	53	1		4	0	1	0	2	0	6	0	26.50
NEW CUMNOCK	3951	289	18		12	0	15	0	8	0	45	0	19.27
KILMARNOCK MUSLIM	38	14	1		0	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	14.00
AUCHINLECK	2407	346	6		11	2	18	0	5	0	35	2	29.66
DRONGAN	707	105	8		8	1	1	3	7	0	17	4	18.53
KILMARNOCK	26200	1391	49		41	7	33	13	11	2	123	20	33.93
DALRYMPLE	744	115	3		7	0	3	0	0	0	13	0	26.54
KILMAURS	1615	439	9		9	3	5	2	5	1	23	5	57.26
CATRINE	1962	199	6		6	0	5	2	1	0	17	2	35.12
STAIR	528	42	2		2	0	2	2	0	0	6	2	21.00
PATNA	1925	222	3		4	1	2	0	1	0	9	1	74.00

MUIRKIRK	3230	334	4		5	1	4	2	2	1	13	3	77.08
KILMARNOCK BABY SECTION	643	540	1		0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	810.00
FENWICK	1375	178	5		5	1	2	2	1	1	12	3	44.50
DARVEL	1653	421	7		1	0	6	2	1	0	14	2	90.21
STEWARTON	5235	1025	7		10	4	6	3	1	4	23	7	133.70
OCHILTREE	1346	323	2		2	0	2	0	3	2	6	0	161.50
NEWMILNS	3555	811	6		4	1	3	0	0	0	13	1	187.15
CUMNOCK BABY SECTION	452	416	0		2	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	416.00
GALSTON WOODLAND	214	206	0		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	68.66
Totals	79587	8,327	197	0	206	28	184	45	95	19			

5.3 Monitoring our cemeteries

East Ayrshire Council currently monitors cemetery usage (based on the last five years of burial demand occurring in each cemetery) and this information is used when considering future local provision.

Recent expansions have been added to:

- Dalrymple in 2019, resulting in a 26.54 year capacity
- Auchinleck in 2019, resulting in a 29.66 year capacity

Given the above demand it is envisaged that there may be additional requirement at:

- Cumnock; and
- Mauchline ¹

Some aspects of changing community requirements have already been touched upon in terms of ethnic and religious diversity, and on maintenance and health and safety. Other aspects which relate to the Green Infrastructure provision of cemeteries have been examined in further detail in the settlement reviews.

Future considerations may be given to the development of a Crematorium.

¹ *Note: A cemetery issue of lair availability has arisen at Mauchline. It was discovered that ground previously identified as suitable for burial has a three-foot diameter concrete pipe running the length of the area which has deemed this ground as unsuitable for burial. Recently F&P have started to assess where suitable land can be purchased through a capital project to accommodate a cemetery extension.*

At the current rate of new graves used for burial there may be less than two years available at Mauchline cemetery.

The Council have identified an area to alter to make new burial space of up to 24 more lairs giving us up to 3 years burial space at the current use rate of new burials. Negotiations are in place between EAC Estates and the landowner to purchase land adjacent to the cemetery for a new burial ground extension.

