



## Home burial

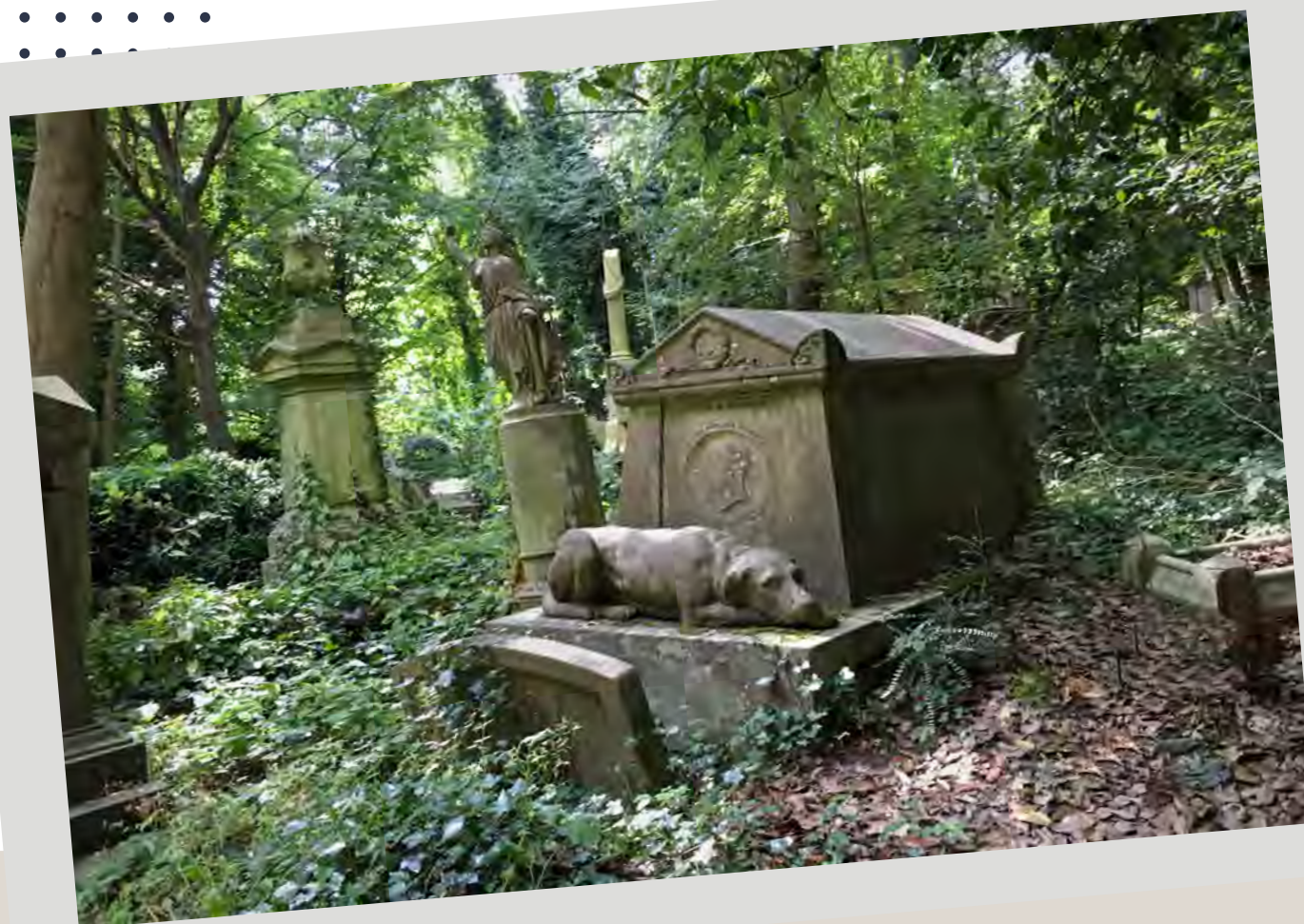
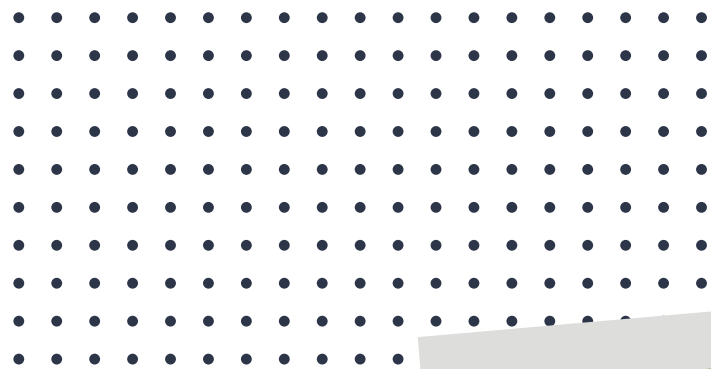
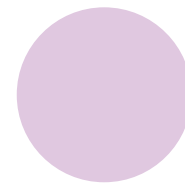
Whilst home burial can be an ideal option for a pet's final resting place, and some challenges may not have occurred to the client. Some of these considerations include:

- 1) Does the client have the landowner's permission for a burial?
- 2) Would they be happy to leave the grave if they decide to move houses?
- 3) Where in the garden will the burial take place?
  - Avoid underground utilities and pipes
  - Avoid high traffic areas so the grave won't be trodden on
- 4) The grave for a cat needs to be at least three feet deep; for a dog we recommend a minimum of 4 feet. Digging a grave this deep is considerably more work than many people realise.

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We have heard many stories and still get many enquiries from clients that regret burying their pet as they weren't in the right frame of mind to consider all of their options.



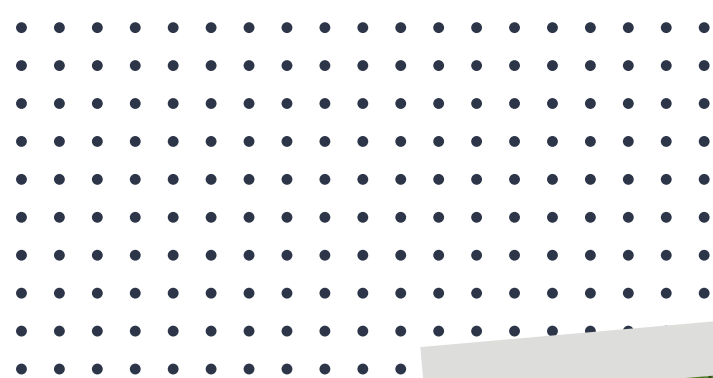
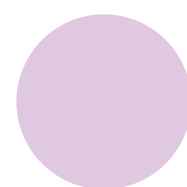


# Pet Cemetery

An alternative to home burial is to use a private pet cemetery. Your client can opt to have their pet or their pet's ashes buried in landscaped gardens. A headstone or memorial plaque can be used to mark the pet's resting place. Some companies are offering more informal settings for pet burials such as wildlife gardens. Normally the client will pay to keep the plot for a set period of time.

Clients would normally contact the pet cemetery directly to make the necessary arrangements.





## Cremation Options

Most practices now have agreements in place with a pet crematorium. There are two types of pet cremations available:

### Communal Cremation

Communal or mass cremation, is where a number of animals are cremated together. If your client wants their pet's ashes, you must recommend an individual cremation.

### Individual Cremation

Individual cremation is increasingly popular. Either you as the veterinary professional or the owner can organise an individual pet cremation.

With either option there are some considerations that, if agreed beforehand, can avoid causing your client distress. If you are sending the pet's body to CPC, you will be asked to put the pet's body into a protective body bag, complete an individual cremation form and attach it to the body bag.

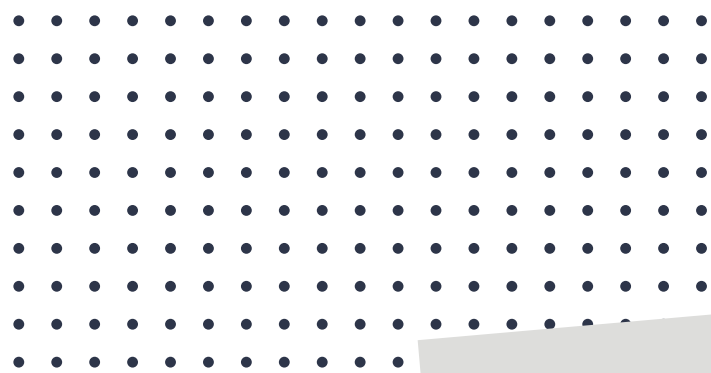
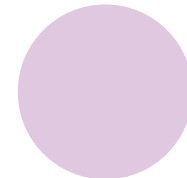
Once the body bag is sealed, it won't be opened again unless your client wishes to attend the cremation. In which case, trained pet presentation assistants will groom the pet so your client can say goodbye.

Body bags aren't routinely opened due to health and safety concerns. Any items in the bag will also be cremated. Items such as a lead and collar, a small toy or woollen blanket shouldn't cause any problems. Bulky blankets or things like a solid rubber ball really shouldn't be put in the bag.

A common cause of distress for clients is when items are cremated that they wanted to keep, which is why it is vital to document your client's wishes.

It is recommended that any fur clippings or paw prints are completed at the practice.





## Return of the ashes

When pets' ashes are returned to the practice for the owner to collect, you will need a procedure on how to present the ashes.

When your client arrives, they should be taken to a private room. Only then should the ashes be brought to the client. The way you handle the ashes should convey your respect for the deceased pet.

You can use this meeting to assess how your client is reacting. You should offer a referral for bereavement counselling if you feel your client would benefit from additional support.

If your client has organised a cremation directly with a crematorium, their pet's ashes will be returned directly to them. In these cases, you won't benefit from being able to meet with your client soon after their loss. In these instances, it is important to contact your client and enquire about them.