

How easy is it to identify and plan sites for new cemeteries?

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A planning expert from UWE Bristol is taking a new angle on dealing with the issue of an ageing population by finding out if sufficient provision for cemeteries is being made.

Katie McClymont, senior lecturer in Planning and Architecture at UWE, has just started a project to research people's attitudes to new cemeteries and the possible barriers in gaining planning permission for them.

She says, "The area remains under-researched in planning academia and practice, but is widely accepted as increasingly important.

"I want to find out how sites are identified, designated, developed and then accepted as new cemeteries. This is of great relevance to [local authorities](#), bereavement services and members of the public.

"I am interested in seeing how cemeteries and crematoria can serve all groups and faiths. People become very attached to certain localities because of historical aspects and place a spiritual value on them, but it is currently hard to account for this in planning policy terms."

Katie is initially focusing on a site for a new cemetery and crematorium in Rugby that is currently under construction.

She is studying how the planning process was conducted, interviewing representatives of key groups, and making field visits to the new and existing cemetery sites in the area.

Sean Lawson, head of environmental services at Rugby Borough Council, said, "There are significant expectations from residents placed upon local authorities to be able to provide such facilities, however the challenges involved in bringing new facilities forward are immense. As a society we have to reconsider our approach to providing new cemeteries and crematoria facilities, as well as managing the scarce resources we have. This is a problem that is growing and will only become more acute over time."

Katie continues, "Planning decisions made now will have substantial impact on the development of future cemeteries and the maintenance or reuse of existing ones.

"I will report on how need is assessed, how planners view applications for new cemeteries, what is the role of bereavement services, and on what grounds do members of the public object to or support such schemes.

"This work will contribute to national debates about the role of planning and whose interests it serves, specifically whether it can account for non-functional land uses."

Katie has been funded by UWE's SPUR fund for early career researchers. She hopes to be able to extend the project and look at cases of [cemeteries](#) at different stages of development across the whole country.

Provided by University of the West of England

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