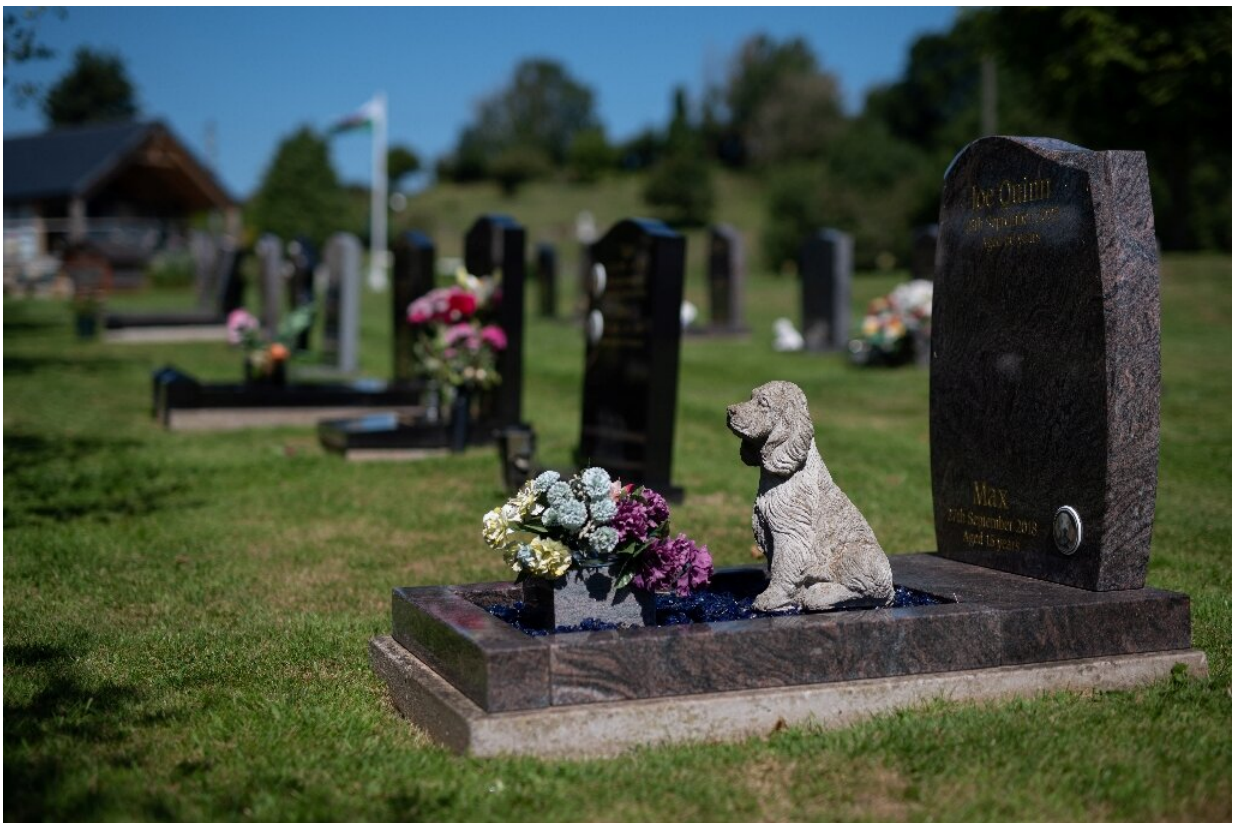


UK pet owners face grim choices amid soaring costs

August 18 2022, by James PHEBY



Costs of pet cremations have increased by 10 percent over the last two years.

Unable to afford the cost of cremation for his much-loved dog Khan under the weight of sharply increasing living costs, David McAuliffe turned to a social media group offering help for under-pressure pet

owners.

With inflation in the UK at a 40-year high, millions are feeling the pinch from soaring bills.

"Especially the way things are going: the gas, the electric, food prices, fuel everything is a struggle," said Mcauliffe, as he sat with his partner Julie Fielding at Pet Cemetery in Holywell, North Wales.

"(But) the dogs rely on you for everything and you've got to do right by them at the end of the day."

The pair, who live on welfare, turned to a Facebook group that channels donations to families who otherwise would not be able to afford expenses such as cremations, which are becoming pricier as fuel bills soar.

It costs over £200 (\$241) to cremate a medium-sized dog, with prices up 10 percent over the last two years.

Jason Ward, general manager of The Pet Cemetery, said most owners want their pets to have a private cremation so they can take the remains to bury or keep at home.

"The alternative, for families who don't have a private cremation, is for their body to be disposed of en masse with other pets," he said, adding they are often collected in bags from veterinary surgeries with other clinical waste.



Most pet owners want their pets to have a private cremation where they can take the remains to bury or keep at home.

During Britain's lengthy pandemic lockdowns, furry companions were many people's main crutch and source of companionship.

That strong bond is on full display at Pet Cemetery, where many plots serve as the resting place for both pets and owners.

The ashes of Mcauliffe's mother and Fielding's sister are already laid alongside Khan and their previous dog Flash, and it is the couple's final wish to be interred with them.

"When the time comes, that is where we want to rest," they said.

Costs of living

It is not only pet cremation that has become more expensive.

Mcauliffe and Fielding, who have two other dogs, have seen insurance and other costs increase.

"You just do what you have to do and take care of your pets the best you can," said Mcauliffe.

"If we have to go without, then we'll go without. As long as our pets are OK."



Pets that have recently passed away often required emergency medical care soon

before their death -- delivering a brutal financial double blow.



Many plots at the Pet Cemetary serve as the resting place for both pets and owners.

Pets that have recently passed away often required emergency medical care soon before their death—delivering a brutal financial double blow to an already grieving family.

Sometimes families have no choice but to send their pet's body to be disposed of as waste, which Ward says can cause "distress".

"(Pets) are a member of the family, they contribute a great deal to our well-being, and during the pandemic all families have spent more time with their pets," he said.

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