

Funeral Arrangements for Expat Deaths in Crete

If you have decided to spend the rest of your life living in Crete then funeral arrangements are something you ought to think about. Here are some notes/facts provided by David Lancaster-Smith.

Following any death a certificate needs to be obtained from the doctor/hospital/surgeon and the death registered at the local Town Hall. The Town Hall will issue a permit for a funeral.

The Passport and IKA book of the deceased need to be handed in at the local police station or Town Hall.

If the deceased has assets in the UK the British Consulate in Heraklion needs to be informed.

Options available:

Grammenos International Funeral & Repatriation Services

provide a full service at a reasonable price. Their details are as follows: -

Γραφείο Τελετών Γραμμένος

Alarm line: [+30 6948214734](tel:+306948214734)

Telephone: [+30 2661020390](tel:+302661020390) [+30 2108055656](tel:+302108055656)

Fax: [+30 2661040560](tel:+302661040560)

Mobile: [+30 6948214734](tel:+306948214734) [+30 6949929737](tel:+306949929737)

Website: www.grammenosinternational.com

Email: info@grammenosinternational.com

Alternatively notes provided by David: -

1. Cremation

Although cremation is now legal in Greece, there are no crematoria as yet. The nearest is Bulgaria. The cost of this is estimated at around 6,000 €.

2. Returning the body to the UK

Sending a body back to the UK involves a lot of red tape and would cost about 16,000 €.

3. At Sea

David doesn't believe that the Cretan authorities will allow burial at sea.

4. Burial in Crete

Graveyards are generally small and often full.

Some local priests have refused burial to non-Greeks in the past, however Bishop Anthilochios has written to all priests saying that non-Greeks are entitled to be buried in Crete, and a grave should be made available where possible. The only stipulation is the deceased should have been baptised, but the uncertainty remains as to whether the Greek authorities will seek proof of this.

If for any reason you become baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church you give up all rights to any sort of English funeral. Therefore, having made this choice, please do not contact David re the funeral arrangement as he will be unable to help. David is not allowed to officiate or take part in any service, or say anything on your behalf.

David has worked several times with the funeral director, Yiannis Toulourakis, who has an office at 2 Kissamou St in Chania, but lives in Kissamos. He speaks no English, but his daughter Katarina does, and she is very helpful (69457 82777).

Once Yiannis has been informed, he will sort out all the necessary paperwork, and even arrange refreshments.

There is no chapel of rest, although Yiannis does have a cold room, so the funeral can be delayed to allow mourners time to travel to Crete. Chania hospital also has a cold room. Alternatively, you can have a regular funeral without delay followed by a separate memorial/remembrance service some time afterwards.

Please note that embalming of the body is not the practice in Crete nor is a shroud provided by the funeral director. You will need to provide the funeral director with clothes for the dressing of the deceased.

Yiannis' funerals costs are about 1,600 euros.

The grave is rented for periods of three years at a time currently costing around 100 € a year. Alternatively a grave can be rented for 25 years the cost of which will be subject to enquiry.

At the end of these rental periods, unless renewed, the bones will be removed from the gravesite by the cemetery officials and kept permanently in storage until, or if, claimed.

If the bones of the deceased are to be returned to England they can be removed from the gravesite or bone store by the Greek authorities who will have them crushed and placed into an Ossuary Box for transport.

David has in the past presided at joint service funerals conducted in both languages, English & Greek. If you would like him to conduct an English funeral, please write down your personal details and what you would like him to do (words, hymns, music etc.) If you're on your own, leave your requests with a friend. You can have a Greek-style or an English-style funeral – it's an individual choice. The most important thing is to make sure

your family in the UK know that you want to be buried in Crete. Remember, it's your funeral to celebrate your life.

David is involved in ongoing negotiation with the mayor of Platanias with the aim of obtaining land on which to establish an Expat cemetery. Not an easy objective.

The funeral and grave costs quoted at time of printing are for guidance only and will inevitably change over time.

For any further information you may contact David by email at christchurchcrete@gmail.com, or rodalu@ymail.com, alternatively call him on 28240 23660, or 69487 47723.