



Hooton Paddocks

CREMATORIUM

A local, family run service to provide a modern crematorium for
Ellesmere Port, Neston and South Wirral



Hooton Paddocks was formed so that the bereaved families of this area could have a crematorium of their own to meet today's expectations, easily accessible and free from the congestion and pressures that blight existing crematoria.

We have been working on this mission for two decades and whilst Hooton Paddocks is a new company, our Managing Director, Richard Evans, has unrivalled experience in providing high quality, sensitively designed new crematoria for communities across the country.

He also has unrivalled knowledge of this area; born and raised locally, he first tried to improve matters back in 2006 with an application for a new crematorium at Waterworks Lane, Hooton. The application was refused on appeal with little weight given to the welfare of the bereaved. Numerous appeals since have been more sympathetic and the pressures on the nearest crematoria, Landican and Blacon, have grown over the past fifteen years.

Richard has continued to search for the right site alongside his brother James and are committed to running an independent, local service where fees will remain fair and all local Funeral Directors, big and small, will have a genuine influence.

The Need For A New Crematorium

Currently, funeral parties from Ellesmere Port, Neston and South Wirral have to travel some 30 minutes to either Birkenhead (Landican crematorium) or Chester (Blacon crematorium) to hold a cremation. Both of the existing choices were meant to serve their respective communities but their catchments have extended into surrounding areas with both, understandably, becoming overly busy, holding many more cremations than their original design intended. In 2019 Landican held 3174 cremations, an average of 13 per day, and was the 5th busiest crematorium in the country. Notably, the four busier crematoria have relief on the way with new crematoria permitted. Action needs to be taken now if Landican is not to become the busiest crematorium in the country, despite its design dating back almost a century.

Understandably, the crematorium is desperately congested operating beyond its capacity with delays of 3-4 weeks for funeral bookings. The situation has become worse since the appeal in 2008 with families needing longer, more personal funerals. It is not unusual for five funerals, including burials, to be on site at the same time with different funeral parties alongside each other, removing any prospect of an individual, personal service. The overcrowding is not helped by the antiquated layout with the crematorium operating from two adjacent chapels alongside a third burial chapel. Unsurprisingly, funeral parties become mixed together with mourners unsure if they are attending the right funeral.

Little thought was given to the circulation of people and cars when Landican was built in 1934 and cremation only accounted for 1% of funerals. Over 80% of people now chose this option and need modern, purpose-built facilities.

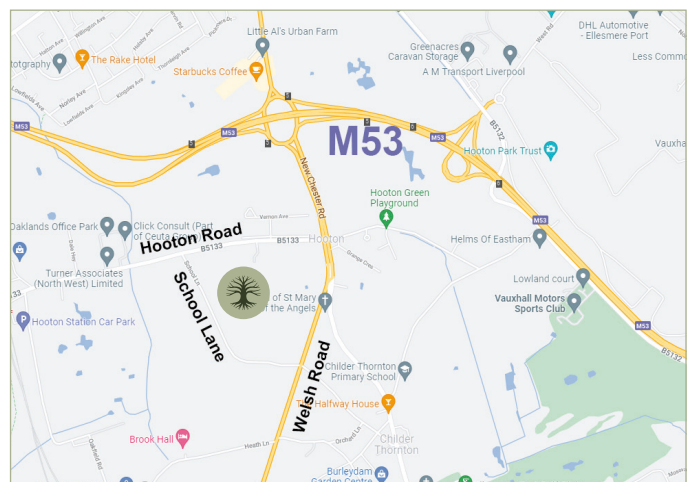
The facilities are also in poor condition with little visible improvement since the time of the last appeal. Blacon is a modern crematorium but has no spare capacity to look after families from beyond its natural catchment of Chester City. It held an annual average of 1958 cremations before the pandemic and faces comparable capacity problems to Landican with similar delays to funerals and a 'conveyor belt' experience for many.

Numerous appeal decisions over the past thirteen years have established standards for measuring the capacity for crematoria with both Blacon and Landican failing this test even during average levels of demand. The situation is even worse during the winter. These pressures will only grow over the next 20 years with the sustained rise in deaths, forecast by the ONS to be over 30% for this area alone. A new crematorium would finally allow families to have a local, less busy choice of their own with a minimum of an hour allowed for each service. Overall, the new service is expected to look after 1022 cremations a year, four per day on average, providing a much quieter and peaceful setting. The two existing crematoria would also benefit from having a more manageable level of demand.

20 Year Site Search

Mr Evans, along with his brother, has been searching for the right site to meet this need for over 20 years. Since the last appeal, numerous brownfield sites have been considered over a wide area to avoid greenfield development in the Green Belt. None were ultimately suitable until the search eventually found land with existing development on School Lane, Hooton. The plan is to replace the existing residential property and stable block with a sympathetically designed, carefully proportioned crematorium.

The proposals would lead to just over 200m² of extra development; far less than the scheme put forward by Horizon Cremation Ltd on greenfield land at Hooton Road, which proposes 593m² of new building plus an upstairs office block. The site on School Lane is secluded, away from the built-up areas on Hooton Road, and benefitting from the existing mature hedgerows and trees which surround this self-contained field. All of these landscape features will be retained with the existing access points used for the crematorium. The whole site will be improved with extensive landscaping, especially trees, creating a naturally beautiful and private place for funerals to be held, carefully screened from neighbouring views.



A place to pause and remember, celebrate and mourn, in the most comforting of settings

The Design

We believe that we have found a perfect place for our discreet building to nestle into the landscape. The development is single storey, just under 500m² in size and designed to match the local character with red brick alongside handmade plain tiles and timber cladding. This should help it sit comfortably in the existing landscape and be respectful of its position within the countryside.

The main part of the building is a 100-seat ceremony room adaptable for secular and multi faith use; along with a waiting room; accessible public toilets; a small office with family meeting room; and a crematory. 75 car parking spaces, including electric charging points, and 6 disabled bays would be provided.



The emphasis of our plans is to transform the existing grazed paddocks and scrubland into a beautiful natural setting for funerals, blessed with extra trees, plants, flowers and hedgerow. The inherent woodland will be extended around the site, lined with wild flower meadows and other informal planting with the garden and grounds eventually resembling a mature parkland.

Just 10% of the site is planned to be developed with the rest left as a green landscape to ensure that it is a place of peace and remembrance free of the pressure and congestion of historic crematoria.

The Environment

The crematorium would include advanced filtration and abatement equipment, making it “clean to air” and will be one of the first to fit NO_x (nitrous oxide) abatement. There is no requirement to do this but, unlike our competitors, we feel now is the right time to make this commitment.

The design will allow the heat from the cremation process to be used to warm the building with the service ultimately being carbon neutral.

The land will be converted from an intensively grazed paddock of low ecological value to a more natural parkland offering an abundance of rich habitat to local wildlife. A full ecological survey has been undertaken which confirms that our plans will lead to a 70.25% Bio-diversity net gain.

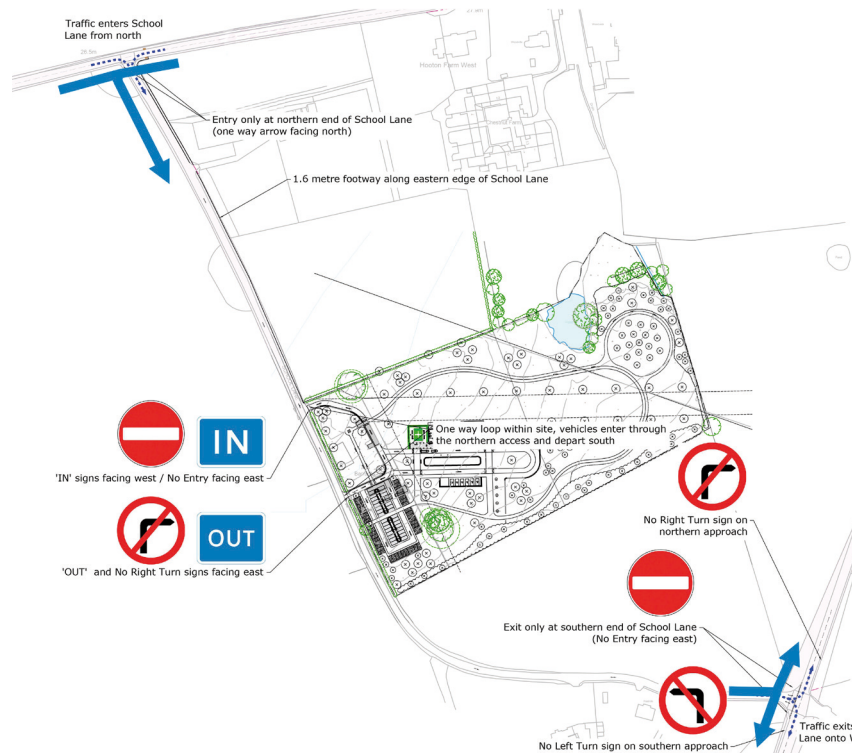


Access And Highways

Almost all funerals take place between 10:30 am and 3:30pm. This is outside of peak traffic hours, and so the crematorium would not conflict with or add to rush hour traffic.

Traffic to the crematorium would be light in any case as it is anticipated that 1022 funerals will be held each year once fully established, an average of just four funerals per day (Monday to Friday). With typically 19 cars attending each funeral, this would mean on average 76 cars visiting the site each day.

All in-bound traffic would be directed off Hooton Road onto School Lane which, we suggest, would become one-way. Vehicles leaving the premises would be routed onto Welsh Road to prevent a return trip onto Hooton Road. This would create a seamless, circular flow to and from the crematorium that should ensure that residents see 50% less funeral traffic on Hooton Road than the alternative scheme. It will also stop traffic heading back onto Hooton Road from the poor visibility of the School Lane junction.



Summary

- There is a critical and increasing need for a new crematorium to serve this area to relieve pressure on the desperately busy facilities at Birkenhead and Chester and allow bereaved families to have the time and space for a dignified, personal event.
- The site on School Lane is the conclusion of a 20-year search and offers a solution on existing developed land.
- The design matches the local character and its smaller scale will ensure that the net build is limited to just 200m², a third of that proposed by the alternative Horizon scheme on Hooton Road.
- Our site is also more secluded with far less impact on local residences especially with the proposed one-way system which would reduce the extra traffic on Hooton Road by 50%.
- There will be very significant ecological benefits with a 70.25% net biodiversity gain.
- The service will be run as a local, independent family service. It will be one of a kind rather than one of a group.

Public Exhibition

A public exhibition will be held on Thursday 27th January from 12- 7.30 pm at The Woodcote Hotel, Hooton Road. Please come along to see our proposals in more detail, ask any questions, and let us know your thoughts. All of this information and more can be seen at www.hooton-paddocks.co.uk

Your Comments Are Important.

We would appreciate your comments on our proposal before we submit the planning application. You will be able to do this on our website www.hooton-paddocks.co.uk or at our exhibition.

Alternatively please write to: Richard Evans,
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Cheshire, CW6 9LU

