



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Council cemetery where all are buried according to Muslim ritual



Rt Rev George Cassidy

**A new cemetery is to have all its graves aligned with Mecca. It will be the first council graveyard in England to bury the dead in Islamic tradition, regardless of their religion.**

Headstones in the new £2.5million High Wood Cemetery in Nottingham will face north-east because Muslims believe the dead look over their shoulder towards Mecca. This is the way in which all followers of Islam in the UK are buried.

#### Upset

But the move has upset the Church of England and led to complaints that the policy discriminates against the city's majority Christian population. The traditional direction of burial in Anglican graveyards is facing east.

#### Bishop

The Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, the Rt Rev George Cassidy, criticised the decision. He said: "This is a sensitive issue to all people. I hope the situation will be reviewed with wide consultation and a policy introduced that takes account of the needs of all."

#### Decision

The decision was made by Steve Dowling, Nottingham City Council's Services Director for Environment and Public Protection. He said: "For people of the Muslim faith this fits in with a religious requirement, but it will also ensure a tidy appearance for the site.

#### Tory

Tory councillor for Clifton North, said: "I was totally bewildered when I read about this decision. I spoke to one of the local Muslim groups in my area and they were equally surprised by what had been done. It is utterly ridiculous and I know it'll create a lot of ill feeling both in Nottingham and the country generally."