

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)093

(Question Serial No. 1656)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

With a growing and aging population in Hong Kong, the public demand for burial facilities has become increasingly keen. To cope with the demand, apart from increasing the supply of public niches, the Government has been actively promoting green burial in recent years, including promoting and encouraging the scattering of ashes at sea or in Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs). In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. (i) the respective numbers of cases in which ashes were scattered in relevant locations (i.e. in GoRs managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, GoRs in private cemeteries, and at sea), (ii) the percentage of green burial cases out of the total number of burial cases, and (iii) the utilisation rates of various GoRs managed by the Department (including the number of cases in which the Department was entrusted with the arrangement for dedicated staff to scatter ashes, and the number of cases in which memorial ceremonies were arranged to be held in GoRs), in each of the past 3 years;
2. the number of users and the hit rate of the Internet Memorial Service (IMS) website, as well as the number of downloads of the IMS mobile app, in each year since the launch of the website and the mobile application;
3. the number of members of the public registered with the Green Burial Central Register, and the number of registrants therein whose cremated ashes were handled in the form of green burial in accordance with their wishes before death, in each year since the launch of the Register;
4. whether the Government will continue to build GoRs and encourage non-governmental organisations and religious groups to build more GoRs in suitable places in the coming 3 years; if so, the locations of such GoRs.

Asked by: Hon KOON Ho-ming, Peter Douglas (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

- 1(i)&(ii) The numbers of green burial cases and their percentages of the total number of deaths in the past 3 years are provided as follows:

Number of cases Year	Scattering of ashes			Percentage of the total number of deaths
	In Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs)*	At sea	Total	
2022	8 437	1 012	9 449	15.4%
2023	8 237	1 144	9 381	16.5%
2024	8 522	1 032	9 554	18.2%

* Including cases handled by private cemeteries.

- 1(iii) The numbers of cases of scattering ashes in GoRs managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and their percentages of the total number of cases in the past 3 years are provided as follows:

Name of GoR	2022		2023		2024	
	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)
Diamond Hill Garden of Remembrance (New)	3 726	48.4%	3 421	45.8%	3 516	45.7%
Cape Collinson Garden of Remembrance (New)	1 386	18.0%	1 317	17.6%	1 319	17.1%
Tsang Tsui Garden of Remembrance	718	9.3%	831	11.1%	1 064	13.8%
Wo Hop Shek Garden of Remembrance (Phase V)	657	8.5%	733	9.8%	668	8.7%
Kwai Chung Garden of Remembrance (Old)	504	6.5%	481	6.4%	414	5.4%
Fu Shan Garden of Remembrance	375	4.9%	371	5.0%	394	5.1%
Kwai Chung Garden of Remembrance (New)	262	3.4%	238	3.2%	240	3.1%
Wo Hop Shek Garden of Remembrance (Phase III)	62	0.8%	65	0.9%	65	0.8%

Name of GoR	2022		2023		2024	
	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)	Number of applications	Percentage of the total number of cases (%)
Cheung Chau Garden of Remembrance	4	0.1%	4	0.1%	10	0.1%
Cape Collinson Garden of Remembrance (Old)	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%
Peng Chau Garden of Remembrance	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Diamond Hill Garden of Remembrance (Old)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Lamma Garden of Remembrance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	7 695	100.0%	7 465	100.0%	7 691	100.0%

2. Statistics about the website and mobile app of the Internet Memorial Service (IMS) are provided as follows:

Year	Number of users [#]	Hit rate of the website	Number of downloads of the mobile application [*]
2020	7 566	616 496	7 119
2021	5 400	545 195	5 814
2022	2 551	680 632	6 608
2023	9 273	697 014	6 065
2024	9 684	648 075	6 163

[#] The IMS website was launched for service in June 2010.

^{*} The mobile app was launched for service in June 2018.

3. Since the launch of the Green Burial Central Register in January 2019, the number of registrants and the number of deceased registrants whose cremated ashes were handled in the form of green burial in each year are provided as follows:

Year	Number of registrants	Number of deceased registrants	Number of deceased registrants whose cremated ashes were handled in the form of green burial (percentage of the number of deceased registrants)
2019	3 401	55	41 (75%)
2020	2 333	95	67 (71%)
2021	2 346	140	94 (67%)
2022	1 492	174	114 (66%)
2023	2 266	175	118 (67%)
2024	3 250	237	208 (88%)

4. The Shek Mun Columbarium and Garden of Remembrance in Sha Tin, which is constructed by the Government, is expected to be completed and commissioned in 2025. We also encourage non-governmental organisations and religious bodies to build GoRs at suitable locations under their management. Green burial facilities have been added to the Junk Bay Chinese Permanent Cemetery, the Pokfulam Chinese Christian Cemetery and the Hong Kong Buddhist Cemetery in Cape Collinson. In addition, green burial facilities were first introduced to the St. Raphael's Catholic Cemetery in Cheung Sha Wan under the management of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong in May 2024.

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