

Godstone Parish Council

BURIAL GROUNDS REGULATIONS

1. Introduction

1.1 These regulations apply to the burial grounds owned and managed by Godstone Parish Council, ("The Council") which are situated in an area to the rear of St Nicholas' Church, Godstone. They have been formulated to ensure that the Burial Grounds remain a safe, attractive and peaceful place for everyone.

1.2 These regulations are in addition to the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and any other appropriate legislation currently in force.

2. Contact Details

2.1 All funeral bookings, general enquiries and comments regarding the burial grounds should be directed to the Clerk to Godstone Parish Council, The Bounty, Godstone Green, Godstone RH9 8DY. Tel: 01883 744209. The offices are open from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday (by appointment please), excluding bank holidays.

3. Admission to the Burial Grounds

3.1 Admission to the burial grounds is available 24 hours a day, however the Council does reserve the right to close the burial grounds for short periods of time for maintenance issues.

3.2 Burials may take place during daylight hours, Monday to Fridays. No burials may take place on Saturday, Sundays, Christmas Day and any Bank Holiday without the express permission of the Council.

3.3 Godstone burial grounds is a place of peace and quiet reflection. It is also a workplace. Visitors to the site are welcome, but please respect the special nature of the area, the needs of other users, and safety factors.

3.4 Any person creating a nuisance or a disturbance such as interfering with a funeral, grave, headstone, flowers, trees etc., will be required to leave the burial grounds immediately and may be the subject of subsequent legal action.

3.5 Dogs shall be kept on a lead and properly controlled. Owners will clean up the faeces if any fouling takes place.

4. General Regulations

4.1 All fees for interments or memorial works must be paid in full to the Council in advance.

4.2 The Council will publish a scale of fees and charges annually. Parishioners and 7-year parishioners of Godstone will qualify for reduced fees compared to non-parishioners. A Parishioner is a person who has lived until their death or at the time of death, owned a property within the Local Authority Boundary of the Parish of Godstone. A 7-year Parishioner is a person who at some time during their life lived for a period of 7 years within the Local Authority Boundary of the Parish of Godstone.

4.3 For the interment of ashes an application should be made to the Clerk. The maximum number of ashes that can be interred are six per plot after all burials have taken place. The location of ashes must be confirmed to the clerk and the area in the grave confirmed: The options for placement of ashes are top left, top right, middle left, middle right, bottom left, bottom right whilst facing the headstone at the top of the plot.

4.4 The Council reserves the right to amend these regulations and to deal with any circumstances or contingency not provided for in the regulations as necessary.

5. Graves

5.1 The Exclusive Right of Burial for a grave can be purchased for a period of 50 years. After the first five years, this period is extendable by five-year periods up to a maximum of 75 years. The maximum number of people that can be listed on an Exclusive Right of Burial is a maximum of two people.

5.2 Graves may be purchased by Parishioners and 7-year Parishioners in advance of need.

5.3 Graves cannot be purchased in advance of need by non-Parishioners. The number of graves allocated to non-Parishioners in any one financial year is limited to 4, unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

5.4. The selection of grave spaces shall be at the discretion of the Council.

5.5 The Exclusive Right of Burial can only be transferred to another person via the legal process laid out in the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1986, i.e. assigned by deed by a living owner to another person or bequeathed by Will.

5.6 If the purchased grave is to be reopened for a further interment the written permission of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial (herein after referred to as the grave owner) must be given.

5.7 A Memorial may be placed on a grave following the required application and approval which must first be made to the Council on the prescribed form with any fee payable. See 7 below.

5.8 The Council is not responsible for the digging of the grave; this should be arranged by the Funeral Director (see 9.5 below). Full account must be taken of current health and safety practice. The depth of each grave will be determined by the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

5.9 Graves are normally designated for the interment of two persons. Graves are not to be used solely for the burial of ashes. However, ashes may be interred in the grave provided an interment has already taken place. Where a grave has been purchased in anticipation of a burial and the purchaser later decides on cremation, the situation must be referred to the Council.

5.10 The owner can surrender the Exclusive Rights of Burial if the grave has not been used for burial, on completion of a Deed of Surrender. The surrender value being the original purchase price as specified on the Deed of Grant less 10% for administration costs.

5.11 Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial granted between 1973 and 2006 which stipulate Rights for Burial for the specified plot, also include the Right to Erect a memorial on the grave although this is not specifically detailed on grant documents issued between 1973 and 2006.

6. Care of Graves

6.1 Grave spaces must be kept in a neat and tidy condition and all litter must be removed from the site.

6.2 Wreaths can be laid on the grave following a burial or ashes interment taking place, wreaths should not cover any area further than the grave space covered by the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. Wreaths should be cleared from the burial plot after 7 days following a burial has taken place. Any wreaths and memorial items should be taken and disposed of as there are no waste facilities at the burial ground. The Council reserves the right to clear wreaths following a funeral if they remain after 7 days.

6.2 Flowers and plants may be planted on a grave, but they must not exceed the width and length of the grave when fully grown. This is to facilitate the cutting of the grass between the graves and to prevent encroachment onto a neighbouring grave. No trees or shrubs may be planted.

6.3 If a grave has not been planted within 9 months of the interment, the Council reserve the right to make arrangements for the grave to be levelled and turfed. The owner of the grave will be contacted beforehand at their last known address.

6.4 Fresh floral tributes only (no artificial flowers) may be placed in a container on a plinth. Only non-breakable containers may be used; glass or plastic is not permitted. Compostable material only may be deposited in the compost bins provided, all other rubbish must be removed from the Burial Grounds – it must not be placed in the bins near the church.

6.5 Any materials on the grave such as gravel, marble or similar stones are not permitted. No grave space shall be enclosed therefore no edging of graves is permitted.

6.6 Statues, sculptures, figurines or similar items are not permitted and should not be placed on grave spaces.

6.7 The Council reserves the right to remove anything from the Burial Grounds which does not comply with the regulations. If fencing, trees, shrubs or any other non-compliant materials, or objects are placed on a grave, written notice will be sent to the grave owner at the last known address, requesting their immediate removal. If, after 28 days, the request has not been complied with, the Council will place a notice on the grave. A further 14 days will be allowed for the problem to be rectified, after which time the Council will arrange for their removal and any items perceived to be of value will be deposited in a safe place for collection.

6.8 If graves are left untended or become unsightly the Council reserves the right to take any necessary action to preserve the general amenities of the Burial Grounds.

6.9 No obstruction should be on the graves that will hinder the maintenance and cutting of the grass at the burial ground.

7. Memorials

7.1. No memorial may be erected until 11 months have elapsed since the date of the interment for safety reasons and to minimise the effect of any further settlement.

7.2. Before any memorial can be erected or works undertaken to an existing memorial, a completed Council supplied application form must be submitted together with the appropriate fee. A dimensional drawing with the proposed inscription and details of the materials to be used must accompany the application. The grave owner must sign the form to give their permission for the proposed memorial/works. The Council shall determine the suitability of any memorial. On approval by the Council, the responsible Memorial Mason will be advised.

7.3 The memorial must comply with one of the following criteria:

- a) Mounted on a plinth, the dimensions of the plinth must be no more than 30" (762.0mm) wide, 15" (381.0mm) deep and 3" (76.2mm) in thickness. The memorial stone must be no more than 3" (76.2mm) in thickness. The maximum height from ground level to the top of the memorial must be no more than 36" (914.4mm)
- b) A single memorial stone set directly in the ground (a monolith) must be no more than 24" (609.6 mm) wide and 3" in thickness. The maximum height from ground level to the top of the memorial must be no more than 36" (914.4mm). The memorial must be secured below ground as specified in BS 8415, and in any case must extend at least 12" (304.8mm) below ground level.
- c) Memorials cannot have any electrical devices installed within them.

7.4 The grave number must be engraved on the top right hand side of the rear of the memorial. The memorial mason may inscribe their company name in letters no bigger than 2" (51.0mm) only on the bottom left of the rear of the memorial; no trademark, phone number or other form of advertising is permitted on a memorial.

7.5 Prior to the installation of an approved memorial, the Parish Council must be advised of the scheduled date and time of the installation.

7.6 Memorial masons must remove all arisings from the Burial Grounds at the conclusion of their work and must leave the area in a tidy condition.

7.7 The Memorial must be designed and installed in compliance with BS8415 - 2018 and any relevant industry Codes of Practice that fully comply with BS8415 - 2018. A completed certificate of compliance must be sent to the Council upon satisfactory completion of the installation.

7.8 The grave owner will be responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and safety of the memorial from the date of installation. The owner must advise the Council in the event of any ownership change and/or address.

8. Care of Memorials

8.1 All memorials erected are the sole responsibility of the owner(s) of the grave or their successors in title. The Council shall not be held responsible for any damage to or caused by the memorial, howsoever incurred. The memorial remains the responsibility of the grave owner during the term of the lease for the grave. The Council recommends that grave owners take out an insurance policy on their memorial.

8.2 The Council will undertake routine safety checks on all memorials and will notify the grave owner at the last registered address of any necessary works to make the memorial safe. The grave owner will be given a period of 6 months from the date of the letter to affect the necessary repairs. The Council reserves the right to make safe any memorials that are unsafe until such time as works are completed. If the grave owner does not arrange for the repairs to be made, or if the grave owner or his successor cannot be found, the Council may repair or remove the memorial.

9. Mostly for Funeral Directors

9.1. A provisional booking for a funeral may be made by telephone to the Council Offices

9.2 The provisional booking should be followed by the submission of a completed Notice of Interment to the Council offices (form supplied by the Council) at least 48 hours prior to the intended time and date of the funeral (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays). Receipt of the fully and correctly completed Notice of Interment will act as confirmation of the provisional booking.

9.3 The relevant certificate from the Register of Births and Deaths, or the Coroner, must be provided with the completed Notice of Interment.

9.4 All fees and charges are payable to Godstone Parish Council. A table of fees, which is reviewed annually, is available from the Council. Payment must be received before a burial can proceed.

9.5 The Parish Council has determined that the preparation and back filling of all graves for a funeral and the preparation of all graves for the interment of ashes, shall be conducted by the following person, or his designated deputy: Mr Michael Tamplin, Tel: 01883 716145 or Mobile: 07884 195970. In the event of the designated Funeral Director being unable to communicate with Mr Tamplin, the Parish Council office should be contacted.

10. Registers

10.1 The Registers of Burials, Grave Spaces and Purchased Graves are kept by the Clerk and can be inspected at the Council office by appointment. Certified extracts may be obtained on payment of a prescribed fee.

11. Personal Details

Any personal information given for the purpose of burial records will only be used in relation to the matters concerning any allocated plot(s) and the burial grounds and will not be disclosed to any other third party without my permission or unless the Parish Council are required to do so by law.

The above Regulations came into operation on 5th September 2011

[Revised 9 May 2022]

All previous Regulations are superseded.

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