

POLICY TITLE

Cemetery Policy

REVISION DATE

October 2020

REPLACES POLICY

June 2018

POLICY AIM

The aim of this Policy is to assist Skegness Town Council in undertaking its duties as Burial Authority for Skegness and Winthorpe.

Caring for the Community

All burial facilities shall be maintained to a high standard and managed with competence and efficiency, to ensure that the entire bereavement experience occurs without error or insensitivity, and meets the religious secular, ethnic and cultural needs of the bereaved. The service shall comply with all statutory and Health and Safety requirements.

Service Sensitivity

The burial of a human body is a highly emotional occasion for those taking part. The cemetery must be managed to create and maintain an atmosphere of solace and respect throughout the entire proceedings. This sensitivity must extend to all staff and contractors working at facilities, through the application of bereavement sensitive specifications. Officers will respond sympathetically to individual funeral needs where possible and affordable and shall give reason for refusing any specific request.

Staff

All staff should be appropriately trained. The appointment of all staff must emphasise the need for proper conduct and demeanour, as well as technical expertise.

Staff must act and speak in a manner that recognises the sensitivity of bereavement, both during and outside working hours and should not accept gratuities.

Environmental issues

Efforts will be made to minimise the impact of bereavement upon the environment. This should encourage the greater use of earth friendly materials, particularly in coffins and containers used for burial and the use of suitable ground for burial so that water borne pollution shall not occur.

Individual Disposal

The importance of human beings as individuals and the manner in which they inter-relate with relatives and friends does not diminish in significance following death. It is important for the bereaved to know that the burial is individually carried out.

General Conditions

No coffin/container/shroud shall be accepted at the cemetery unless the name of the deceased therein is clearly shown. The identity shown on the coffin/container/shroud shall be verified at every funeral. If burial is to occur, the body and its coffin/container/shroud shall be placed in the identified grave.

Requirements Relating to Burial

After the coffin/container/shroud and body have been committed into the grave, they shall not be removed or otherwise disturbed except for lawful exhumation, by licence and/or faculty or by the order of a coroner. Immediately after the mourners have departed the graveside, the grave shall be entirely backfilled and made tidy. This work will be completed on the day of the burial and must not extend overnight.

Inspection

Everyone has the right to inspect the cemetery during normal working daylight hours, upon application to the Cemetery Attendant or Town Clerk.

Everyone has the right to inspect our burial records during normal working hours. A fee may be charged for staff time when assisting in lengthy or complicated searches.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town Council are the Burial Authority for Skegness and Winthorpe and have direct responsibility for the management and maintenance of St Mary's New Cemetery and Extension.

St Mary's New Cemetery and Cemetery Extension cover an area of approximately 6.5 acres and due to the water table only single depth burials are permitted. It is a Lawn Cemetery and has separate sections for the interment of ashes and children. The Council has built a garden of remembrance in a non-consecrated area of the cemetery to enable the scattering of ashes

In addition the Town Council have responsibility for the maintenance of one closed burial grounds at St Clements Church. Any maintenance work carried out by the Council in the non-closed areas, are not covered by this policy.

POLICY STATEMENT

General:

1. The cemetery is a Lawn Cemetery. All graves are laid to lawn and are set out East/West with memorials permitted only at the west (head) end and in line with other memorials so as to achieve a degree of uniformity and allow ease of maintenance. In the non-consecrated section head stones may face in other directions (e.g. to face Mecca)
2. A designated area the width of the grave and measured 2 feet (61cm) from the head of the grave is where all memorial and floral tributes should be placed. All memorials are to be positioned as approved by the Cemetery Attendant or Town Clerk following an approved application. For clarity, so that grass may be easily cut and the cemetery maintained nothing should be placed on any other part of the grave. The rules of the cemetery will be set out in the handbook and associated guidance information as updated from time to time. For up to 6 months following a funeral, the Town Clerk has discretion to allow floral and other tributes on the whole grave, but after this time these must be confined to the designated area. For children's graves, the Town Clerk has discretion to take a more relaxed position as long as this does not interfere with the efficient maintenance of the cemetery, does not cause the cemetery to look untidy or uncared for and does not pose any additional risk to staff or cemetery visitors.
3. Full grave sizes in the Cemetery Extension will be 10' x 4'. In the older part of the cemetery smaller grave sizes were used. The grave plots in the older sections will be in accordance with any exclusive right that has been issued or consistent with other graves in the section.
4. An ashes section will be provided, and grave sizes are 4'x 2' and suitable for two interments.
5. A children's section will be provided, and grave sizes will usually be 5'x2' or conforming to the existing layout of the section.
6. An un-consecrated area will be provided for full and ashes burials.
7. An un-consecrated garden of remembrance is provided for the scattering of ashes.
8. The burial authority shall maintain records, in accordance with the Cemetery Management & Administration for Town and Parish Council Clerks guidance provided by the SLCC and ICCM.
9. The burial authority may grant on such terms and conditions they think proper:-

To any person

- a) the exclusive right of burial in any grave space or grave for an initial period of 40 years with the option to extend this by 20 years (for which further fees are payable) at intervals up to a maximum total period of 100 years.
- b) the right to burial in any grave space or grave which is not subject to any existing exclusive right of burial

- c) To the owner of the right described in (a) or (b), the right to place and maintain a memorial, or to put any additional inscription on a tombstone or other memorial on the grave space or grave.

Registration of Burials and Disinterment

10. The burial authority shall maintain a register of all burials in the cemetery in a book or books or in a computer to meet the obligations and legal requirements as may be current from time to time.
11. If in a book the entries to be made in durable black ink and the books kept in a fire proof container or cabinet giving at least 60 minutes of fire protection.
12. Where the register of burials is maintained in a computer the burial shall be entered in the computer so as to ensure that the information recorded meets the minimum legal requirements. All records shall be regularly backed up and a copy of the data secured in a fire proof safe or off site.
13. The burial authority shall maintain a record of any disinterment in a cemetery to meet the obligations and legal requirements as may be current from time to time.

Storage of Records

14. All statutory records shall be stored so as to preserve them from loss or damage in perpetuity or until such time as they are no longer legally required.

Fees

15. The burial authority may charge such fees as they think proper and will publish a list of fees from time to time:-
16. No burial shall take place, no cremated human remains shall be scattered and no tombstone or other memorial shall be placed in a cemetery, and no additional inscription shall be made on a tombstone or other memorial, without the permission of the officer appointed for that purpose by the burial authority.
17. No body shall be buried in such a manner that any part of the coffin is less than three feet below the level of any ground adjoining the grave.

Maintenance

18. The maintenance of St Mary's Cemetery, St Mary's Cemetery Extension and the two closed churchyards St Mary's and St Clements will be carried out by the Burial Authority to an agreed specification.

Management of Memorials

19. All memorials are to be installed by registered Memorial Masons on either the BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons' registration scheme or the RQMF (Register of Qualified Memorial Fitters) registration scheme administered by NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) who conform to BS8415 in accordance with the "National Association of Memorial Masons" Code of Working Practice or BRAMM's "The Blue Book" when installing memorials in the Council's cemetery. Following installation where possible the Burial Authority will request a copy of an installation certificate and a memorial guarantee for a period not less than 10 years.
20. Permission for the installation of a memorial will initially be for a 20 year period. This will be subject to requirements as set out in the Council's Memorial Specification Guide.
21. After the initial 20 year period, the grave owner may extend the period for a further 10 years on the production of a certificate of inspection to the Council and the payment of half the current full memorial fee. Permission will not be granted beyond the period of exclusive right granted on the grave.
22. Certificate of results of the inspection to be supplied to the Council –
Cost to be paid by applicant
23. It is the Grave Owner's responsibility to keep the Council informed of their current address and contact details so that the Council may contact them in event of a problem.

Safety Inspection Headstones

24. Headstones in the Council owned cemetery will be inspected in accordance with the I.B.C.M. Code of Practice for the Management of Memorials. Where a problem is identified, the Council reserve the right to take whatever remedial action is required to protect the Health and Safety of the public, cemetery users, employees and contractors. This may involve the laying down or the removal memorials.

Unauthorised Memorials

25. The burial authority may remove from a cemetery any tombstone or other memorial placed therein otherwise than in accordance of a right or permission granted by the burial authority and the burial authority may recover the costs incurred by them from the person to whose order the tombstone or memorial was placed.

Cemetery Opening Times

26. The cemetery is considered to be open at all reasonable hours between dawn until dusk.
27. Accompanied visits or inspections may be carried out between 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday by prior appointment.

Interment Administration and Arrangements

- 28 All interments will be carried out in accordance with the Council's procedure for Interments and within the guidance notes for Funeral Directors and the Bereaved. It is the responsibility of the Town Clerk to ensure this is updated to meet legislative requirements and the aims of this policy.

ORGANISATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

29 The Council

The Council make sure that sufficient budget is made available annually for the purposes of meeting Cemetery Obligations.

The Council through the Management Committee will monitor compliance with this policy.

30 Town Clerk

The Council has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Council fulfils its legal responsibilities, that the Policy's objectives are achieved and that effective management is in place to secure its implementation and review as appropriate. To these ends delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to ensure the allocation of the resources necessary to maintain management and maintenance arrangements on an operational basis and to implement appropriate processes and procedures.

31 Employees/Councillors (where applicable)

All employees must ensure that they will:

- Carry out all work and tasks in the prescribed manner and follow any training, information and instruction provided.
- Use equipment correctly at all times and not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare (for example fire fighting equipment, protective guards or devices, personal protective equipment, warning signs, etc).
- Make themselves familiar with policies, procedures and other operational instructions including those relating to Health and Safety.
- Wear or use appropriate personal protective equipment as provided.
- report immediately to the Town Clerk all accidents, incidents, unsafe acts or damage including any "near misses".
- Take part in risk assessments, workplace inspections and audits when necessary.
- Observe safe systems and methods of working at all times, avoiding taking short cuts which would entail unnecessary risks.
- Ensure that when driving while at work that they are fit to do so and drive in a safe and proper manner.
- Remain sensitive to the nature of the work at the cemetery/burial grounds and the need to be respectful of others.
- Be aware of and have respect for the diversity of those using the cemetery.

32 Contractors (where these are used)

Contractors will be reminded of all their legal obligations, including the reporting of accidents and near miss incidents. All contractors must take reasonable care to make sure that their employees and others are safe in and about their work, and competent to undertake the work required. To fulfil these obligations the contractor must provide:

- Competent employees and craftsmen who have received adequate training to enable them to safely perform the job
- Adequate supervision of untrained staff or young workers
- Safe plant, i.e. equipment and appliances in good working order
- Safe systems of work, and
- Adequate third party liability insurance as specified by any contract.
- Respectful of the diversity of the users of the cemetery.

Any employees of the Council, who bring in a contractor to carry out works for or on behalf of the Council, are responsible for ensuring that contractor, and any sub-contractors they may appoint, are competent to undertake the necessary works. They must also ensure that suitable systems are in place before the works start to ensure the contractor undertakes work, as per their own documented health and safety procedures, and that all works are carried out in a safe manner.

33 Agency Staff and Volunteers

Agency staff and volunteers will be reminded of their legal obligations, including the reporting of accidents and near miss incidents. All agencies and voluntary agencies (where involved) must ensure the individuals they appoint to work for us are competent to undertake the work required and behave with respect for the diversity of the users of the cemetery.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION & DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Cemetery Handbook, appendices and Terms & Conditions.

Relevant Legislation

Cremations Act 1092 & 1952

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 192841

Cremation Regulation 2008/Environmental Protection Act 1990

POLICY CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons to be informed.

Consultation with grave owners and other interested parties, as and when required.

POLICY APPROVAL

Approved by Council on 7th October 2020, next review due October 2022.