

Hartley Wintney Parish Council – Burial Ground Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the purchasing of graves and placing of memorials and headstones in the Hartley Wintney Burial Ground. It is the duty of Hartley Wintney Parish Council to ensure that the site remains a place of peace and reflection for the relatives of the people they commemorate and visitors who come to pay their respects.

The burial ground extension site is blessed rather than consecrated and as such the Parish Council decision on memorials is final; there is no recourse to the Diocese at Winchester. However, this policy document is created with direct reference to the Chancellor's Regulations published in September 2011 and is broadly in keeping with their "Churchyards and Churchyard Memorial" guidance.

There is no specific right given to anyone to have a memorial erected in a churchyard or to have any inscription on that memorial.

Permission **must** always be obtained from the Parish Council Office first using the process detailed in Section 2 Notice of Interments. The final decision on the applicability, interpretation and implementation of this policy lies with the Parish Council.

The guidelines set out in this document apply not only to new memorials but to existing ones for which an alteration or addition is proposed.

2. Notice of Interment

The Notice of interment must be submitted to the Parish Office on the correct form found on the Council's website, at least one week before the interment. The Notice of Interment must be signed by the owner(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial signifying his or her consent to such burial. No burial, other than that of the owner of the Exclusive Right, will be allowed without the consent of the Exclusive Right's owner(s). (See section 10(6) of The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977).

Payment of fees (cheque made payable to Hartley Wintney Parish Council) must accompany the Notice or a notification to pay via BACS given to the office in advance. If the plot is being re-opened then a copy of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is required.

If the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is not available then the Parish Office must be satisfied of ownership.

The certificate of the Registrar of Deaths (green form) or the Cremation certificate must also be submitted with the Notice of Interment form.

If a new plot is being purchased, a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial (grave deed) will be issued. Please note that when a grave is purchased, this refers to the exclusive right of burial in a grave space and not the purchase of the land itself.

If the owner(s) of The Rights wishes to transfer the ownership during their lifetime they must complete a Form of Assignment and submit it to the Parish Office, together with the original Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. It is recommended that the ownership of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is regularly reviewed by the 'Purchaser' as this does not automatically transfer to next of kin.

It is illegal for the Parish Council to permit any burial in a grave subject to an existing Exclusive Right of Burial without first obtaining permission from the owner(s) of the right, unless one of the owners is being buried. There can be up to 2 owners of an Exclusive Right.

For a burial other than that of the owners, both owners must give written permission for a burial is

to take place. All owners are entitled to be interred in the grave if there is room.

If the sole owner is already deceased when an application is received, a transfer must take place and permission be received from the new owner prior to the burial in that grave. It is recommended that a transfer of ownership takes place as soon as possible after the owner's death. For details of transferring the Exclusive Right please contact the Parish Office.

In accordance with the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, all grave rights are sold for a fixed period. The number of years the rights have been granted in St Marys Burial Ground is 70 years. At the end of this period the owner(s) of the rights may apply to the Parish Council to extend those rights. The owner(s) of Rights should keep the Parish Office updated of any changes of address.

3. Pricing

Interment fees

The interment fee includes burial in a 2.7m x 1.2m (or 1.4m x 1.2m for ashes) earthen grave with an Exclusive Right of Burial (unless otherwise requested) and erection of a memorial (including additional inscription where appropriate) and associated expenses.

Resident interment fees

The Parish Council provide a significant discount on the cost of interment to residents of Hartley Wintney. You qualify for resident interment fees for burials if the deceased:

- was a resident of Hartley Wintney Parish at the time of death
- was the owner of a grave in Harley Wintney Parish Cemetery; or the spouse or civil partner of the owner of the grave; and was a resident when the grave was originally purchased
- was a near relative (next of kin) of the owner of the grave, and the owner is a resident (as indicated above)
- moved outside of Hartley Wintney Parish (such as in a nursing home or in the care of a relative) but was a resident of Hartley Wintney Parish immediately prior to this
- lived outside of Hartley Wintney Parish but can provide evidence of living within the Parish no more than 5 years prior to the time of death
- was a serving member of the armed forces living in temporary accommodation whose family still reside in Hartley Wintney Parish

Proof of residency

You must provide proof of residency (for example electoral roll papers or Council Tax bills) when you book the burial.

Non-resident interment charges

Non-residents are charged the standard interment fee.

The Council reserve the right to consider applications for residency interment charges where circumstances are not covered by the above conditions and make decisions accordingly.

Charges

The principle of charging is as follows;

- The fee for a first Full Interment will be reviewed annually by the Environment and Amenities Committee and ratified by the Full Council
- The Ashes Only Interment fee will be 50% of the Full Interment fee
- A second Full Interment in the same plot will be 50% of the fee for a first Full Interment
- A second or third Ashes Only Interment in the same plot will be 50% of the fee for an Ashes Only interment

Residents of Hartley Wintney (see above definition) will get a 75% discount on all the above fees.

For more details on our fees, please see our website www.hartleywintney-pc.gov.uk or request a copy from the Parish Office.

For more information on possible financial support with burial fees, please see Appendix A of this policy.

4. Full Interments

It is the responsibility of the funeral director for the excavation of the grave and removal of any existing memorials or kerbstones (where permitted) and the replacement of same after burial.

All graves will be excavated and dug by a person or persons approved by the Parish Council. Funeral directors must advise the Parish Office of the details of all gravediggers prior to use.

Undertakers are responsible for engaging gravediggers and for ensuring that such agents work in a responsible and safe manner and observe all Health and Safety legislation and codes of practice in force at the time of the excavation. All excavations must be shored up and if left unattended for any period of time boarded and appropriately guarded. Lock down covers must be used if an excavation is left overnight, although the practise of leaving a grave unattended is discouraged and must be approved in advance by the Parish Office for exceptional circumstance only.

The mound over a grave will be grassed and levelled by Hartley Wintney Parish Council when the ground has settled, usually 9-12 months after interment.

Only one funeral shall be permitted to take place in the cemetery at any one time.

The Council reserve the right to determine the position of any un-purchased or unreserved grave in the cemetery.

The grave space set aside for each person shall not exceed 2.75m x 1.37m (9 feet long by 4 feet 6 inches wide).

No part of the coffin shall be at a depth less than 1.0m (3 feet) below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.

Burial, in a grave in which an interment has already taken place, shall ensure the new coffin is effectively separated from any other coffin previously placed and remaining in the ground by means of a layer of earth not less than 150mm (6 inches) in depth.

No person shall disturb any interred human remains or remove any soil.

Each plot is for two full interments. An additional ashes interment may be approved subject to the discretion of the Parish Office, should the plot allow.

5. Ashes Interments

As above, It is the responsibility of the funeral director for the excavation of the grave and removal of any existing memorials or kerbstones (where permitted) and the replacement of same after burial.

All graves will be excavated and dug by a person or persons approved by the Parish Council. Funeral directors must advise the Parish Office of the details of all gravediggers prior to use.

Undertakers are responsible for engaging gravediggers and for ensuring that such agents work in a responsible and safe manner and observe all Health and Safety legislation and codes of practice in force at the time of the excavation. All excavations must be shored up and if left unattended for any period of time boarded and appropriately guarded. Lock down covers must be used if an excavation is left overnight, although the practise of leaving a grave unattended is discouraged and must be

approved in advance by the Parish Office for exceptional circumstance only.

The mound over an interment will be grassed and levelled by Hartley Wintney Parish Council when the ground has settled, usually 9-12 months after interment.

Only one funeral shall be permitted to take place in the cemetery at any one time.

The Council reserve the right to determine the position of any un-purchased or unreserved grave in the cemetery.

Each plot will allow up to three ashes interments however the positioning of each interment will depend on the plot.

No person shall disturb any interred human remains or remove any soil.

6. Memorial Design

No memorial should be obtrusive or inappropriate. A burial ground is not a private place in which anything is acceptable. It is a place where many people have a shared interest in its appearance.

Hartley Wintney Parish Council recognises that memorials are for the family and as a place of remembrance for loved ones. We do request that memorials should be harmonious in appearance and reflective of the surrounding rural aspects and listed church of St Mary's.

Harmony however does not mean uniformity and headstones need not be restricted to a conventional rectangular shape. Attractive, well-conceived new designs by skilled and imaginative craftsmen are genuinely encouraged.

It is strongly recommended that **prior to submitting** the memorial application form, all applicants contact the Parish Office to discuss this policy and the guidance within it. The Parish Office has the right to refuse any application received via a third party if contact has not been made in advance.

It should be remembered that the Parish Council has the power to require the removal at the owner's expense of any inappropriate memorial, or an inappropriate feature on a memorial, placed in the burial ground without proper permission

Upright headstones for full interments should be:

- a. No more than 4ft (1200mm) high or less than 2ft 6ins (750mm) high measured from the surface of the ground.
- b. No more than 3ft (900mm) wide, or less than 1ft 8ins (500mm) wide
- c. No more than 6ins (150mm) thick, or less than 3ins (75mm) thick, except in the case of slate memorials which may be thinner, but no less than 1.5ins (38mm) thick.
- d. For a child aged 2+ the headstone may be smaller but should be no less than 2ft (600mm) high, 1ft 3ins (375mm) wide and 2ins (50mm) thick.
- e. For infants up to the age of 2 years (including stillborn babies) the headstone should be a no more than 2ft (600mm) high, 1ft 3ins (375mm) wide and 2ins (50mm) thick, or less than 1ft 6ins (455mm) high, 1ft 3ins (375mm) wide and 2ins (50mm) thick.

Upright headstones for ashes interments should be:

- f. No more than 2ft 3 ins (686mm) high measured from the surface of the ground, by 1ft 6 ins (450mm) wide by 3ins (75mm) deep on a 2ft 2ins (650mm) by 1ft 3ins (375mm) base.

Permission may normally be given on cremated remains plots for tablets and small 'open book' memorials.

Headstones may be of 3 types:

- g. So shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability
- h. On an integral base, no more than 9ins (225mm) high, 3ft (900mm) wide of projecting 4ins (100mm) in any direction
- i. On a vase base, no more than 4ins (100mm) on either side, the base being no more than 1ft 3ins (375mm) front to back.

Horizontal stones or ledgers are not permitted for full interments.

Subject to any other consideration, a memorial in the following types of stone will be granted permission:

- **Limestone** – Portland, Purbeck, Derbyshire, York, Hopton, Nabresina, French, Portuguese
- **Slate** – light grey, blue/black, green
- **Granite** – light grey, black or similar dark colour tone, can be honed or polished
- **Granite** – in blue or Rustenburg (charcoal) grey is also permitted provided the stone is rubbed to a matt finish rather than polished.

Highly polished red or white granite is not permitted.

A temporary wooden cross to mark a grave is permitted.

A headstone in the shape of a cross will be allowed, provided the size of the cross conforms to that of an upright headstone. Any proposal for a well-designed cross, including a Celtic cross may be granted provided it is referred to the Parish Council first.

Memorials in the form of a natural boulder taken straight from a quarry with a single sloped face to carry the inscription may be permitted at the discretion of the Parish Council.

A small well engraved image will be considered at the time of application and permitted at the Parish Council's discretion.

Memorials with railings, chains, chippings or glass shades will not be permitted.

Memorials with kerbed surrounds will no longer be permitted.

A photograph, such as ceramic portrait of the deceased designed within the headstone made be permitted at the discretion of the Parish Council.

Due to the lawn style layout of the cemetery, loose ornaments, windchimes, windmills, trinkets and any other item which may either impede upon the ongoing maintenance of the grounds or another plot are strictly prohibited and may be subject to removal.

An inscription should aim to be the most appropriate in all the circumstances and to commemorate accurately the existence of the person who has died. It should, therefore, record either his/her full name or the name by which he/she was generally known. There can be no reasonable objection to including any particular term of affection or nickname e.g. Dad or Tommy, perhaps in brackets or inverted commas.

It may also be appropriate to record what he/she did – 'farmer in this village for 50 years or some feature of his/her character – 'a much loved father and grandfather'. A short scriptural text or extract from a poem or some other suitable phrase may be added.

Inscriptions should be incised into the stone or carved in relief. Painting cut lettering can make the inscription easier to read over a longer period. Inscriptions may be painted black, white or in a colour that blends in with the underlying stone. With discretion, gold or gilded lettering may be permitted although this may deteriorate quite rapidly.

No advertisement or trademark may be inscribed on the face of the headstone. The stonemason's name may be discreetly inscribed on the side or on the reverse.

7. Installation

Installation of memorial stones will be permitted as follows:

- a. Full Interments – 6 months after interment or longer, at the discretion of the Parish Council, in wet ground conditions. This is to help prevent the memorial from moving.
- b. Ashes interments – 2 months after interment or longer, at the discretion of the Parish Council, in wet ground conditions.
- c. All memorials must be installed in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons Code for Lawn Memorials and Kerb Sets with the ground anchor systems being an integral part of the foundation.

8. Flowers and Trees

Except where the design of a headstone contains an integral receptacle for plants or flowers, flowers should be placed in a removable container sunk into the ground next to the headstone.

Any bulbs placed on the grave may, after 6 weeks be removed at the discretion of the Parish Council, especially if the plant encroaches upon surrounding plots, for reasons of preserving the undisturbed lawn appearance of the site. Trees, shrubs and other plants are not permitted on burial plots without prior permission from the Parish Council. The Parish Council reserves the right to ask for any plant to be reduced or removed should it at any time encroach other plots.

If a flower vase is the only memorial, it should be no more than 12ins (300mm) in height, width or length, and fixed securely to a foundation stone flush with the ground.

Artificial flowers are permitted but should be removed when they fade.

The Parish Office or their appointed officer is entrusted to remove unsightly flowers from any grave. To avoid unnecessary resentment, he/she should, wherever possible, contact in advance the relatives of the deceased, or leave an appropriate note on the grave, to indicate his/her intention. If there is any disagreement, the Parish Council's decision is final.

Existing memorial trees previously planted in the burial ground will be pruned by the Council annually to maintain their diminutive size.

9. Maintenance

Although the Parish Council will grass and level the ground after interment (as detailed above) it is the plot owner's responsibility to maintain both the headstone and plot. Part of the cemetery has a lawn style layout – this means that only headstones are allowed and the grass around them is kept mown.

The planting of flowers, trees or shrubs is not permitted on the grave space, nor is the placing of ornaments or fencing. Any unauthorised ornaments or flowers etc will be removed without notice.

Flowers are permitted on the grave at the time of the interment however they should be removed within 3 weeks or when they die. The Parish Council reserve the right to remove any flowers at any time if they become unsightly or interfere with any other grave space.

The Parish Office may give written permission for the temporary removal of a headstone from the Burial Ground for the purpose of cleaning repair, renovation or altering, or adding to, the inscription. Any changes to an existing memorial must be submitted to the Parish Office on the memorial application form.

It is the Parish Council's legal responsibility to carry out safety checks of all headstones. This is on a 5-year cycle and notices will be published. If a headstone is deemed 'unsafe', the headstone will be immediately made safe by props whilst the owner is contacted. It is the owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial to instruct and pay for the headstone to be permanently made safe, otherwise the Parish Council reserve the right to remove it.

It is important that the contact details of the owner is kept up to date and/or transferred if required.

10. Garden of Remembrance

The Garden of Remembrance is designed as a place of quiet contemplation and is laid out as a formal parterre garden. As such, permission will only be given for small rose bushes and plaques. Requests must be submitted in advance to the Parish Office.

11. Memorial Benches

Due to limited space within the Burial Grounds, no more memorial benches will be permitted; however, the Parish Council reserve the right to place a limited number of additional benches in the Burial Ground in future should it be deemed necessary.

A small commemorative plaque may be placed on existing benches in the Burial Ground at the Parish Council's discretion. Plaques must be rectangular in shape and no larger than 7.87ins (200mm) by 2.95ins (75mm) and come with pre-drilled fixing holes.

Plaques must be made of brass or aluminium and the colour of the inscription must be black and contain only alphabetic characters and numerals.

All proposed plaques must be submitted to the Parish Council for prior approval.

Additional information

Information and forms for burials and memorials can be found on: www.hartleywintney-pc.gov.uk

For further information, please contact the Parish Office on 01252 845152 or admin@hartleywintney-pc.gov.uk

Amendment Record

- Version 1: Initial Issue as Interim Policy – March 2012
Adopted by Full Council – March 2012
- Version 2: Initial Issue as Interim Policy – 20 March 2017
Adopted by Full Council – 03 April 2017
- Version 3: Adopted by Full Council – 05 March 2018
- Version 4: Reviewed by Policy Committee – 23 July & 08 October 2018
Adopted by Full Council – 05 November 2018
- Version 5: Reviewed by E&A Committee – 18 January 2021
Approved by Policy Committee – 25 January 2021
Adopted by Full Council – 01 February 2021
- Version 6: Reviewed by E&A Committee – 21 October 2021
Agreed by Policy Working Group – 15 November 2021
Adopted by Full Council – 06 December 2021

APPENDIX A

Financial Support

You may be eligible for a Funeral Expenses Payment (also called a Funeral Payment) if you get certain benefits and need help to pay for a funeral you are arranging.

Funeral Expenses Payment can help pay for some of the costs of the following:

- burial fees for a particular plot
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the cost of moving the body within the UK, if it's being moved more than 50 miles
- death certificates or other documents

You may also receive money for any other funeral expenses, such as funeral director's fees, flowers or the coffin.

You can get up to:

£700 if the person died before 8 April 2020

£1,000 if the person died on or after 8 April 2020

The payment will not usually cover all the costs of the funeral.

How much you get depends on your circumstances. This includes any other money that is available to cover the costs, for example from an insurance policy or the deceased person's estate.

The Funeral Expenses Payment is paid into your bank, building society or credit union account if you've already paid for the funeral.

The money will be paid directly to the organiser of the funeral (for example, the funeral director) if you have not paid yet.

For more information and to check your eligibility please visit www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies

You can also access information on the Bereavement Support Payment, Widowed Parents Allowance and Guardians Allowance.

Support for child funeral costs (Children's Funeral Fund for England)

Since July 2019, the Children's Funeral Fund for England has been set up to help to pay for some of the costs of a funeral for a child under 18 or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

It is not means-tested: what you earn or how much you have in savings will not affect what you get however the burial or cremation must take place in England.

The Children's Funeral Fund for England can help pay for the:

- burial fees
- cremation fees, including the cost of a doctor's certificate
- coffin, shroud or casket (up to a cost of £300)

The fees for the **burial** or **cremation** will be claimed directly by Hartley Wintney Parish Council as the burial authority. Please speak to a member of the Parish Office Team.

Claiming for other expenses (for example, the coffin) will depend on if you are using a funeral director or not.

Claims must be made within 6 months of the funeral.

If you are using a funeral director, you do not need to submit any claims yourself.