



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Ross-on-Wye Town Cemetery Administrative and Operational Policy

THE FOLLOWING POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CEMETERY MEMORIAL REGULATIONS.

Purchase of Exclusive Burial Rights

1. Residents of the parish, and those who die within the parish boundary, have a right to be buried in the Cemetery subject to payment of the appropriate fee. Anyone who dies in a retirement or care home outside the parish, but who was previously resident in the parish immediately before they moved into care, will be treated as if they were still resident in the parish at the date of death. Non-residents may also be buried in the Cemetery subject to payment of the appropriate fee and provided, in the opinion of the Town Clerk, there is space available to accommodate them.
2. The Town Clerk will determine which grave or cremation plot should be allocated in liaison with the Cemetery Officer. The purchase of Exclusive Burial Rights does not confer title to the land and therefore the grave or cremation plot remains the property of the Town Council.
3. In accordance with article 10 of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 the Town Council may at any time grant to a resident of the parish and on payment of the appropriate fee, the right to bury remains in a grave or cremation plot within 50 years of the date of the deed.
4. If the owner of the Exclusive Rights dies, it is assumed that they gave permission to have themselves interred in the grave. After this the Rights become part of their estate and may be left in a will, or assigned by their executors to someone else. If the Rights are not specifically mentioned in the will, they will form part of the 'residue' of the will, usually willed as 'and all my other worldly goods' at the end of the will.
5. Exclusive Rights may be transferred to another person on application to the Town Clerk and on payment of the appropriate fee. The transfer will be treated as if it is a new purchase but will not alter the expiry date of the deed.
6. Exclusive Rights may be surrendered at any time, without refund of the purchase fee, on return of the deed to the Town Clerk. If the owner of Exclusive Rights fails to notify the Town Clerk of a change of address and cannot be contacted subsequently, the deed will be deemed to have been surrendered. Before terminating the deed the Town Clerk will write to the last known address of the owner of the Exclusive Rights. If no reply is received within four weeks of the date of the letter the Town Clerk will contact any known relatives who are resident in the parish to ask them to contact the owner of the Exclusive Rights. If no contact can be made within twelve weeks of the original letter to the owner of the Exclusive Rights the deed will be terminated. If contact is made after this time the deed may be restored, on its original terms, at the discretion of the Town Clerk.
7. Exclusive rights will be given for a period of fifty years. After the expiry of the right, the owner may apply to renew the lease for a further 50 years which may be granted subject to the payment of the fee in force for purchasing the exclusive rights at the time of renewal.

Cemetery Officer

8. A Cemetery Officer shall be appointed by the Town Council. Duties will be outlined in the job description set out by the Council. Training will be given as and when required.

Digging of Graves and Cremation Plots

9. The Town Council will arrange for the relevant grave plot to be dug. The grave digger will be responsible for the spoil to be removed from the Cemetery. Cremation plots will be dug by the Cemetery Officer.

10. All graves will be double graves for two people and must be dug to a depth of seven feet. Cremation plots must be dug no more than 14 inches square and to a depth of 16 inches).

Burials

11. Applications for interments must be made to the Town Clerk on the appropriate form at least five working days prior to the burial.

12. The registrar's form and the appropriate fee must be received by the Town Clerk three days prior to the burial.

13. The Cemetery Officer or a member of the council staff will be present at all interments to check all coffins and cremated remains' caskets.

14. Graves will be filled immediately after the mourners have left.

15. The Town Council reserves the right to defer a burial (e.g. in extreme weather conditions).

Headstones, Vases, Tablets and other Monuments

16. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all new headstones, vases, tablets and other monuments conform to the Cemetery Memorial Regulations currently in force. All new headstones, vases, tablets and other monuments cannot be erected until they have been approved in writing by the Town Clerk and the appropriate fee received. Such memorials may only be erected by a BRAMM registered mason.

17. The Town Clerk is also responsible for ensuring that the inscriptions on new headstones, vases, tablets and other monuments are in keeping with existing standards. Additional inscriptions cannot be added until written permission from the Town Clerk has been given and the appropriate fee received.

18. The Town Council will not be responsible for any other artefacts placed around a grave area. In the lawned area of the Cemetery this practice is discouraged due to the difficulties caused to grounds maintenance operations, and also the potential to cause distress to other Cemetery visitors.

19. To enable the ground to settle sufficiently approved headstones cannot be erected within six months of the burial, except in the case of infant burials for which headstones can be erected as soon as deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Cemetery Officer.

Maintenance of Monument

20. The applicant, or his/her heirs or successors, is responsible for making arrangements for ensuring that the headstone, vase, tablet or other monument is maintained in good condition.

21. The Town Council will offer a care package whereby memorials will be kept clean and tidy by the Cemetery Officer for an appropriate fee to be paid annually.

22. The Cemetery Officer will be responsible for the regular inspection of each memorial to assess its condition. After each inspection the Cemetery Officer will provide a record of inspection and a report to the Town Clerk. The condition of each headstone, vase, tablet or other monument will be categorised as:

- Unstable
- Poor with some movement or misalignment
- Average with no movement, but some degradation and some misalignment
- Good - no degradation, movement or misalignment

23. The result of all inspections will be recorded and in the case of “unstable” or “poor” monuments, appropriate action will be taken to make them safe. A monument in “average” condition will be monitored by the Cemetery Officer and if it deteriorates, appropriate action will be taken. A monument which is “good” requires no action.

Fees and Charges

24. Fees and Charges are reviewed annually by the Town Council. Where applicable, the revised prices come into effect on 1 April each year.

25. Current fees and charges are published on the Town Council’s website at www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk .

Grounds Maintenance

26. The Town Council is responsible for grounds maintenance at the Cemetery, but new graves will be allowed to settle for six months before being levelled and re-lawned.

Cemetery Rules

27. In addition to the Memorial Regulations, the following rules shall apply and be displayed on the Cemetery Notice Board.

- Cremated remains - the scattering of ashes is not permitted in the Cemetery.
- Dogs - No dogs are allowed in the Cemetery with the exception of Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs.
- Games - no games, balls, sports, riding of bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, etc. are allowed in the cemetery.
- Vehicles - no vehicles, with the exception of those displaying a Disabled Badge, are allowed into the cemetery unless prior permission has been obtained from the Town Clerk.
- Glass - vases, jars or bottles made of glass are not allowed within the cemetery and the Town Council reserves the right to remove them without prior notice.
- All biodegradable refuse should be disposed of in the compost area.
- A skip is provided for non biodegradable refuse from the cemetery only. Unauthorised use is not permitted.

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