

WEST KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL
REGULATIONS FOR THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE BURIAL GROUND, WEST KINGSDOWN, KENT
Revised September 2015

The Burial Ground situated at Fawkham Road, West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks, Kent, is administered and maintained by the West Kingsdown Parish Council.

Members of the Council will visit and inspect the burial ground at least three times a year. Periodic visits will also be made from time to time to remove weeds, self-seeded trees in graves, ivy & brambles, non-compliant decorations etc to ensure that the appearance of the burial ground does not become unkempt. Members of the public will be most welcome to assist Parish Councillors in carrying out this task.

All burials shall be conducted in a decent and orderly manner and in accordance with the rites of the faith of the deceased person.

The Burial Ground is rural in character and divided into a Memorial Section, Lawn Section and Cremated Remains Section, as defined by the map held at the Parish Council Office.

In order to simplify maintenance and upkeep, to improve its general condition and to preserve its character, the following regulations, with appropriate amendment, have been determined by the West Kingsdown Parish Council to have effect from 1976.

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- 1.1 Interpretations:
 Throughout these regulations "Parish" means the civil parish of West Kingsdown, "Council" means the Parish Council of West Kingsdown, "Clerk" means the Clerk to the Parish Council. Wherever the term "Grave" appears it also refers to a plot for interment of cremated remains.
- 1.2 Application for Burial:
 Application for Burial shall be made to the Clerk who will provide information on the Council's requirements, allocate grave space or space for burial of cremated remains and detail fees and charges which may from time to time be decided. Burial is available to persons who at the time of death were residents of the Parish and, in special circumstances, to non-residents whom the Council may decide are acceptable (For guidance this includes former residents who due to circumstance beyond their control have had to move out of the village into a care or nursing home or to live with relatives for the last few years of their lives or direct relatives of a parishioner who is already buried here.)
- 1.3 Certificates for Disposal:
 The certificates for disposal issued by the Registrar of Deaths, or in any case where a Coroner's Inquest has been held, the Coroner's order must be produced to the Clerk before the funeral takes place. In the case of a stillborn child a certificate in accordance with the Births and Deaths registration Act 1953, will be required.
- 1.4 Exclusive Right of Burial:
 The Grant of an Exclusive Right of Burial will confer on the purchaser the sole right of burial in the grave for a period of 99 years. Grave reservation of specific plots is not permitted.
- 1.5 Interment of a Resident:
 A grave may be purchased at the ordinary fee for the interment of a resident by a resident or a non-resident of the Parish. Interment of a person may only be in a coffin of a natural material such as wood, basket or other biodegradable materials. Materials such as stainless steel will not be permitted.
- 1.6 Interment of a Non-Resident:
 If any resident of the Parish acquires exclusive right of burial for the purpose of interring a non-resident, the non-resident fees shall be payable. Interment of a person may only be in a coffin of natural material such as wood, basket or other biodegradable materials. Materials such as stainless steel will not be permitted.
- 1.7 Opening of Graves:
 For the opening of a grave or a plot for the burial of cremated remains for which right of burial has been purchased, the written consent of the Executor(s)/Administrator(s) must be produced to the Clerk when notice of interment is given.
- 1.8 Care of Graves:
 The Council reserves the right to remove from any grave any neglected, broken, dilapidated, dangerous or unsafe articles or materials or any article considered to be a nuisance or any memorials which do not conform to these regulations. In the event of the representative of the deceased failing to maintain a grave in a tidy condition.

The Council may, at its discretion, clear the grave space of any plants or memorial and grass it over. The Council will use its best endeavours to trace and contact relatives before carrying out such action.

- 1.9 Conformity:
Grave plots must be brought into full conformity with the requirements of these regulations within 12 months of the date of the interment.
- 1.10 Photographs:
No person shall make a drawing or sketch or take a photograph of any grave, memorial, building or funeral procession within the Burial Ground without the prior permission of the Council.
- 1.11 Sale of Goods or Soliciting Orders:
The sale of goods, materials, plants, flowers, and the soliciting of order for the erection or repair of memorials or for any other work connected with graves, is strictly prohibited within the Burial Ground.
- 1.12 Gratuities:
No officer, Councillor or servant of the Council is allowed to solicit gratuities of any form.
- 1.13 Responsibility for Damage:
The Council will not be responsible for any damage to any grave or memorial however caused, except if caused directly by the action of an employee of the Council. The Council arranges for all of the trees in the Burial Ground to be inspected annually. The recommendations of the inspecting Tree Surgeon are implemented as soon as practicable. The Church Woods Management Committee are responsible for the care of the adjacent woodland. It should, however, be noted that trees can suffer unexpected and sometime serious damage in windy conditions. The Council and the Church Woods Management Committee regard such rare incidents arising in this way as being due to an 'Act of God' and as such will accept no liability for damage to graves howsoever caused.
- 1.14 Searches:
Searches of the Register of Burials may be made and certified extracts obtained at the Parish Office at the prescribed fee.
- 1.15 Administration:
The day to day administration of the powers of the Council in respect of the Burial Ground is vested in the Parish Clerk. There is an automatic right of appeal to the Council in the event of any dispute between representatives of the deceased and the Clerk.

2.REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE MEMORIAL SECTION

- 2.1 Graves:
The purchaser is responsible for the maintenance of the purchase grave plot. The Council is responsible for the maintenance of the Burial ground, which includes all grassed areas, hedges trees and paths, including the grass areas around graves. It is intended that the Burial ground shall be kept free of such obstructions as would impede the cutting of the grass by mower or strimmer and prevent the maintenance of an even surface.

For this reason:

- (i) Grave mounds will normally be levelled within 12 months of burial. If the representative of the deceased fails to see that this is done, the Council may do so and may recover any cost from the representative.
- (ii) Any headstone or monument placed on a grave is the responsibility of the representative of the deceased who is responsible for its maintenance.
- (iii) Margins surrounding any monument shall be flush with the ground.
- (iv) The Council reserves the right to cover, move, reaffix, align or alter the position of any monument as circumstances may dictate, and recover the cost from the representative of the deceased.
- (v) The Council reserves the right of passage over all graves for purposes connected with the Burial Ground and the right to remove and replace any memorial as necessary for interment in an adjoining grave.

2.2 Memorials:

If it is wished to erect a memorial or monument, of any kind, it must be in accordance with the style and materials described in these regulations. A full description including particulars of design, material and measurement, and the wording and style of any inscription must be forwarded to the Clerk, and no order should be placed until the Council's approval to the memorial has been obtained.

2.3 Styles and Materials for Memorials:

For the benefit of applicants the following forms and materials for memorials as supplied by monumental stone masons, are acceptable to the Council, subject to approval of the detailed plans:

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| FORMS: | (i) | A plain headstone not exceeding 3'6" in height, 2'6" in width and 6" in thickness. The headstone shall have no base, step or other projection raised above the level of the surrounding ground. |
| | (ii) | A plain cross not exceeding 3'6" in height above ground level and standing on a base which is either flush with the ground or, if above ground level, not larger than 2'0" by 1'6" and having not more than two steps. |
| | (iii) | A flat stone not larger than 7' x 3'. It may be raised to a maximum of 9" above ground level but must then have a 3" minimum wide surround at ground level all around. Alternatively the stone may be sunk flush with the surrounding ground. |
| | (iv) | Kerb stones surrounding an area, the whole having overall measurements of not more than 7' x 3'. They may be raised to a maximum of 9" above ground level but must then have a 3" minimum wide surround at ground level all around. Alternatively the kerbs may be sunk flush with the surrounding ground. Each kerb stone shall consist of a single piece of masonry (4 in total) |
| | (v) | Footstones, garden edging stones, concrete edging or low metal or wooden picket fencing, railings, free standing figures, bird baths or the like will not be permitted. |
| | (vi) | Open books only as part of an integral headstone or plinth
And not mounted on pillar type supports. |
| MATERIALS | (i) | Memorials shall be constructed of natural materials in order to blend with the character of the Burial Ground. Natural stone or slate quarried in Great Britain is considered to be suitable.

It is not permitted to construct memorials from wood, metal, concrete, glass, synthetic stone, fibreglass or plastic. |
| | (ii) | Memorials should not contain solar or any form of lighting, or any glass items. Helium balloons or signs. |

2.4 Inscriptions:

A simple inscription may be incorporated within any memorial consisting only of the particulars of the deceased, a brief appropriate epitaph and/or suitable religious emblem and the number of the grave space.

In the event of any mason applying his name or mark to a memorial this shall be unpainted and unleaded, no more than one half inch in height and in an inconspicuous position.

2.5 Floral and other Decorations.

The only permitted floral and other decorations are:-

- (i) Bulbs and small plants may be planted in the soil above the grave
- (ii) A plain stone vase not exceeding 12" in height may be kept on the grave only.
- (ii) Wreaths, cut flowers or artificial flowers may be laid upon graves
- (iii) Small items of a sentimental nature may be left upon graves but those placing them should ensure that they are secure against being blown away and accept the risk that they may be removed by a third party.

The following are not permitted:-

- (i) Trees [e.g. Leylandii] or shrubs which may grow beyond the edge of or above the height of the headstone.
- (ii) No hanging baskets or chains should be placed upon graves nor any mementos or tributes to the deceased which could fall over the edge of kerbstones or the grave space.

2.6 Execution of work:

Any memorial must be prepared for fixing before entering the Burial Ground and all work in the Burial Ground must be completed expeditiously and in a clean and workmanlike manner. Persons engaged in work on memorials must take all necessary precautions to protect the surrounding turf and adjoining graves and must indemnify the Council against any claims arising from their presence.

2.7 Movement of Memorials:

Arrangement for the removal or replacement of memorials for the purpose of interment are to be made by representatives of the deceased at their own expense.

3. REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE SECTION FOR BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS

3.1 Burial of Cremated remains:

Remains may be buried in wooden caskets or loose. Plots will be 2'0" wide 2'6" deep with 2'6" between the centres of plots. Plots may be marked by a simple headstone measuring not more than 1'8" high x 1'4" wide set on a plinth 1'6" wide x 10" deep and 3" high using materials of the type specified in 2.3 (v) above. Clauses 2.4, 2.6, and 2.7 will also apply. To facilitate access to the area for grass cutting etc. kerbs will not be permitted in the area set aside for burial of cremated remains. Floral decorations must be an integral part of the bottom plinth. If the bottom plinth is stood on a base, this base must be sunk to ground level. No planting or floral tributes shall be placed in front of the memorial.

3.2 Approval of Headstones:

Any headstone must be in accordance with the styles and materials described in these regulations. A full description including particulars of design, material and measurements, and the wording and style of any inscription must be forwarded to the Clerk, and no order should be placed until the Council's approval to the memorial has been obtained.

4. REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE LAWN SECTION

Part of the Burial Ground is designated as a Lawn Cemetery. Representatives of any person to be interred within this section are deemed to accept the following regulations.

4.1 Memorials:

No memorial may be placed on any grave within the lawn section except for a plain flat stone, 1' x 1' x 2" thick, sunk flush with the surrounding ground, with a brief and appropriate inscription. Stone vases or similar containers may not be placed on any grave nor may any memorials described under Section 2.3 above be erected.

4.2 Lawn Principles:

It is accepted by representatives of the deceased that it is the Council's intention to maintain this section of the Burial Ground as a lawn with the sole exception of the memorials permitted under paragraph 4.1 above and that no further notice of this intent need be given.

5. PERORATION:

The Council reserves the right to amend or alter all or any of the above regulations from time to time.

The Burial Ground is open to the Public, subject to the observance of these Rules and Regulations. All Dogs must be kept under control and on a lead and any waste caused by dogs be placed in the bin provided.

In all matters concerning the Burial Ground, the decision of the Council shall be final.

Mrs L. Harrison-Clerk to the Council

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