

BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

CEMETERY POLICY

Adopted: 22nd May 2018

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **Lane End Cemetery is designed and maintained as a lawn cemetery by the Bembridge Parish Council. These Regulations are primarily designed to ensure that a sense of harmony is maintained throughout the cemetery.**
- 1.2 The Clerk to the Parish Council and Registrar of Burials will be responsible for interpreting the Regulations and ensuring compliance.

2 CEMETERY REGULATIONS

- 2.1 Lane End Cemetery is a consecrated burial ground.
- 2.2 Notice of burial may be given during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Written applications must be delivered at least two clear working days prior to each interment, and must include all fees due and the Certificate of Registration of Death.
- 2.3 The hours of Interment will normally be between the hours of 9 am and 5pm Monday to Friday Unless previously agreed.
- 2.4 Prior to interment or the erection of a memorial, the Grant of Exclusive Right to Burial must be confirmed. If the documentary evidence has been lost, other satisfactory evidence of the applicant's title to the Grant must be produced.
- 2.5 If an applicant wishes to select a grave space they must purchase the Exclusive Rights to Burial and pay all appropriate fees. When an applicant does not wish to select a grave space, the Burial Authority will allocate a space at their discretion. The Exclusive Right of Burial may be subsequently purchased provided that no other burials have taken place in that space. An Exclusive Right of Burial must be purchased before any interment unless the grave was pre-purchased.
- 2.6 No coffin shall be buried in any earthen grave within three feet of the ordinary ground level. A minimum of six inches of earth must be placed between each coffin. Grave spaces will be dug to a depth of 4ft 6 inches for one coffin or 7ft for two coffins. There will be 1ft of space between each grave side by side and 1ft from head to toe of different grave spaces. If a larger casket is used the grave should be dug to a depth of 5ft.
- 2.7 All bodies brought for interment must be in a traditional wooden coffin or in a container approved by the Burial Authority.
- 2.8 No personal artefacts are to be placed in the grave outside of the coffin.
- 2.9 All graves are to be dug by the contractor to the satisfaction of the Burial Authority. Following interment the grave shall be filled up with earth and the surface covered with turf to the level of the surrounding ground.
- 2.10 A Register of all burials is kept at the office of the Burial Authority, where during office hours, searches may be made.

2.11 It is lawful to permit ashes to be scattered on graves however they should not be recorded in the burial register. Scattering over the area of the grave constitutes a scattering whilst burial below ground in a definable mass or in a container does constitute a burial. The latter should be fully registered formally.

In respect of scattering it is advisable to add a note to the appropriate grave in the register of graves that ashes have been scattered. This will alert you should such a grave be reopened in the future for a coffin burial so that all topsoil goes back into the grave.

3 MEMORIALS - GENERAL

- 3.1 No memorial may be placed on a grave except where the Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased.
- 3.2 No monument, lettering or other memorial shall be permitted to be erected or placed in the grounds of the cemetery without written permission of the Burial Authority and payment of the appropriate fee.
- 3.3 Applications for approval shall be forwarded to the Burial Authority on the Authority's official form and must include a drawing of the proposed memorial showing design and dimensions, together with a specification of the material of which the memorial is constructed. A copy of the proposed inscriptions shall be sent with the drawing.
- 3.4 All memorials, and any memorial work must be carried out by a qualified mason, or a person qualified and insured to carry out the work.
- 3.5 Every memorial shall have cut upon it the section letter and/or number of the grave over which it is erected, this information should be on the reverse of the memorial. The stonemason's name may however, be discreetly inscribed on the side or on the reverse.
- 3.6 All headstones shall be securely dowelled to vase base or plinth and shall be supported by such foundations as is necessary.
- 3.7 Removal and reaffixing of any memorial for interment is the responsibility of the grave owner. Prior to any removal of a memorial for cleaning, repair or renovation notice shall be given in writing to the Registrar of Burials.
- 3.8 A temporary mark (no more than one in total) identifying the deceased [after approval of the Burial Authority] may be placed on a grave for a period not exceeding twelve months providing application and payment are made to the Burial Authority, and the Exclusive Right of Burial purchased.
- 3.9 All memorials shall be kept in good repair and in a tidy and safe condition by the owner. It is recommended that memorials are insured against damage, as all memorials erected at Lane End Cemetery are erected at the owner's risk.

- 3.10 After erection of a memorial, all surplus materials must be removed, and any damage done to walks or grounds must be made good at the expense of the party for whom such a grave was constructed.
- 3.11 Where in the opinion of Bembridge Parish Council a memorial is considered as requiring maintenance to ensure that it remains in a safe condition the Registrar of Burials will advise the owner of the grave at their last notified address.
- 3.12 Bembridge Parish Council reserves the right to dismantle and lower to the ground or remove any memorial that it considers may constitute an imminent danger to the public or contractors.

4 MEMORIAL – DESIGN

- 4.1 The concept of harmony is central to the regulation and management of the cemetery. Harmony does not require uniformity and headstones need not be restricted to a conventional rectangular shape. The regulations are designed to provide guidance on how to commemorate the life of a loved one and will be made available through the organising undertaker. Alternatively a copy can be obtained at the offices of the Burial Authority.
- 4.2 Upright headstones should be:
- No more than 4 feet (1200mm) high, or less than 2 feet 6 inches (750mm) high (measurements from the surface of the ground);
 - No more than 3 feet (900mm) or less than 1 foot 8 inches (500mm) wide;
 - No more than 6 inches (150mm) or less than 3 inches (75mm) thick except in the case of slate memorials which may be thinner, but no less than 1.5 inches (38mm) thick.
- 4.3 For a child (*under 18*) the headstone may be smaller, but should be no less than 2 feet (600mm) High, 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) wide and 2 inches (50mm) thick.
- 4.4 Headstones may be of three types:
- So shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability;
 - On an integral base, no more than 9 inches (225mm) high, 3 feet (900mm) wide or projecting 4 inches (100mm) in any direction;
 - On a vase base, no more than 4 inches (100mm) on either side; the base being no more than 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) front to back.
- 4.5 Where appropriate the Bembridge Parish Council will approve the placement of an additional tablet on an existing grave. Where approval is given the tablet should be sloped and laid as close to the original stone as is practical. Circumstances where a request might be approved could include situations where cremated remains are to be interred into an existing grave and there is insufficient space to allow for a further inscription on an existing headstone.
- 4.6 Only marble, granite or natural hard stone shall be used in the construction of memorials. No concrete or artificial stone of any kind shall be used in the construction of the memorial. Vases and/or containers only shall be exempt from this part of the regulations. No woodwork or metal other than that approved for use as dowels shall be used in the construction of the memorial.

- 4.7
- 4.8 Non Standard headstones (for example hearts, open books and crosses) are acceptable, subject to approval, but the Burial Authority retains the right to refuse a non-standard headstone where the proposed design is inconsistent with the principles of maintaining a lawned cemetery.
- 4.9 Grave kerbs (or the enclosure of a grave) will not be permitted in any circumstances as they are inconsistent with the principle of a lawned cemetery.
- 4.10 Photographs or ceramic portraits of the deceased on memorials will be permitted provided that they are no larger than 6 inches (150mm).
- 4.11 Glass vases and containers are prohibited.
- 4.12 In order to maintain harmony within the cemetery the following will not be permitted.
- Models of people, animals and toys made in concrete, metal, plaster, plastic or similar
 - Windmills and jangling trinkets (wind chimes or similar)
 - No artificial lighting of any type
- 4.13 Engraved images and motifs will be accepted [provided that they are no larger than 6 inches (150mm) if they are decorative (flower, tree or similar) or reflect an aspect of the deceased person's life. Recognised images reflecting the religious faith of the deceased will also be permitted.
- 4.14 Inscriptions need to be appropriate and reflect the life of the deceased. Bembridge Parish Council reserves the right to not approve an inscription if it believes it to be insensitive or inappropriate.
- 4.15 Except where the design of a headstone contains an integral receptacle for plants and flowers, flowers should be placed in a removable container sunk into the ground.
- 4.16 Natural or silk flowers only are acceptable but the Burial Authority reserves the right to remove those flowers if or when it considered them to have degraded to a less than acceptable standard.
- 4.17 The planting of trees, shrubs, bedding plants or bulbs on a grave or between graves is prohibited, recognising that the cemetery is designated a lawned burial ground.

5 APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 5.1 Where agreement is not reached between the Registrar of Burials and the family on a matter relating to a memorial (wording, inscriptions or removal of articles that contravene the Regulations), Bembridge Parish Council will establish a panel comprising three Parish Councillors [with delegated powers] to consider the matter and make the final decision.
- 5.2 The complainant will have the right to appear in person at the meeting of the panel and may be supported by one other. At least seven days and no more than twenty one day's notice of the hearing will be given to the complainant.

- 5.3 The panel will record and report their decision and reasons to the complainant and Parish Council as soon after the panel meeting as is practical, but no longer than twenty eight days after the meeting .

6 CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

- 6.1 Bembridge Parish Council will maintain the cemetery as a lawned cemetery and ensure that its overall appearance appears tidy and regularly mown.
- 6.2 In pursuing its policy of maintaining the cemetery Bembridge Parish Council retains the right to remove dead or unsightly flowers on graves.
- 6.3 The applicant, or their heirs or successors, is responsible for making arrangements for ensuring that the headstone, vase, tablet or other monument is maintained in good condition. Where the applicant for a monument cannot be identified the relatives of the deceased are responsible for its upkeep.
- 6.4 The Parish Lengthsmen will undertake a risk assessment every 2 years of all headstones, vases, tablets and other monuments at the Cemetery. The condition of each headstone, vase, tablet or other monument will be categorised as:
- Unstable - liable to collapse
 - Very poor - considerable movement, but not yet liable to collapse
 - Poor - some movement and/or considerably out of alignment
 - Average - no movement, but some degradation and some misalignment
 - Good - no degradation, movement or misalignment
- 6.5 Depending on the condition of the headstone, vase, tablet or other monument the following action will be taken:
- a. Unstable: the Parish Council Office will arrange to have the monument repaired and will contact the person responsible for it to recover the costs involved. If the monument cannot be repaired it will be removed.
 - b. Very poor: the Parish Council Office will contact the person responsible for the monument and seek repair/restoration within three months of the completion of the risk assessment which first identified its condition as 'very poor'. If the person responsible for the monument does not complete the work required within three months the Parish Council Office will arrange to have the monument repaired and will take action to recover the costs involved.
 - c. Poor: the Parish Council Office will contact the person responsible for the monument and seek repair/restoration within twelve months of the completion of the risk assessment which first identified its condition as 'poor'. If the person responsible for the monument does not complete the work required within twelve months the Parish Council Office will arrange to have the monument repaired and will take action to recover the costs involved.
 - d. Average: the condition of the monument will be monitored by the Lengthsmen. If it deteriorates action will be taken to make it safe as set out above.

e. Good: no action.

6.6 Where appropriate Bembridge Parish Council will contact the grave owner on any matter relating to the maintenance and safety of the grave. The Burial Authority retain the right to take appropriate remedial action, at the expense of the grave owner if, it deems that urgent action is required to mitigate an imminent danger.

6.7 Bembridge Parish Council reserves the right to maintain such grounds and buildings as is felt necessary and to carry out any such work under their control. No other person shall be allowed to carry out any work within the grounds or building except by permission of the Council.

7 DEDICATING A SHRUB WITHIN THE CEMETERY

7.1 On receipt of a written request Bembridge Parish Council permission may be given for the planting of a shrub in memory of a loved one. Planting of shrubs will be confined to the east and west perimeter fence/wall of the cemetery.

7.2 Permission will only be given if the following criteria and conditions are met:

- The shrub to be planted must be from the approved list below:

○ CEONOTHUS	Evergreen
○ CHOISA	Evergreen
○ DEUTZIA	
○ EUONYMUS	Evergreen
○ FUCHSIA (hardy)	
○ HEBE	Evergreen
○ HYPERICUM	Evergreen
○ OLEARIA	Evergreen
○ PHILADELPHUS	
○ RIBES	Evergreen
○ SKIMMIA	Evergreen
○ SPIREA	
○ WEIGELA	

- The shrub must be planted 2 foot (60cm) from the fence/wall
- The height of the shrub should be kept to below that of the fence/wall

7.3 The Parish Council reserves the right to prune, control and remove any shrub should it become necessary on the grounds of safety and/or in the event of disease.

7.4 There is no automatic right to replace a shrub should it died or otherwise need to be removed. In these circumstances a new written request must be made.

8 DEDICATING A TREE WITHIN THE CEMETERY

8.1 The Parish Council agreed that the public could donate memorial trees in 4 spaces currently at Lane End Cemetery. The process for donation is set out as follows:-

- The member of the public would approach the Parish Council and agree/reserve the space for the tree.

- The member of the public would then purchase the tree, complying with the criteria listed below.
- The member of the public would liaise with the Parish Clerk for delivery to the cemetery where the lengthsman would plant on their behalf.
- The lengthsman will maintain the tree and responsibility for its upkeep or ultimate disposal would be down to the Parish Council.
- The Parish Council would require a small donation of £10.00 per tree planted to cover the cost of planting.

8.2 The criteria that members of the public should comply with when purchasing a tree is set out as follows:-

- Height: 4-5m
 - Hardy
 - Tolerant of clay soil
 - Disease resistant (as far as possible)
 - Non fruit shedding (as this could create a problem of rotten fruit on the path – slippery, needs to be cleared up)
 - Distinct trunk as opposed to bushy
 - Not prunus variety (Better to replace with a different genus to give soil a break and in case of any disease)
 - Suitable for being planted beside a paved path
- Possible new trees could include:-
Yew, Laburnum, Acer sp, Betula spp, Crataegus persimilis, Prunifolia.

9 **OTHER**

- 9.1 Any person who conducts themselves in a noisy, disorderly or unseemly manner or, who is intoxicated or, uses improper language may be removed from the cemetery grounds.
- 9.2 No person will be permitted to play any game or sport within the cemetery or wilfully or unlawfully disturb any person assembled for the purpose of attending a burial.
- 9.3 No person will be permitted to sit, stand or climb on any memorial, or any gate, fence, wall or building belonging to the cemetery, or throw any missile within the cemetery grounds.
- 9.4 All persons should conduct themselves in a quiet, orderly and decorous manner, and no person should commit any nuisance within the cemetery. The playing of radios or similar equipment is forbidden.
- 9.5 The cemetery is open at all times. Children should be accompanied by a responsible adult. Dogs should be kept on a lead and must not be allowed to foul in the cemetery. Cyclists should dismount when crossing the cemetery and skateboarding is prohibited
- 9.6 The Registrar of Burials has the right to exclude or remove any article or object which may cause offence.
- 9.7 In cases of any dispute as to the interpretation of these regulation, the decision as to the interpretation will rest with the Registrar of Burials.

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- 9.8 These Regulations are subject to alteration without notification by Bembridge Parish Council at any time as may be considered necessary. All grave spaces and memorials are subject to these regulations and amendments that may be made from time to time.
- 9.9 Any person offending against the Regulations will be prohibited from entering, remaining or working within the cemetery.