

PITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery Policy

Pittington Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) owns and is responsible for the public cemetery at Hallgarth. The Council reserves the right to amend any of the cemetery rules and regulations or fees and charges at any time.

BUYING EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL

An exclusive right of burial is where someone purchases the rights to a particular grave plot. The right of burial is given in the form of a deed.

The exclusive right of burial in a private grave shall be for the term of ninety nine years.

A deed of exclusive right of burial in a private grave for a term of ninety nine shall be made to the purchaser of such a right and that person shall be registered in the Burial Authority records of the cemetery as the owner of the grave space.

The purchase is of a right of burial plot, not the land itself, ownership of which remains with the Council.

Anyone intending to purchase the exclusive right of burial in the grave space may select the plot. This is subject to:

- The approval of the Council
- The payment of the sum or sums specified by the Council
- Any further regulations made by the Council.

If no burial takes place during the purchased period (99 years) and the Council has not received a request for renewal from the owner of the right of burial, then the Council may grant a right of burial to another person. Every reasonable effort will be made to notify the previous owner of the right, his successor in title, or personal representative, and give the option to renewal first.

When the registered owner of a ‘right’ of burial dies, the person organising the burial must provide satisfactory proof of title, usually a copy of the deed that was issued when the right of burial was purchased. At the time of arranging the funeral of the current deed holder, it is recommended that the deed be transferred to another family member to assist with the smooth organisation of future burials.

The owner of a right of burial can also give up their right to the Council before the 99 years is up. The Council will determine any payment that may be due.

The right of burial may be transferred with the prior approval of the Council; this will incur a transfer fee. Proof of ownership of the deed will be required before transfers effected. .

The owner of a right of burial cannot dispose of any such right without the consent of the Council first (except by will, descent or marriage).

If a 'right' of burial is acquired through a will the new owner must contact the Council to arrange the transfer. This will incur a transfer fee. A new Certificate of Ownership will then be issued.

Notice of Interment

Notice of proposed interment shall be given to the Clerk to the Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as the 'Clerk').and all fees and charges shall then be paid.

Notice of Interment shall be given on the printed form supplied by the Clerk on which all particulars requested shall be clearly stated: responsibility for error or omission shall rest upon the person signed the notice.

Notice of Interment may be accepted by telephone but shall be subject to confirmation in writing immediately afterwards.

No less than forty-eight hours notice shall be given for an interment.

A longer period of notice may be required where; in the opinion of the Clerk a grave cannot be prepared within the minimum period of notice.

The person arranging a burial shall notify the Clerk in all cases where the deceased suffered from a notifiable infectious disease or was exposed to radiation.

After Notice of Interment has been given, any alteration required in the arrangements will be subject to the consent of the Clerk.

Interments may be made at all reasonable hours but subject to agreement with the Clerk.

An additional charge may be imposed if any alteration to time or date is likely to involve the Council in any additional expense.

When notice is given of the first interment in a private grave, the person responsible for making the arrangements shall indicate whether the grave will be required for one, two or three persons, and the number of the interments in that shall be limited accordingly. This limitation shall not apply to the interment of ashes.

If it is desired to re-open a private grave, the grant of exclusive right of burial shall be produced or other authority of the owner for the opening shall be given in the form prescribed by the Council.

Public Graves Consent for the interment in a public grave shall not include any right or privilege apart from the right to make a single interment in a grave to be selected by the Clerk.

Certificate Required

A certificate of disposal issued by a Registrar or Deputy Registrar of Births Deaths or a Coroner's order for burial shall be sent to the Clerk before interment. or as soon as possible.

Any person procuring a burial who fails to deliver such certificate or order shall be required to make a written declaration in the prescribed form in accordance with the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Regulations 1968. A person failing to comply with these requirements shall be liable to prosecution.

Funerals Special Occasion

The arrangements for any ceremonies of a special or unusual nature shall be subject to the prior approval in writing of the Council.

Officiating Minister

The person arranging a burial shall be responsible for the attendance of a Minister of Religion to officiate at the burial service and for payment of the requisite fee.

Wooden Coffins

A body shall not be accepted for interment unless it is enclosed in a coffin.

A coffin other than one of wood and of traditional design will not normally be accepted.

Details of any special type of coffin or container to be used shall be notified in writing to the Clerk with the Notice of Interment.

The council reserves the right to refuse to accept a coffin or container of unusual or extraordinary design.

Exhumation

After interment, a body, or casket containing the ashes of a body, shall not be removed from a grave without the production to the Clerk of the necessary faculty or licence, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Grave Spaces Excavations Measurements

All work in connection with the excavation of a grave shall be carried out by the undertaker or a contractor employed by the undertaker.

A grave space shall measure 9 feet by 4 feet for the interment of an adult and 5 feet by 3 feet for the interment of a child.

The required excavation for an interment within these measurements of an adult may be to a maximum depth sufficient for three interments.

Internal walls of brickwork, stonework, or other permanent lining will not be permitted.

The purchase of a grave space in the Burial Ground is conditional upon the acceptance by the purchaser of:

- Maintenance by the Council. The principal maintenance of the Burial Ground is by the use of mechanical mowers on the grass over the grave areas.

Except with the prior approval of the Council, apart from the erection of a headstone the remainder of the grave space will be turfed or seeded flat (see other exceptions below under 'Memorials and Headstones').

No grave or grave space shall be raised. After an interment has taken place the soil will be allowed to settle naturally over the following months.

Any subsidence will be rectified by the Council who will arrange for top soil to be added periodically until settlement ceases.

When conditions are suitable the Council will turf or seed the area of the grave and carry out subsequent maintenance of the lawn.

FLOWERS AND WREATHS

Flowers and wreaths may be placed on the grave on the day of the funeral. They may be removed by the Council two weeks after the funeral or earlier if they start to decay.

Wreaths placed on graves at other times may be removed at the discretion of the cemetery staff. The owner of a grave space shall not set out and plant the grave space except as permitted by the Council.

The Council do not permit artificial trees, plants or shrubs to be placed on any grave space. Following an interment all floral tributes will be placed on the grave or close by.

Floral tributes will be removed when, in the opinion of the Council, they become unsightly. No planting is allowed on the grave.

The Council will arrange to remove planting at its discretion if in default of the above, after first requesting the owner to do so, giving an appropriate period of notice.

No plants or flowers are allowed on the grave.

Flowers or plants in pots are allowed on the plinth at the base of the headstone.

Flowers and plants will be removed when, in the opinion of the Parish Council, they become unsightly.

All rubbish / waste flowers are to be placed in the bin provided

MEMORIALS AND HEADSTONES

A memorial can only be fitted after a minimum of 12 weeks following a burial. This period allows the ground to settle.

Application for permission to erect or place a memorial or marker on a grave space shall be made to the Clerk and be accompanied by details of the proposed wording and marking plus requisite fee.

The Council will have the right to seek amendments to the proposed wording and to be the final arbiter of the proposed wording.

Headstones and Inscriptions Memorials in the form of headstones are to be placed at the head of the grave only.

A headstone is only permitted on a grave space in accordance with these regulations and upon payment of the appropriate fee. The approval of the Council is necessary before a headstone is placed in the Burial Ground and before the alteration or addition of an inscription to a headstone.

The application for approval must contain full particulars of the application including:

- A drawing of the headstone and its specifications, including the nature and quality of the material to be used, showing all dimensions.
- Any text to be cut on the proposed headstone or any text to be altered or added to an existing headstone on memorials the following are not allowed:
 - Photographs
 - Inappropriate sentiments
 - Political, racist, sexist symbols and/or statements

Where exclusive right of burial has been granted a headstone may be erected; it shall not exceed 2'6" in height by 2'6" wide by 1'6" deep.

On a cremated remains plot the marker shall not exceed 18" by 18".

All new memorials and headstones must be installed by suitably qualified memorial masons, registered with the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM).

Monumental masons must provide a minimum guarantee, and should be contacted in the first instance if problems occur within this guarantee period. If problems remain unresolved then the National Association of Monumental Masons should be contacted.

Persons undertaking the fixing or laying of memorials or marker shall provide all equipment for the work and, on completion of the work, such equipment and any

surplus materials shall be removed forthwith and the grave space and surrounding area left in a tidy condition.

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that memorials are kept in good repair. The owner is responsible for any repairs to damage caused by vandalism, storm, wind, lightning, cracking or subsidence of footings. If a memorial becomes unsafe, the Council may contact the registered owner (or representative) advising that repairs are required.

The Council will check the safety of memorials at least every five years, as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive.

Kerb stones are not permitted in any part of the cemetery except in the following circumstances:

- Existing graves with kerb stones;
- Where a previous permission has been granted and not yet implemented

will be accepted. If an unauthorised kerb surround is installed, the Council will contact the family and ask them to remove it. The family will be given a month to remove the kerb surround; otherwise it will be removed and stored for collection.

Payment of fees:

All fees and charges shall be paid to the Clerk. Cheques should be made payable to Pittington Parish Council.

The Council accepts no liability for any consequences arising from the loss or delay in delivery of any notice, order or other documents sent by post.

Hours of Admission

The cemetery will be open to the public daily from dawn till dusk.

Conduct in Burial Ground

All persons shall conduct themselves in a quiet, decent and orderly manner. Any person who wilfully destroys or injures any property within, or forming part of the Burial Ground, or plays at any games including gambling or sport therein, or wilfully and unlawfully disturbs any persons assembled for the purpose of attending any funeral, or commits any nuisance within the Burial Ground shall be liable to prosecution under Article 19 of the Local authorities Cemeteries Order 1977

No smoking shall take place within the Cemetery.

No person shall deposit litter or other waste material within the Burial Ground

Only cars and vehicles belonging to undertakers, mourners accompanying a funeral, any contractor employed or requested to undertake work by the Parish Council, persons undertaking work agreed by the council or people visiting a grave will be allowed in the cemetery. Drivers of vehicles must not exceed the 10mph speed limit.

Visitors are asked:

- Not to obstruct or interfere with employees of the Council in the execution of their duties or to interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery.
- Not to wilfully create any disturbance in the cemetery or behave in a way that may be a nuisance to others.
- Not to enter or remain in a cemetery after it has closed to the public.
- Not to pull or cut shrubs or flowers growing within the cemetery or to interfere with any grave or memorial
- Not to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- To keep dogs on a leash at all times. The visitor in control of the dog must remove any dog waste from the cemetery, with the exception of a guide dog accompanying a blind person.
- Not to bury pets or scatter ashes of pets in the cemetery.
- Not to play musical instruments, walkmans or similar sound systems in the cemetery, without the consent of the Council
- To ensure that no demonstrations of any kind are held in the cemetery without the consent of the Council.

The Council may close the cemetery, or any part of it, to the public for such time as they may consider necessary.

REGISTER OF INFORMATION

A Register of Burials is available from the Clerk. Plans showing the locations of all graves may also be viewed by prior arrangement with the Clerk.. Whilst every effort will be made to provide information from the Council's records, where extensive staff time could be involved, a charge may be due, notice of which will be given in advance of a search being carried out

Signed (Clerk)

Date Adopted:.....

Register offices in County Durham

There are register offices in

- Durham City
- Chester-le-Street
- Consett
- Seaham
- Bishop Auckland
- Barnard Castle
- Crook
- Stanhope

Further details can be found at www.durham.gov.uk or by calling 0300 123 7070.

Bereavement helplines and counselling services

Cruse Bereavement Care (Bereavement Counselling)

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Tel 01325 288633

Compassionate Friends (Support & Friendship by those Similarly Bereaved)

www.tcf.org.uk

Tel 0845 123 2304

Age Concern

www.AgeConcern.org.uk

Tel 0191 232 6488 or 0191 386 3856

Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths

www.fsid.org.uk

Tel 01670 531982

24 Hour Cot Death Helpline

Tel 01635 861 771

Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)

www.uk-sands.org

Tel 0207 436 5881

Child Death Helpline

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Tel: 0800 282986

The Natural Death Centre, London

Email: www.naturaldeath.org.uk

Tel 0871 288 2098