

**FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL**



**POLICY**

**DUNCOMBE  
CEMETERY REGULATIONS**

CEM01

**Ferryhill Town Council is the Burial Authority in charge of Duncombe Cemetery. Throughout this policy the word Council refers to Ferryhill Town Council.**

Burial plans and registers are stored at Ferryhill Town Hall and searches can be carried out; there is a charge per search and cost will be provided on application.

Enquiries regarding burials at the cemetery can be made at the Town Hall during the following hours:-

Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 12noon & 1.00pm - 4.30pm

Friday 9.00am - 12noon & 1.00pm - 4.00pm

Tel.01740 652157 (An answerphone service is available out of office hours)

Fax 01740 657905

Email: [enquiries@ferryhill.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ferryhill.gov.uk)

## **1 VISITING THE CEMETERY**

### **Location/Opening Times**

Duncombe Cemetery is situated in Cleves Avenue, Ferryhill, DL17 8BN

The nearest bus stop is in Linden Road, Ferryhill approximately 15 metres from the main gates of the cemetery.

Summer Opening Times (April to October) 8.00am till 8.00pm

Winter Opening Times (November to March) 8.00am till 4.00pm

The main gates and the pedestrian gate will be open during these hours to enable access; both gates will be locked when the cemetery is closed.

### **Car Parking**

The car park is on the left at the bottom of the driveway. All cars must park in the car park and all vehicles are left at the owner's risk. There is a maximum speed limit of 5 miles per hour in operation.

### **Children Under 16 Years Old**

Children under 16 years of age are usually expected to be accompanied by an adult when visiting the cemetery, any children unaccompanied may be asked to leave the cemetery.

### **Dogs and Other Animals**

Dogs are not allowed in the cemetery and no other animal is to be taken into the cemetery without the express permission in writing of the Council except for Guide and Assistance dogs.

### **Water Points**

Water points are provided for use, visitors are requested to remove all water containers from site.

## 2 BURIALS

### **Burial Fees**

Current fees and charges for all burials are available from the Town Hall or through your Funeral Director.

ALL fees will be doubled for residents outside of the parish boundary of Ferryhill and for a burial the day following a statutory public holiday.

All payments of fees and charges shall be invoiced immediately after the burial and must be paid within 28 days

### **Arrangements For Burials**

In most cases burial arrangements will be made by the nominated Funeral Director who will advise on cemetery protocol.

Burial instructions shall only be given on the official forms supplied by the Council for that purpose. The particulars required must be fully and distinctly completed.

The Sexton will select the next appropriate plot for burial. Interments will normally take place;

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 10.00am - 3.00pm | Monday to Thursday |
| 10.00am - 2.00pm | Friday.            |

### **Length of Notice Previous to Interment**

Notice of interment must be given at least 2 days prior to the time for interment. No application for burial can be received on Saturdays or Sundays, or outside the office hours stated.

No interments will take place on weekends or statutory public holidays. For any interment arranged for the day following a public holiday fees will be doubled.

Whenever it is found necessary to postpone or change the time of a funeral from that for which notice has been given, written notification of the postponement must be received at the Town Hall office giving at least 4 working hours notice of the change.

### **Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial**

It is the policy of the Council to sell grave spaces, of either single or double depth, guaranteeing the purchaser exclusive rights for a period of 99 years or 50 years for a plot in the ashes garden from the date of interment, (this date being calculated from the date of final interment in the case of a double depth grave space).

The exclusive right of burial is the right to inter into a grave space, not the purchase of the land. Ownership of the land remains at all time with the Town Council, accordingly the Town Council reserve the right to remove any items or alterations undertaken without permission.

No one, other than the purchaser/s, is permitted to inter into the grave space or erect a memorial.

The privileges of erecting a memorial on a grave space are granted only in respect of those in which exclusive rights exist.

Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial is necessary should you wish to reserve the right to future burials in the same grave space or should you wish to install any form of memorial.

Completion of the application to purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial is usually dealt with by the Funeral Director and the Town Hall staff at the time of initial arrangements for the funeral. The purchase will be confirmed by the issue of a Deed of Grant and the particulars thereof shall be entered in a register to be kept for that purpose. It is important that you notify the Council of any change of address immediately if you purchase a right of burial.

In all cases of burials in purchased ground, the notice of interment shall be signed by the purchaser or owner thereof for the time being, or a person authorised to exercise the right, usually the Funeral Director signifying consent to such burial.

### **Transfer of Grave Ownership**

In the event of the death of the original grave owner, the person claiming to be entitled to the ownership rights must obtain a formal transfer of ownership with the Council.

Ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial is therefore a very important matter. Ownership can be transferred either during the owner's lifetime or after their death.

A copy of the last will and testament identifying the Executor/Executrix will be accepted as proof of intended ownership. If this information is not available please contact the Town Hall to ascertain what documentation will be required, as this will depend on who intends to have ownership going forward.

The procedure for transferring the ownership is detailed in a document entitled Grave Ownership or Deed Transferal, which is available from the Town Council offices.

The formal transfer must take place before funeral arrangements are made to re-open the grave space.

## **3 THE DAY OF THE BURIAL**

### **Meeting at the Cemetery**

When arrangements are made for mourners to meet at the cemetery, persons intending to arrive before the funeral cortege should be advised to park in the main car park and wait on foot at the cemetery gates for the arrival of the cortege.

The time announced for the burial to take place will normally mean the time that the funeral is due to arrive at the cemetery gates.

Cars arriving in procession with the funeral cortege should follow the Funeral Director into the cemetery through the main gates and park in the car park.

### **Certificate For Burial Or Cremation**

The Certificate of Registration of Death for Burial or Cremation, issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, must be given to the Sexton at the time of interment. No funeral will take place without production of a disposal certificate.

### **Following Burial**

Backfilling of graves will not normally begin until mourners are making their way out of the cemetery. Graves are left slightly mounded to allow for settlement, flowers delivered at the time of the burial will be carefully placed on the grave by cemetery staff upon completion of backfilling.

## **4 CREMATED REMAINS**

Cremated remains can either be buried in a casket or they can be scattered on a grave; the top layer of the grave must be removed by the Sexton before the scattering takes place, cost on application. This can be arranged through a Funeral Director or directly through the Council.

If the remains are buried, the Certificate of Registration of Death for Burial or Cremation, issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, must be given to the Sexton at the time of interment.

## **5 GRAVE AFTERCARE**

Turfing over of the grave plot will be carried out by cemetery staff following a period of settlement of up to six weeks during which time the grave will be topped up with soil as necessary. Settling of graves may take longer than twelve weeks depending on weather and ground conditions. Any plants or items found on the area to be turfed will be carefully relocated to the memorial area to the head of the plot to allow turfing to take place.

Mourners are respectfully advised not to place anything on the grave during this settlement time as weather and ground conditions can result in rapid overnight settlement.

## **6 MAINTENANCE OF GRAVES**

Maintenance and upkeep of these areas is the responsibility of the Town Council. The planting of trees, plants or conifers is not permitted. The Town Council reserve the right to clear such planted areas or remove obstructive objects should the plot become neglected or weedy or where plants overgrow into adjacent plots or where grass cutting procedures are hindered.

## **7 MEMORIALS**

### **Applications to Install Memorials**

Confirmation of purchase of Grant of Grave Space will be required by your chosen stonemason before he can proceed with his application to install any memorial.

Applications for the erection of a headstone/vase must be submitted in writing to the Town Hall for approval by the authorised officer, payment will be made prior to the headstone being erected, fee on application.

Permanent memorials may be placed only on graves to which the burial rights have been purchased. Where the burial rights have not been purchased a wooden marker or cross (the cross not to exceed 30" x 24" overall) showing the name, age and date of death of the deceased may be permitted, subject to the Council's approval or concrete numbers into ground level. Such a marker shall be removed by the Council on the expiry of the time after which the grave may legally be re-used. The Council reserves the right to remove permanent memorials erected where the burial rights have not been purchased.

### **Headstones/Memorials**

The Town Council reserves the right to prescribe a specific type of headstone in the interests of cemetery safety.

Memorials may only be erected over graves in respect of which the Exclusive Rights of Burial has been produced. The right to erect a memorial rests with the Exclusive Right holder and will be for the term of the Grant of Grave Space.

The Stone Mason must contact the Town Hall prior to the headstone/memorial being erected at the Cemetery to enable the Sexton to mark the correct grave space. The Stonemason is responsible for removing any rubbish once the work is complete.

Headstones for burials shall be of a standard shape with maximum dimensions of 763mm x 610mm x 75mm (2ft 6in high x 2ft wide x 3in) to 100mm (4in) thick.

The dimension of a matching base must be no more than 763mm x 305mm (2ft 6in wide x 12in) back to front x 100mm (4in) thick.

All permanent memorials must be durable natural stone, marble or granite. The full name of the deceased must be inscribed on the memorial and the grave reference number must be inscribed on the back.

In the interests of safety and to ensure as far as possible a satisfactory standard of installation, all memorials must meet standards and specifications as recognised by the 'Association of Burial Authorities'. To avoid disappointment please ensure that your nominated stonemason can demonstrate his ability to satisfy the above criteria.

Headstones will be sited central to the head of the grave space, but in the event of adjoining spaces being occupied by one family, headstones may be sited adjacent to each other, subject to the over-riding consideration of convenience of ground maintenance. Requests for such adjacent headstones must be referred to the Works Manager to the Council who will decide on the application of this policy in consultation with the Town Clerk.

Until it is deemed suitable for the siting of a headstone after settlement of a new grave, a temporary wooden cross (or appropriate non-Christian alternative) may be placed at the head of the grave. This item must be removed upon the installation of a permanent headstone. If a temporary marker is not replaced by a headstone after the sexton considers settlement is complete, the Council reserves the right to remove the temporary marker, although reference will be made to the appropriate officiating funeral director before such action is taken.

It is possible for a headstone/memorial to be erected on a grave with an inscription that refers to someone not buried in the grave. However, it should be recorded in the

burial records for the said grave that there is a memorial in place on this grave but the inscription does not refer to a person interred in the grave.

**Graves and plots within the Memorial & Ashes Gardens shall not include any of the following :**

- Fencing or any other form of border or enclosure or any other of boundary marking.
- Potted plants or planted trees and shrubs.
- Pebbles, chippings
- Glass, china, plastic jars
- Bird tables, wind chimes or lanterns
- Solar lights

These rules have been devised for the Health & Safety of the public and cemetery staff.

The cemetery staff will, as part of their routine maintenance, top up graves and remove any object or debris or disallowed objects from the grave.

**Maintaining Memorials/Insurance**

It is the responsibility of the grave owner to maintain and repair any damage sustained to memorials.

It is strongly advised that the family/person who purchases the headstone takes out the necessary insurance cover against accidental damage or vandalism. Please contact a Stonemason who should be able to advise you about this matter.

The Council are not responsible for any damage to the headstone by Council staff unless this is witnessed at the time of happening. Hearsay cannot be accepted.

**Memorial Health And Safety**

Whilst purchasers of headstones/memorials hold some responsibility for the safety of such, the Council takes seriously its responsibility to keep the cemetery a safe place for all visitors.

Accordingly, memorials within the Cemetery are constantly monitored for safety reasons and a headstone safety test is undertaken every six months. If a memorial is found to be in a dangerous condition the Council may take the following action.

- i Remove and store the memorial on site or,
- ii Dismantle the memorial and lay the headstone flush with the ground or,
- iii Repair the memorial to make it safe if this is practical, the costs for this may be recovered from the grave owner.

Whilst the Council will take the utmost care when undertaking the above tasks, it will not be responsible for any alleged damage caused whilst doing so without specific proof that the damage was caused by Council staff and was avoidable. The costs for undertaking the work may be recovered from the grave owner. If the owner of the grave space cannot be traced, further interments may not be permitted until the cost of carrying out the work has been settled.

## **8 MEMORIAL GARDEN PLAQUES**

The Council have created a dedicated area within the cemetery where memorial plaques can be placed in memory of people whose remains are interred elsewhere.

Applications should be made to the Council in the first instance where the cost and further details will be available.

The purchase of the plaque includes fitting and an inscription of up to 80 characters, including spaces. Plaques will not be engraved and mounted until payment has been received.

Any memorial plaque space will be leased for a period of fifty years from the date the plaque is fixed and the Council will maintain and periodically clean the plaque.

Any dead or dying flowers will be removed from the garden at the discretion of the Sexton.

## **9 ASHES GARDEN**

An Ashes Garden is also at the rear of the Memorial Garden and provides a small plot to bury ashes topped with a memorial plaque. Application forms and prices are available from Ferryhill Town Hall.

A flat memorial plaque, prepared by a Stonemason, can be placed on an ashes plot. Each plaque shall be black granite and measure no larger than 12" x 12" x 2". It is to be fitted in the ground with an optional black polished sunken vase measuring no more than 6" x 6" x 4". Lettering must be either white or gold.

## **10 COMMEMORATIVE BENCHES**

The Council will consider the installation of a commemorative bench in specified areas only. Applicants must write to the Council in the first instance, stating their request. The Council reserves the right to dictate design and composition, positioning and fixing of the bench and the right of removal if it is deemed a danger to the public.

## **11 FLORAL DECORATIONS**

Floral tributes will be removed when, in the opinion of the Sexton, they become unsightly.

No planting is permitted on the grave space.

The Burial Authority, Ferryhill Town Council, reserves the right to amend the details and contents of this policy and to deal with any circumstances or contingency not provided for in the contents as necessary.