



Ferryhill Town Council

Town Hall, Ferryhill, County Durham, DL17 8JL

Telephone: (01740) 652157

Website: <http://www.ferryhill.gov.uk>

Email: enquiries@ferryhill.gov.uk

Dear Councillor,

I Hereby Summon You to attend a **Meeting** of the **Corporate Governance Committee** at 6.00pm on **Tuesday, 9th December 2025**, which will be held at **Ferryhill Town Hall, Chapel Terrace, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8JL**

Dated 2nd December 2025

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leeanne".

Leeanne Owens
Town Clerk

Membership:

Councillors C Atkinson, C Bihari, A Ferguson, J Lathan, P Mountford, C Johnson

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
To invite members to declare any interest they may have.
- 3. Members' Dispensation**
To consider written requests for dispensations from members who have declared interests under Disclosable or Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – Section 33 of the 2011 Localism Act.
- 4. Public Participation (Subject to Public Participation Policy)**

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Questions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister. A question will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a decision of the Council in the last six months.

5. Report from Internal Auditor

To consider the progress of the audit work already completed during the period September 2025 – December 2025, including:

- 5.1 Allotments
- 5.2 Payroll
- 5.3 Accounts Receivable
- 5.4 Tendering/Quotes Procedures
- 5.5 Income Collection and Banking
- 5.6 Accounts Payable

6. Report from Internal Auditor

To consider terms of reference for proposed audits scheduled to take place between January 2026 – March 2026

7. Policies due for renewal

Cemetery Rules and Regulations

ITEM NO: 07

Subject: Cemetery Rules and Regulations

Report of: **Town Clerk**

Committee: **Corporate Governance**

Date: **09th December 2025**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To review the Council's Cemetery Rules and Regulations Policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following a recent report been presented to the Town Council at its meeting on the 22nd October 2025, it was agreed that the Cemetery Rules and Regulations Policy be amended to reflect the detail discussed at this meeting in relation to Kerbstones. These changes are highlighted in yellow and are under parts of section 7 of the policy.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 To comply with changes in legislation and part of good working practices, the Council is to ensure that Policies and Procedures are current and up to date. As part of the terms of reference for this Committee, the above policy falls under this Committees remit and it is due to be updated, mainly due to changes in working practices and to make it more robust than the previous policy.
- 3.2 I have attached a copy of the new policy as Appendix 1 and a copy of the headstone application form as Appendix 2.

4.0 RECOMMENDED

- 4.1 That the amendments to the policy be approved.

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL



POLICY

DUNCOMBE CEMETERY REGULATIONS

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

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/Kerb Surrounds

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.

Kerb surrounds are only permitted in certain sections of the cemetery and permission must be sought prior, this is subject to the kerb surround being installed by a suitably qualified memorial mason.

If an unauthorised kerb surround or memorial is installed the council will contact the family to request removal. The family will be given a month to remove the kerb surround/memorial; otherwise, it will be removed and stored for collection. Kerb surround memorials are not to exceed 2439 mm (8' long) x 1194 mm (3'6" wide) on 1220 mm (4') centres and 2439 mm (8' long) x 1220 mm (4' wide) on 1520 mm (5') centres including foundations. These foundations must be below ground level and should always be to the highest specification possible. In situ foundations should be allowed to cure for at least 14 days before fixing takes place, 28 days is preferable. It is generally accepted best practice that the laying of concrete should ideally not take place when the temperature is below 5°C. However, a suitable frost proofing cement additive should be used. The kerbs can be either dowelled to the headstone or to the foundation. If the kerbs are dowelled to the foundation and the headstone, then they are more difficult to separate in the future.

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.

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

DUNCOMBE CEMETERY

Application to Erect Monument, Plaque, Headstone or Kerb Surround

I hereby make application to Ferryhill Town Council for leave to erect a Monument, Plaque or Headstone in the grave space no. as shown on the cemetery plan, and if approved will pay the fee prior to erecting the same.

I can confirm that I am the grave owner. (If the grave owner is deceased, the ownership must be transferred before this application can be approved, please contact Ferryhill Town Council to transfer the exclusive right of burial).

Name in full of Registered Grave Owner:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Signature: Date:

The following is a description of the monument, plaque, headstone or kerb surround and its exact measurements:-

The following inscription is to be cut thereon:-

If leave be granted for the erection of the above described monument, plaque or headstone, I hereby undertake that the Rules and Regulations (shown overleaf) of the Council relating thereto, shall be strictly observed.

Dated:

Signed:

Company:

The following is a copy of the rules and regulations of the Committee relating to the erection of Monuments, Plaques and Headstones:

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 of the headstone.

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.

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. The Monumental Mason must contact the Town Hall prior to the memorial being erected at the Cemetery to enable the sexton to mark the correct grave space.

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 shall be of a standard shape with maximum dimensions of 763mm x 610mm x 75mm (2ft 6" high x 2ft wide x 3") to 100mm (4in) thick. Dimensions of a matching base should be 763mm x 305mm (2ft 6" wide x 12") back to front x 100mm (4") 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.

Flat plaques in the ashes garden shall be black granite 12" x 12" x 2" to be fitted in the ground with an optional black, polished, sunken vase 6" x 6" x 4", lettering must be white or gold.

Kerb surrounds are only permitted in certain sections of the cemetery and permission must be sought prior, this is subject to the kerb surround being installed by a suitably qualified memorial mason.

Flat stones, fencing, or any other form of enclosure or border is not permitted. Trenches or any other type of boundary marking are not allowed. Potted or planted trees or shrubs are not allowed on or near graves. Only cut flowers are allowed.

Memorials, trees and shrubs which are not allowed will be removed immediately without further notice.

All graves are lawn type graves and so will be mown on a regular basis.

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

The stonemason is responsible for removing any rubbish when erecting a monument.

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