

## **HERMITAGE BURIAL GROUND**

This document contains rules and regulations for Hermitage burial ground including the erection of memorials. For further information or enquiries please contact the Parish Clerk at [hermitagepc@outlook.com](mailto:hermitagepc@outlook.com).

### **1. RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

Parishioners and other persons who die in the parish have the right of burial in the burial ground provided that it has not been closed by Hermitage Parish Council (the Council) and there is sufficient space.

The place of burial is at the discretion of the Council unless a particular grave space has already been reserved by arrangement with the Council.

The Council may, at its discretion and if there is sufficient room, permit a burial in the burial ground of persons other than parishioners or those who die in the parish.

These rights of burial extend also to the interment of ashes after cremation except where the burial ground has been closed for burials by Order in Council. This can take place only if permission is obtained from the Council specifically for this purpose.

All graves should be in order 24 hours before a burial takes place. No vehicles are permitted on the burial ground site.

### **2. ERECTION OF MEMORIALS IN PARISH BURIAL GROUND**

a. The erection of any memorial in the burial ground, or the alteration of any existing memorial, or the introduction of any other object in the burial ground, is a privilege and not a right. Bereaved people are frequently under the impression that they have purchased the plot of land in which their loved one is buried. This is not so; they have simply funded a small part of the cost

of the general maintenance of the burial ground. The whole burial ground remains in Council ownership and the Council is responsible for its upkeep.

For this reason, permission must always be gained for the erection of (or alteration to) any memorial in the burial ground.

**b.** Hermitage burial ground is relatively small. The Council feels the landscape can help maintain an appropriately calm and peaceful atmosphere and so places restriction on the type of memorial it will permit. Designs, materials and inscriptions are vetted by the Council before permission is granted.

The Council will consider sympathetically any application for an appropriately and harmoniously designed memorial.

**c.** It is a legal requirement that a permit is issued before any kind of memorial, including a headstone, vase etc, is placed on a grave. The Council will give permission and instruct the clerk to issue the permit.

**d.** All memorials are subject to the jurisdiction of the Council and all work must meet BS8415 and the NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) code of practice. Memorials can only be placed on graves for which the exclusive right has been purchased.

**e.** It is important to note that the existence of a similar memorial or memorials to the one for which permission is being sought will not usually be a reason for the Council to give permission. To illustrate the point: the existence of older kerbs will not in itself be a reason for granting permission for another kerb. If or when relatives of the deceased leave the area or themselves die, tending a grave becomes the responsibility of the Council which prefers no kerbs to make this task more straightforward.

**f.** If a memorial or other object is introduced into the burial ground without authority, the Council has power to remove it and to order the person who introduced it to pay the expenses of removal and the costs of any

proceedings. The Council also has the power to remove any memorial not maintained by the owners.

### **3. PROCEDURE FOR THE ERECTION OF MEMORIALS**

Anyone wishing to erect a memorial or make any alteration to an existing one, should consult the Council as early as possible, and certainly before making any choice of design or material. A minimum of six months must elapse between the interment of a person to be commemorated and the approval of a memorial by the Council to allow the ground to resettle.

Placing or maintaining a memorial can take place Monday to Friday except for Bank Holidays.

Step One: The memorial is agreed in principle with the Parish Clerk.

Step Two: The individual should make a formal application to the Council on its standard form. This must include the **full** particulars of the design of the proposed memorial or alteration, including a description of the materials to be used, its measurements, shape, base, colour, and decoration plus the style, layout and lettering of the proposed inscription.

The Council will consider any application at a regular council meeting and, if approved, will give that consent in writing. This permission must be obtained **before** placing an order with a stonemason.

### **4. REGULATIONS RESPECTING MEMORIALS**

Where conversion of metric measurements to imperial has been done please note that some rounding has occurred.

#### **a. Dimensions of headstone**

Headstones shall be no larger than 760 mm (30 ins) high, measured from the surface of the ground, 540mm (21 ins) wide and 100mm (4 ins) thick. They shall be no less than 500mm (20 ins) high, 300mm (12 ins) wide, and 50mm (2ins) thick except in the case of slate memorials, which may be thinner but

not less than 35mm (1.5ins) thick. These measurements are not intended to define standard proportions of memorials, and memorials may be of any dimensions within the given maximum and minimum.

Crosses shall not exceed 760mm (30ins) in height, measured from the surface of the ground, and shall be set in a sufficient stone or concrete plate, the surface of which is below ground enabling a mower to pass freely over it.

Memorials of smaller dimensions may be allowed to mark the graves of children under 12 years old.

The grave number given by the Parish Clerk should be marked on the back face of the headstone or memorial.

**b. Base and foundation slab**

A headstone may stand on a stone base, provided that the base is an integral part of the design. The top of such a base should, for preference, be flush with the ground. If it is not, it is essential that its foundation slab must be flush with the ground to allow a mower to pass freely over it. A recess for flowers may be incorporated in the base. The width of the base should not exceed 50mm (2in) beyond the headstone in any direction. Other methods of fixing the memorial in the ground may be considered; the base of the memorial may be so shaped that it can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability.

**c. Ledgers**

A memorial ledger must be laid flat slightly below ground level. The dimensions should not exceed 1,800mm (71 ins) by 540mm (21 ins). A ledger may be laid on its own or in addition to a headstone. If there is only a ledger, the grave number should be recorded on the bottom left -hand corner of the ledger.

#### **d. Flowers**

Any separate container for flowers must be level with, or below, the surface of the ground so that it will not obstruct the passage of a mower. Wreaths and cut flowers must be removed as soon as they appear to be withered. Glass vases, including such as jam jars or milk bottles, and plastic containers are strictly prohibited.

Flowers placed in the Burial Ground should ideally be fresh, but silk flowers will also be accepted. The Council reserves the right to remove flowers if they become mouldy, fall apart, or start to fade or loose appeal. Remembrance Day poppies and traditional Christmas wreaths will be accepted but these must be removed within two months. The Council has authority and will remove any artificial flowers which do not comply with these regulations.

Planting of shrubs, roses etc is not permitted.

#### **e. Materials**

Headstones and crosses/memorials shall be made of natural stone or slate – no plastic will be allowed.

#### **f. Sculpture**

Figure sculpture and other statuary are not discouraged but must be authorised by the Council.

#### **g. Designs**

Headstones need not be restricted to a rectangular shape; curved tops are preferable to straight-edged ones.

Memorials in the shape of a heart or book are not normally permitted, nor are photographs, portraits, kerbs, railings, chippings or glass shades. Motifs and pictures are not normally allowed on headstones.

Kerbed headstones or borders are not permitted.

**h. Epitaphs**

Inscriptions must be simple and reverent and must be approved by the Council whose decision is final. Inscriptions should be incised or in relief and may be painted. Plastic or other inserted lettering is not permitted.

Additions may be made to an inscription at a later date following a subsequent interment in the same grave or for some other suitable reason. However, any such alteration must be separately approved. The lettering, layout and wording must be consistent with the original inscription.

**i. Trademarks**

No advertisement or trademark shall be inscribed on a headstone. The mason's name may be inscribed at the side or on the reverse in unleaded letters no larger than 13mm (½in) in height.

**j. Commemoration after cremation**

The Council has set aside an area in the burial ground for the purpose of scattering ashes. Ashes may be scattered, but only with the Council's permission due to the environmental impact on soil conditions (increased pH levels). A charge will be levied. Ashes after cremation may be interred in a plot size 600mm(24ins) x 600mm(24ins) in a site designated by the Council.

A ledger can be up to 540mm (21ins) x 540mm, with a plot number (in the bottom left-hand corner) but must be placed level with the ground. A headstone must not exceed 500mm (20 ins) x 500mm x 30mm depth. If the ashes are interred in a container, the container must be of perishable material.

**k. A temporary grave marker** or wooden cross, not exceeding 460mm (18 ins) in height and 300mm (12 ins) in width, may be placed immediately after any burial, including cremated remains, but must be removed after six months.

The Council reserves the right to remove these markers after this period has elapsed.