



**DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL  
REVISED BURIAL REGULATIONS  
FOR DOWNTON CEMETERY**

**Adopted April 2020**

**Amended March 2021**

**Including regulations to be adhered to  
during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The Parish Council has reviewed the Parish Burial Ground rules recently in the light of past and more recent practices to ensure that it is able to be maintained in an appropriate and decent manner.

The revised rules appear below and take effect from March 2021.

### **Parish Burial Ground Rules**

#### **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 The Burial Ground is normally open to the public between dawn and dusk each day.
- 1.2 The Burial Ground is administered by and is under the charge of the Clerk to Downton Parish Council whose Office is at West View, Slab Lane, Downton, SP5 3PS Tel: 01725 513874 Email: [clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk) Office Hours are 1000 – 1500, Monday to Friday (excluding Public and Bank Holidays).
- 1.3 Right of Interment: The following persons have a right of burial in Downton Cemetery:
  - a. A parishioner or inhabitant of the Parish.
  - b. Any person who owns Purchased Ground in the Cemetery.
  - c. Any parishioner who leaves the Parish to be admitted to a hospital or home or for some exceptional circumstances and who subsequently dies outside the Parish.
  - d. All other, at the discretion of the Parish Council, at **DOUBLE** the normal fees.
  - e. During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 any outside of parish burials, whether they be recorded as Covid-19 or not, so required by the local authority under Schedule 28 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 be charged a fee as if they complied with the sub-clause 1.3a of the Burial Regulations and in the same way as if they were a parishioner or inhabitant of the Parish.

The Parish Council shall be the sole judge of the right of burial under clauses c. and d. above.

- 1.4 Plans of the Burial Ground are kept at the Parish Office and may be seen during office hours identified in (1.2) above, without charge. A copy of the rules and regulations, table of fees etc. may also be obtained. All Burial Records are kept at the Parish Office and will be made available to individuals with an established interest who request information from the Clerk during normal office hours.
- 1.5 The allocation of all grave spaces and cremated remains plots is subject to agreement and the approval of the Clerk. Reservation allocation of grave spaces shall be subject to payment of fees applicable at the time of allocation and shall be in force for a period of fifty years once interment has taken place.

Further fees are payable at the prevailing rate upon an interment taking place in a reserved space.

- 1.6 The Council will maintain the Burial Ground in a good and decent order. The Council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrubs or trees within the Burial Ground at any time in order to maintain decent order.
- 1.7 Re-opening of Graves and Cremation Plots: Permission in writing from the surviving relative or executor must be submitted to the Parish Council when a grave is to be re-opened. There shall be no disturbance of any previous burial.
- 1.8 Vehicular access to the Cemetery is on the condition that they remain on the roadway. Under no circumstances may vehicles be driven onto other parts of the burial ground.
- 1.9 No dogs are allowed in the Cemetery except on a lead and must be prevented from defecating in the area.
- 1.10. The scattering of ashes is not permitted in the Cemetery.
- 1.11 Flowers Plants and Trees:
  - a. Fresh flowers or ONE spray of artificial flowers can be displayed. Once artificial flowers begin to deteriorate, they should be replaced with new. Failure to replace them will result in the Parish Council removing them from the plot.
  - b. When floral tributes are removed, they should be disposed of in the refuse bin provided at the Cemetery. All flowers should be removed when they have died. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove dead or tatty flowers.
  - c. Flowers can only be placed in memorial vases, secure vases within a kerbed grave or in an integral vase. Loose vases are not permitted. Glass and plastic vases are not permitted. In the cremated remains section of the cemetery, all additional vases should be placed on the adjacent cremation wall.
  - d. Trees are not permitted on any grave but permission may be given to put a memorial tree and plaque in certain areas of the Cemetery.
  - e. Where kerbing is permitted, personal planting within the dimension of the full kerb set is not permitted.

## **2. BURIALS**

- 2.1 No burial shall take place, or any memorial placed relating thereto, without the prior permission of the Clerk to the Parish Council.
- 2.2 In every case a minimum of 48 hours' notice shall be given at the office, confirmed in writing within 24 hours, excluding weekends, Public and Bank Holidays. The only exceptions to this rule are in cases of epidemic diseases and where extraordinary circumstances prevail.

- 2.3 Every notice of interment shall be on the form provided or otherwise agreed by the Council and must contain a full and true statement of the particulars required and be signed by the applicant. All fees and charges shall be paid at the time of giving notice unless agreed by the Council. Upon completion the applicant will receive a signed copy of approval and a set of Burial Regulations.
- 2.4 Orders or instructions received by telephone shall be confirmed in writing within twenty four hours. The Council will not accept responsibility for loss of any remittances or instructions forwarded by post.
- 2.5 The Registrar's or Coroner's Certificate for the disposal shall be sent to the officer prior to or immediate after the funeral has taken place.
- 2.6 Coffins: The Deceased must be placed in a properly constructed coffin or eco-friendly coffin as agreed by the relevant funeral director before burial will be allowed to take place.
- 2.7 Digging and Reinstatement of Graves: It will be the responsibility of the appointed Funeral Director to arrange the digging of graves and cremation plots. A body shall not be interred in a grave in such a manner that any part of the coffin is at a depth less than three feet below the level of the surface of the ground of the grave space, nor shall the cremated remains of a body be interred in a grave in such a manner that any part of the casket is at a depth less than one foot below the level of the ground of the grave space. The minimum depth of a grave shall be four feet six inches for one interment and six feet for two interments.

Reinstatement must be to the satisfaction of the Parish Council. Turf is to be lifted carefully and stacked, and topsoil is to be piled. On reinstatement subsoil is to be compacted as firmly as possible with topsoil and turf replaced so that the finished result is a level lawned burial ground after settlement.

A small mound of earth may be left immediately after the interment. It is the responsibility of the Funeral Director to monitor the soil levels after burial and within six months of the interment, the grave must be levelled with the surrounding turf and, if necessary, relawned.

- 2.8 Conveyance and Removal of Materials:
  - a. All tools and equipment required for the digging, erection, reinstatement of graves or memorials shall be conveyed in the Burial Ground in such a manner as to cause minimal damage.
  - b. Care must be taken to avoid any damage to roads or grassed areas in the Burial Ground.
  - c. Equipment and materials must be removed from the burial ground immediately on the completion of work and at no expense to the Council. Spoil may be spread in an area allocated by the Parish Council at the back of the cemetery and out of sight of all visitors.

Surplus spoil is to be removed from the Cemetery by the grave digger and no spoil is to be deposited on an adjacent grave or plot at any time. The Funeral Director is to ensure that the grave digger has the necessary licence to remove and transport waste soil on the highway and safe disposal of the same. If sub-contractor labour is used the Funeral Director is responsible for checking his paperwork is in order. Funeral Directors please instruct gravediggers to pay particular attention to the backfilling of graves after interment to prevent early sinking.

- d. If after receiving seven days' notice in writing from the Parish Clerk, the person responsible for removing equipment, materials and spoil fails to comply with this regulation the Parish Council will clear the site, the cost of such clearance being passed to the person originally responsible.

### **3. MEMORIALS (Burials)**

- 3.1 Before the erection of any memorial or other work relating to a burial plot, an application must be made to the Council on the appropriate form provided or otherwise agreed by the Council. This application must include a drawing/sketch with measurements and nature of the proposed memorial, along with full details of proposed inscription. Subject to approval and on payment of the appropriate fees, authorisation will be granted. No memorial may be erected or inscription made unless approved by the Clerk to the Parish Council.
- 3.2 All Stone Memorials shall be constructed of good quality stone with all fixings made in accordance with recognised trade standards (Recommendations of the National Association of Monumental Masons or equivalent) and shall be stabilised using the recommended underground fixing. Headstones shall be erected vertically on the outer edge of the plot at the head of the grave and shall not exceed 3 feet(900mm) in height measured from the ground nor 2 feet (600mm) in width, nor 12inches (300mm) in thickness and shall be in positions approved by the Clerk.
- 3.3 For all other materials, please seek written approval from the Clerk to the Parish Council.
- 3.4 Vases and flower containers must be part of the memorial. Containers may be placed on the grave during the first six months following interment pending the erection of a permanent memorial. Glass, China, Plastic Jars or Bottles are not allowed. Any such item may be removed at the discretion of the Parish Council.
- 3.5 **Flowers and shrubs must not be planted on graves. Only the planting of crocuses and snowdrops is permitted in the grass within 30cm of the headstone. The Council will remove any shrubs, plants or flowers that have been planted in the vicinity of burial plots and the cremated remains area of the Burial Ground. This is to facilitate proper and effective maintenance of the burial ground.**

- 3.6 The name of a mason and grave space number only may be inscribed low down at the side or on the reverse of a headstone in unpainted and unleaded not more than ½ inch in height.
- 3.7 The applicant or family of the deceased is responsible for the care of the memorial. The Parish Council cannot accept liability for any damage unless it is caused by its employees or contractors carrying out maintenance work.
- 3.8 Any memorial which is found to be loose must be secured to provide stability. It is the responsibility of the owner to arrange for this to be done. An application to re-fix a memorial must be made to the Council and work undertaken by a BRAMM registered stone mason.
- 3.9 Where a memorial has deteriorated, the Parish Council will attempt to contact the applicant or surviving family by posting a notice or sending a letter to the last known address of the owner in order that repairs can be carried out. Should this not be possible or the relatives fail to act in a reasonable time (six months) then the Parish Council may remove any such memorials without further notice.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take any such action as may be deemed appropriate in cases of neglected or vandalised memorials which in particular (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) have become a danger to the public and the cost of such action may be sought from the family or legal representatives.

- 3.10 All persons erecting headstones or memorials must use such means as to protect the grass as directed by the Clerk or her nominated representative and shall be responsible for the clearing of the site following erection of the same including surplus materials.
- 3.11 No grave shall be raised by the use of turf, or any other means, above the level of the ground in the immediate vicinity.

### **Kerbstones**

3.111) All occupied graves prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 will be allowed to retain their existing kerbs, headstones etc and to have kerbstones added or changed within prescribed constraints outlined below.

3.112) All plots reserved will be allowed to have kerbs added, within prescribed constraints outlined below.

3.113) Only full kerb sets approved by the Parish Council are allowed and must be erected by a qualified memorial mason. Borders or fencing of any other kind are not allowed.

3.114) After 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 all future plot reservations will be subject to the regulation without exception, and with the signed agreement that the person(s) arranging the burial have had sight of the burial regulations, that no

grave shall be raised by the use of turf, kerbstone or any other means, above the level of ground in the immediate vicinity, etc. as stated in point 3.11

The design and materials of kerbing and raised covers will be subject to approval by the Council.

The overall dimensions of kerbing, any cover and memorial shall be as follows:-

Type of Grave on which memorial is placed	Length x width x maximum height
Adult grave	1950 x 750 x 900 (6'6" x 2'6" x 3')
Child grave	On application

Kerbing and raised covers must be mounted on an overall concrete foundation.

The space within the kerbing may be covered with shingle or other loose material, provided that this is properly protected and contained by the kerbing. Alternatively a raised cover may be fitted.

Containers for flowers must be placed wholly within the area defined by the kerbing and will not be allowed within the kerbing or on corners. Planting is not permitted within the kerbed area.

#### **4. INTERMENT OF CREMATED REMAINS**

- 4.1 No burial of cremated remains shall take place, or any memorial placed relating thereto without the prior permission of the Clerk to the Parish Council. All excavations for the interment of cremated remains shall be undertaken only by persons approved by the Council.
- 4.2 The Council will grant to any person the exclusive right of burial in a Cremation Plot on a section specially designated for the interment of cremated remains for a period of fifty years.
- 4.3 Cremation Plots shall not exceed 300mm by 450mm (12" x 18").
- 4.4 Cremated remains may not be interred 'loose' but in urns and caskets of a suitable design and construction which may be biodegradable.

#### **5. MEMORIALS (Cremated Remains)**

- 5.1 A memorial tablet of a good quality natural stone material not exceeding 300mm x 450mm (12" x 18") with an inscription previously approved by the Clerk may be placed on the plot at ground level, in accordance with NAMM recommendations or equivalent. Nothing other than the memorial tablet may be placed on the ground in the vicinity of the plot.

- 5.2 Where no approved memorial tablet has been placed, no other type of memorial will be permitted.
- 5.3 Only sunken flower containers incorporated in a plaque are permitted. Raised, loose or fixed holders are prohibited. All additional vases should be placed on the adjacent cremation wall. No glass bowls or jars will be permitted. No chippings or borders or shuttering will be permitted on the grassed area of the Cremation Plot. All other containers and material will be removed and disposed of by the Council.**
- 6.0 Health & Safety at Burials under HM Government Lockdown for Covid-19**
- 6.1 Funeral directors shall inform the Council if the deceased is a recorded Covid-19 death.**
- 6.2 In order to reduce any transmission of the virus, attendance at any interment must comply with all ICCM Guidance for Covid-19 and be limited to a maximum of 10 people consisting of immediate family observing social distancing requirements.**
- 6.3 All paperwork relating to the deceased and interment must be sent in advance to the Clerk by email and all payments must be made by BACS transfer and not sent by post in the form of a cheque.**

Downton Parish Council reserves the power to make alterations from time to time to these burial rules and regulations.