



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

Cemetery Regulations

- 1. The dignity and calm of the cemetery should be respected at all times.**
- 2. Unattended children, together with such activities as ball games, riding bicycles and playing music / media, are prohibited and dogs must be kept on a lead at all times.**
- 3. Opening Hours**
 - 3.1 The cemetery will be open for pedestrian access at all times. Gillingham Town Council (The Town Council) reserves the right to make such closures as may be necessary for repairs, emergencies or in the interests of public safety at any time.
 - 3.2 The chapel may, at the Town Council's discretion, be opened on request during normal working hours to provide shelter and a place for quiet contemplation for visitors to the cemetery.
- 4. Burial Register**
 - 4.1 The Town Council holds a register of all burials. Searches may be made but a charge will apply.
- 5. Interments**
 - 5.1 The hours of interment will be between 9.00 am and 3.30 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00 am to 3.00pm Fridays. No interment will take place at weekends or public holidays, although Saturday interments may be permitted at the discretion of the Town Council.
 - 5.2 No interment shall take place and no cremated human remains shall be scattered without the permission of the Town Council. Notice of an interment must be given at least 3 working days prior to any interment to the Town Council.
 - 5.3 Preparation and digging for interments (excluding cremated remains) must comply with the Town Council's grave Digging Policy.
- 6. Exclusive Right of Burial**
 - 6.1 For the purpose of this document the term grave space refers to the land prior to a burial. Once a burial has taken place it becomes a grave.
 - 6.2 The Exclusive Right of Burial entitles the current owner to determine who is buried in the grave and whether a memorial can be erected on the grave (subject to approval and payment of relevant fees).

- 6.3 No new grave spaces are available to purchase at Gillingham Cemetery except for the interment of ashes. A grave space for ashes interments cannot be purchased prior to the date of death. On payment of the appropriate fee and completion of the relevant form including the signature of the proposed owner, the right is granted for a period of ninety-nine years and the Town Council shall provide the purchaser with an exclusive right of burial deed as proof of ownership.
- 6.4 The owner of an Exclusive Right of Burial can surrender the Exclusive Right of Burial, if the grave has not been used for burial, on completion of a Surrender of Right of Burial form and the return of the original Deed of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. Upon surrender the owner shall be entitled to a refund as specified on the original deed of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

7. Memorials and Inscriptions

- 7.1 **No tombstone or other memorial shall be placed in the Cemetery, and no additional inscription shall be made on any memorial without permission of the Town Council.** Memorials must be installed in accordance with the current National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Guidelines
- 7.2 Memorials are only permitted on graves where the Grant of Exclusive Rights of Burial has been purchased.
- 7.3 The memorial application form should be submitted to the Town Clerk with a plan showing the proposal. Applications for kerbstones will be considered by the Town Clerk taking into consideration neighbouring graves and future access requirements. If the request is considered to be unacceptable by the Town Clerk, then the request will be referred to the appropriate committee of Gillingham Town Council whose decision shall be final.
- 7.4 The right to erect and maintain a memorial on a grave will be granted for a period of 30 years from the date the memorial application is approved by the Town Council. This period can be extended upon application to The Town Council by the owner (grantee) and following a satisfactory inspection of the memorial by the Town Council. The Town Council may authorise removal of memorials from graves, where this has expired, if the memorial has fallen into disrepair and become dangerous, defective or illegible as stated in 7.10.
- 7.5 No kerb surround/edging will exceed 762 mm in width and 2100mm in overall length (2'6" x 7') The materials used must be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the headstone.
- 7.6 Stone chippings are only permitted on graves within approved kerbing.
- 7.7 Memorials must not exceed Width 490mm x Length 490mm x Height 305mm on a cremated remains plot. Headstones and kerbstones are not permitted.
- 7.8 **The following are strictly NOT allowed: railings, footstones, chains, fencing or other structures enclosing graves or parts of graves and will be removed from the grave by Town Council staff.**
- 7.9 To comply with health and safety regulations, **no glass is permitted in the Cemetery** and will be removed by the Town Council.
- 7.10 It is the responsibility of the grave owner to maintain the memorial in a good state of repair. The town council staff carry out an inspection program, checking the condition of every memorial, which may result in unsafe memorials being laid flat to prevent damage or injury. In the event of any such memorial becoming dangerous, defective or illegible, the Town Council may, in

accordance with the powers and procedures set out in Article 16(2) and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977, give notice to the owner (grantee), by way of notices on defective graves, requiring him/her to repair or remove any such memorial. If, after the expiration of the notice, the owner (grantee) has failed to repair or remove any such defective or dangerous memorial, or if the Town Council is unable to trace the owner after taking such reasonable steps as it may consider necessary for that purpose, then the Town Council will take appropriate action to make safe and tidy.

- 7.11 It is the responsibility of the owner to inform the Town Council of any change of address in order that contact can be maintained. Failure to do so may result in the Town Council removing a memorial if it fails a health and safety inspection.

8. Floral Tributes/Trees and Shrubs

- 8.1 Graves will be tidied, floral tributes, whether real or artificial, will be removed when dead or unsightly by town council staff at the discretion of the Town Council.
- 8.2 Planting of trees, shrubs, bulbs or any other vegetation is not permitted on any grave, and the Town Council reserve the right to remove any that have been planted without notice to the owner.
- 8.3 The Town Council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrubs, plants or trees at any time when, in the opinion of the Town Council, they have become unsightly or overgrown.

9. Seats/Benches

- 9.1 **No seat or bench shall be placed in the Cemetery without the permission of the Town Council.** Applications for authority to locate a seat or bench should be submitted to Gillingham Town Council.
- 9.2 To comply with health and safety regulations, seats may be placed in the Cemetery by Gillingham Town Council within designated areas and must not be moved without the permission of the Town Council.

10. Fees and Charges

- 10.1 All fees and charges must be paid to the Town Council at the time of giving notice of the interment/erection of memorial etc. cheques should be made payable to Gillingham Town Council.
- 10.2 The fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis and any changes recorded in the minutes for the meeting.
- 10.3 Copies of amended fees will be sent to each Funeral Director, following revision, and will also be displayed at the reception desk at the Town Hall, on the cemetery notice board and published on the Town Council's Web Site.

11. Removal of Remains

- 11.1 Human remains shall not be removed, except by the Exhumation Order from the Department of the Environment, or other appropriate Statutory Authority.

12. Search of Burial Records

- 12.1 The Town Council is able to carry out searches of burial records and graves by appointment (charges may apply). To make an appointment please contact The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham SP8 4QR, Tel: 01747 823588 or email: GTC@gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

13. Disclaimer

The Town Council cannot be held responsible for any damage to any memorial or any personal property taken into the Cemetery. The Town Council will not be liable for damage to any memorial in the Cemetery caused by storm, wind, subsidence or by any other cause.

If any damage is caused to the Town Council's land or premises by bringing in any materials, gravestones, or monument or from any other cause, the person or persons doing such damage will be held responsible for the same and the Town Council may recover the cost of repairing such damage from such person or persons and in addition take proceedings under Article 18 of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977.

The Town Council reserves the right to make alterations to these regulations.

The Town Council is committed to protecting and respecting the privacy of everyone and ensuring it is fully compliant under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. We process your personal data in accordance with the law, please see the privacy notice on our website which provides more details on the processing of data.

14. Review

The Cemetery Regulations were reviewed by the Allotments and Burials Working Party adopted by the Full Council on 26th February 2024 minutes no 1273.

Future reviews will be carried out biannually.