

## **GD16 – CEMETERY POLICY**

### **MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CEMETERY**

This policy applies to Bryhyfryd Cemetery which is owned and maintained by Newport Town Council.

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 gives burial authorities statutory powers to set fees for carrying out burials, granting 'Exclusive Right of Burial' and for the right to place and maintain a memorial on a grave. Such fees may be used by the council to cover the day to day management and administration of the cemeteries.
- 1.2 This Council recognises and fully accepts its duties under the above law to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, that the cemetery in its ownership are maintained to the highest standard and that they are safe and pleasant place for members of the public visiting graves or attending funerals.

#### **2.0 THE POLICY**

- 2.1 All land within the cemetery boundary is owned by Newport Town Council. It is managed, maintained and regulated in order that it benefits all those who make use of it. All work of any kind carried out on memorials and maintenance of the grounds is carried out by the Council and their approved contractors, subject to current legislation and in accordance with any regulations made by the Council.
- 2.2 Ownership of 'Exclusive Right of Burial' means that you have the sole right to request that your grave is opened for burial or that a memorial or additional inscription is placed on a grave. It does not mean that you own the land in which the grave is situated. No other person may request opening of the grave for burial without the owner's permission and following the death of the owner, the law allows that his or her representative may authorise the burial of the owner to take place in the grave. However, no further burial may then take place in the grave without transfer of the 'Exclusive right of Burial' to another appropriate person by completion of a Deed of Assignment.
- 2.3 To facilitate maintenance and to keep the cemetery looking its best for all to appreciate, it is Council's intention to maintain all areas of new graves as lawns. Lawned cemeteries are designed to permit a higher standard of maintenance than was previously possible and to provide ease of access for members of the public. It is also essential that grave diggers and memorial masons can have access to carry out their work. Council has statutory powers to remove any memorial placed on a grave without authorisation and to obtain recompense for their costs from the person or firm of masons who placed it there.

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- 2.4 To maintain access for all, kerb stones, vases, fencing, plants, gravel chippings or other memorials covering the full length of the grave are not permitted. Placing obstacles such as these on the grass hinders maintenance and grave digging operations and may deny access, trip up or injure members of the public, particularly those with poor sight or mobility problems when they attend a funeral or visit a grave to lay flowers.
- 2.5 Once the grave has been turved over or seeded, any flower containers and pots must be kept adjacent to the headstone or where there is no headstone at the end of the grave in line with other headstones.
- 2.6 The erection of a memorial measuring more than 12" x 12" x 12" cannot be carried out unless a memorial permit has been applied for by the memorial mason and the mason must obtain the permission of the registered owner of 'Exclusive Right of Burial' in the grave in writing. Height of memorials must not exceed 36" and width 30". The only areas of the cemetery where full length memorials are permitted are the older sections where such memorials are already in place.
- 2.7 It is the responsibility of the owner to carry out repairs to any memorial and to ensure it is maintained in a safe condition. Over time, memorials may become unstable because of subsidence, weathering or failure of materials. It is important that you arrange for your memorial to be checked by a memorial mason every few years.
- 2.8 The Council will test all memorials to assess their stability from time to time and although memorials are the owner's responsibility, the Council has a duty of care to maintain a safe environment for members of the public and for its own staff. A measured force will be used to test for stability in line with national guidelines and the Council is empowered to take action to neutralise any immediate danger created by a memorial without seeking the owner's consent.
- 2.9 This will normally mean providing temporary support, but may involve laying a memorial down in extreme circumstances. A letter will be sent to the address you have given us to inform you of any action we have taken and to request that you contact your memorial mason to re-fix to current standards. It is important that this Council is informed of any change of name or address, as contact may need to be made if a memorial requires attention. It is recommended that grave owners take out insurance against accidental damage to memorials. This is relatively inexpensive and is available from monumental masons.
- 2.10 All new memorials must now use a nationally approved fixing system which is designed to ensure the long-term stability of memorials. This special foundation must also be used when memorials are removed and replaced to carry out repairs or an additional inscription.
- 2.11 This Council will respond to any complaints regarding grounds maintenance or general cemetery matters, investigating and/or inspecting the concerns.
- 2.12 Between 1st April and 31st October all grassed areas will be cut and maintained as necessary to keep them in good condition as and when weather conditions allow. Bins are supplied in all cemeteries and are emptied on a regular basis. Regular inspections take place to ensure the above standards are maintained.

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- 2.13 It is the policy of Newport Town Council to set its burial fees in-line with those of Pembrokeshire County Council. Current fees can be obtained from the web site or the Clerk to Newport Town Council.
- 2.14 Resident discount applies to permanent inhabitants of Newport and non-residents where it can be shown they were resident for two years or more before their death.
- 2.15 There will be no further charge for additional burials in the same plot.

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