

HORDEN PARISH COUNCIL, THORPE ROAD CEMETERY

Rules of Management and Cemetery Guidance

Horden Parish Council has prepared this leaflet as a brief guide to all aspects of burial services at Thorpe Road Cemetery, Horden, County Durham.

If you require any further information, please contact

The Cemetery Office
Chapel of Rest
Thorpe Road
Horden, Peterlee
County Durham SR8 4TP

Telephone 0191 5863870

Cemetery office hours

Monday – Thursday 8:00am – 4:30 pm (April – September) 3.30pm (October – March)

Friday 8:00am – 4:30 pm (April – September) 2.30pm (October – March)

GENERAL REGULATIONS WHICH APPLY

Access Time

1. The Cemetery Grounds will be opened to the public at the following times:
8:00 am to dusk (including public holidays)
2. The Council may temporarily close the whole or part of the Cemetery Grounds as often as, in opinion of the Council, such closure is necessary.
3. Vehicular access shall be allowed only during office hours by prior arrangement with staff. Please telephone 07770793561 to make arrangements.

Conduct in the Cemetery

Whilst in the Cemetery all persons shall comply with any directions given by the Parks & Cemetery Manager or staff.

Children under fourteen years of age are not allowed in the Cemetery Grounds unless accompanied by an adult.

Any person who shall willfully destroy or damage any building or climb any wall or fence belonging to the Burial Ground, or destroy or damage any tree or plant therein, or who shall daub or disfigure any wall thereof, or wilfully destroy, damage or deface any headstone or inscription etc, or do any other willful damage, play at any sport, discharge firearms (save at Military Funerals) in the grounds, or willfully or unlawfully disturb any persons assembled therein for the purpose of burying any body, or commit any nuisance therein whatsoever, is liable to prosecution under "The Criminal Damages Act 1971".

No person shall enter or remain there (Cemetery) when it is closed to the public.

No dogs, except special assistance dogs may be taken into or allowed to enter the cemetery.

Any person who contravenes these regulations may be required to leave the Cemetery Grounds and may be excluded from readmission for such period as the Council may determine. In the case of funeral directors or stonemasons the exclusion may extend to their employees in connection with any work or duty within the Cemetery.

Fees and Charges

Fees and charges are reviewed annually with an implementation date of revised fees being 1st April each year. Copies of current fees are available from the Cemetery Office or directly from Horden Parish Council

All fees and charges must be paid in advance at the Cemetery office, except where special arrangements are made.

BURIAL SERVICES

Most burial services take place in a local church with the cortege proceeding to the cemetery for a brief grave service; however, the cemetery has facilities for services at an extra cost in the cemetery chapel. The chapel also has facilities, in having rest rooms for which a charge is made.

Burial arrangements

At least two complete days notice (not counting Saturday, Sunday or public holidays) of any proposed interment must be given at the Cemetery Office in writing on the form prescribed by the Council.

No burial will be allowed to take place unless the appropriate registrar or coroners disposal certificate has first been given to the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

In respect of burials in a public grave the written consent of the nearest surviving relative of the deceased or the person legally responsible for the burial, to the burial taking place in such a grave must be submitted with the notice of the interment.

Interments shall normally take place during the following hours:

Monday-Thursday	9:30 am – 3:30 pm (summer) 2.30pm (winter)
Friday	9:30 am – 2:30 pm (summer) 1.30pm (winter)
Saturday	9:30 am – 1:30 pm(at an additional cost)

Interments at other times may be permitted at the discretion of the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

The time stated in the notice of interment is the latest time at which the funeral cortege should arrive at the Cemetery. An additional fee may be charged in respect of the cortege which arrives after the appointed time. If a cortege arrives early at the Cemetery it maybe required to wait until the appointed time.

The person arranging the funeral must supply sufficient bearers to convey the coffin from the hearse to the graveside.

Where the exclusive right of burial in a grave space has been purchased no grave will be opened for an interment, or the burial or scattering of cremated remains, without the written consent of the owner of the right.

If the owner is deceased an indemnity in the form prescribed by the Council must be completed by the assignee of the right or the personal representatives of the deceased.

Horden Parish Council does not enable members of the public to reserve plot spaces prior to interment. This has enabled the cemetery to remain open for a longer period of time and allows for burials as and when they are required.

Acceptance of Interment

The body of any deceased person will not be accepted for interment unless it is enclosed within a coffin, casket or container of a type and style approved by the Council.

The name of the deceased must be suitably inscribed on the coffin casket or container.

A coffin, casket or container or any part thereof, shall not be removed from the Cemetery after a body has been conveyed there for burial.

INTERMENT FEE

The fee includes all labour charges and the use of grass mats.

Fees will be increased for burials outside of normal working hours (Saturday morning for example) or for people residing outside the Parish of Horden.

TYPE OF GRAVE

The following types of graves are available for purchase:

Lawn graves

There are special regulations for lawn graves in which the grave is turfed and maintained wholly by the council, no plants are allowed, unauthorized items may be removed without notice.

Graves are sold in rotation and choice is at the discretion of the Parks & Cemetery Manager and limited to a row in which graves are currently being prepared.

The exclusive right of burial is sold for a period of 100 years. Graves can be dug to hold up to three interments, subject to prevailing ground conditions and discretion of the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

The grave surface will be turfed flat with an area for the memorial to be erected (note graves must be purchased for a memorial to be erected), no earth mound will be permitted and no flowers, shrubs, plants or trees will be allowed. The turfed area of the grave must not be cut to form a flower bed.

The council may remove without notice any item which has been placed on the grave in contravention of these regulations.

The turfed area shall be maintained solely by the council.

Traditional graves

This type of grave can be planted and maintained by the council on payment of an annual fee by relatives. The rules on the right of burial and number of interments are the same as for lawn graves, kerb stones are permitted at the headstone but must not be more than 18" out from the face of the headstone and not more than the width of the grave, and all must be laid in accordance with the rules on memorial specification. No items shall be allowed to be placed more than 18" from the face of the headstone.

Children's graves

Children's graves are available for sole interment. The size of the coffin is limited to four feet.

Public Graves

Also known as common graves, these are for people who for whatever reason do not require a right of burial. These graves are communal, meaning that people may already be buried in them or buried in the future.

A common grave is not used for 15 years after a particular burial, so that relatives of the deceased may be buried in the grave. No memorials can be erected on common graves. The rules do not allow vases be placed at the head of the grave.

The grave surface will be turfed flat, no earth mound will be permitted and no flowers, shrubs, plants or trees will be allowed. The turfed area of the grave must not be cut to form a flower bed. The council may remove without notice any item which has been placed on the grave in contravention of these regulations.

The turfed area shall be maintained solely by the council.

Selection and purchase of Graves

The selection of Grave spaces is subject to the approval of the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

No purchaser of the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave shall convey, assign, or transfer such a right without the written consent of the Council.

The Council may on request agree to re-purchasing from the owner the exclusive right of burial in respect of any grave space in which no interment has taken place, or where all the remains have been removed and no cremated remains have been scattered thereon.

Upon repurchase by the council a deed of surrender by the registered owner and the original deed of grant should be handed to the council, the council will pay the registered owner one half the current price for that particular class.

Works

All graves will be dug by a council employee.

The depth of a grave shall be determined by the council, not more than two adult bodies may be buried in any grave space.

BURIALS FOR SPECIFIC REGULATIONS/DENOMINATIONS

The cemetery caters for the burials of the above.

BURIAL OR SCATTERING OF CREMATED REMAINS

The cemetery has a section for the burial of ashes caskets or urns. Memorials rules apply as to traditional graves. Cremated remains can also be buried in a full grave if the owner of the right of burial gives their authority; this also applies to the scattering of remains on a grave.

REGULATIONS RELATING TO CEMETERY RECORDS

Plans of the Cemetery showing the various sections and individual grave space, together with the burial registers are kept at the Cemetery Office and are available for inspection upon arrangement during normal office hours.

No interment shall take place in the Chapel nor in any other part of the Cemetery except in a space marked on the plans.

GRAVE MAINTENANCE

The cemetery operates a grave planting scheme in which a grave will be planted out twice a year (in May and October), with plants in summer and bulbs in winter, for which an annual fee is payable. Please note, this is not applicable for graves on the lawn section.

The Council will not be responsible for the loss of or damage to any items placed upon graves.

Any item deemed by the Council to be distasteful shall be removed.

MEMORIALS

Temporary Memorials

There is also an option to purchase temporary grave memorials (for a small fee), which are designed to be placed on new graves immediately after the burial, these provide a tasteful way of personalizing a new grave until a permanent memorial can be obtained.

These memorials are subject to the approval of the Parks & Cemetery Manager and no work shall be carried out before the approval is issued.

Temporary memorials are designed to be placed on new graves immediately after burial. These will be removed by the cemetery staff after a period of 12 months (no exceptions are made). Thus allowing time for the purchase of a permanent Memorial.

Permanent Memorials

All memorials and inscriptions are subject to the approval of the Parks & Cemetery Manager and no work shall be carried out before the approval is issued.

- a) An application on the prescribed form signed by the grave owner and the person who is to carry out the work.
- b) A drawing of the memorial and any kerbs showing its dimensions and foundations.
- c) A copy of all inscriptions to be placed on the memorial.

- d) If the inscription is in a language other than English a translation in English verified and signed by a responsible person who speaks the other language.
- e) The appropriate fee

At least one working days notice must be given to the Parks & Cemetery Manager before any monumental work is carried out.

Any memorial erected in contravention of these regulations may be removed and the cost of removal charged to the person who erected it.

Monumental work will only be allowed during normal working hours.

Mats, boards or other suitable protective materials for grass, plants and other memorials must be used at all times whilst the monumental work is undertaken. The site of work must be left in a clean and tidy state and all surplus materials and refuse must be removed at the end of each working day and immediately upon the completion of the works.

No memorial or any part thereof shall be removed from the cemetery except with the approval of the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

Memorial masons must be properly insured for undertaking any work in a cemetery.

Any memorial erected on a grave must be kept in good order, repair and condition by the owner.

When a monument falls into disrepair and the owner cannot be traced, or after notice fails to repair the memorial, the council may carry out all necessary repairs and may recover the cost thereof from the owner. The council may refuse to permit further interments in such a grave until the cost of carrying out the works has been paid.

There are rules about the size and materials used for memorials. Please see the section on memorial specification for details. You must have the council's permission for a new memorial or any work on an existing one. Normally, a stonemason will deal with this by completing an application form signed by the owner of the grave, detailing the work they intend to do. There is a fee for erecting a memorial or adding an inscription.

Memorial Specifications

All stonemasons carrying out memorial work in the council cemetery must adhere to code of working practice issued by the National Association of Memorial Masons.

Vaults, Walled graves and flat stones are not permitted in the cemetery.

All memorials must be constructed of stone. Any other material, including artificial, is not permitted and may be removed by the council.

No memorial or foundation will be permitted which:

1. exceed 3ft. 6 ins in height
2. is less than 3 inches thick
3. exceed the width of the grave

All memorials must be supported by such foundations as the Parks & Cemetery Manager considers necessary. All foundations shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

All headstones must be doweled to the foundation slab and be supported on a minimum of six inches (150mm) of concrete.

The name of the monumental mason may be inscribed at the bottom left hand side of the rear of the memorial provided that the lettering is not more than half an inch (15mm) in height. No other lettering or verses shall appear on the rear of a memorial unless approved prior to inscription by the Parks and Cemetery Manager.

Kerb stones are permitted at the headstone but not more than 18 inches out from the face of the headstone, and not more than the width of the grave, not more than 6 inches in height and must be laid to the satisfaction of the Parks & Cemetery Manager. Any other materials other than stone, e.g. plastic fencing, wooden items etc. are not allowed. Any kerb stone erected without permission or in contravention of these regulations may be removed and the cost of removal charged to the person who erected it.

Flower holders

Vases and flower holders may be placed on purchased graves without the Parks & Cemetery Manager's specific approval subject to the following conditions.

1. The holder must be placed at the head of the grave as not to impede grass cutting.
2. The holder must not be made of glass or pottery.
3. Other than those built into the headstone, must not be affixed to the grave or any memorial thereon.
4. The holder is placed on the grave at the owners risk and the council will not be liable in the event of its loss or damage howsoever caused.
5. Any vase or flower holder, not complying with the councils conditions will be treated as any other memorial for the purpose of the regulations.

It is suggested that the grave numbers should be marked on the base of any flower holder so that if it is displaced it can be repositioned on the correct grave.

Solar Lights

Solar lights may be placed on purchased graves without the Parks & Cemetery Manager's specific approval subject to the following conditions.

1. Solar lights shall be no higher than headstone (max. 42 inches).
2. Where there is a kerb, solar lights must be contained within the 18 inch space allowed.
3. Where there is no kerb any solar light shall be immediately in front of the headstone.
4. A maximum of 2 lights shall be allowed on any grave.
5. The colour of solar lights to be restricted to blue/white.

No other lights of any type shall be allowed on any grave within the cemetery, any lights not in compliance with the regulations shall be removed by Parish Council staff without notice.

MAINTAINING MEMORIALS

Grave owners are responsible for maintaining and repairing any damage to memorials and it is advisable to take out insurance against accidental damage or vandalism.

A stonemason should be able to advise you about this.

It is important for owners of graves to notify the Parks & Cemetery Manager of any change of address, so that these matters can be dealt with as quickly as possible.

If a memorial becomes dangerous, the council will write to the owner of the grave at the last known address. If the repairs are not carried out in a reasonable time, the council may have to take one of the following courses of action:

1. Remove and store the memorial
2. Dismantle the memorial, lay the headstone flush with the ground, for a maximum of 30 days.
3. Remove and dispose of the memorial, if it is beyond repair.

Memorials are surveyed for safety regularly. If a memorial is found to be in a dangerous condition, it will be made safe immediately. The cost of this work may be charged to the owner of the grave, who in any case will be contacted if possible.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL – REGISTRATION AND TRANSFER

Please note this section contains important information; please read it carefully.

Horden Parish Council's cemetery is managed under the terms and conditions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, which states:

While an exclusive right of burial exists, nobody can be buried or cremated, remains buried in or scattered on the grave, without the written consent of the owner of the right.

The prohibition does not apply to the body of the owner of the right, or to the body of any person specified in the deed of grant, or in an endorsement made at the request of the owner of the right by the appropriate office of the burial authority.

This means that it is essential to get the written consent of the registered owner when it is planned to re-open a grave for a burial or the burial or scattering of cremated remains.

Similarly, when the owner of the right of burial dies, it is important the ownership is transferred, to ensure there are no problems when the grave is used in the future. To transfer ownership, the probate of the deceased person's Will, or later of administration of estate should be produced to the Parks & Cemetery Manager.

It is also important to inform the council of any change of address so that the owner can be contacted about any problems – such as vandalism to a memorial, or when the exclusive right of burial is due for renewal.

The owner of a grave can specify in writing who is to be buried there. If the owner gives their permission in advance, the authority remains valid after their death, provided ownership has not been transferred. Alternatively the ownership of the right of burial can be in joint names. (Those of a husband and wife for example)

The exclusive right of burial is sold for a specific period of 100 years, it can be renewed at a fee determined at the time, Failure to renew the right after a certain time may result in the memorial being removed and the grave being re-sold. If this occurs, any remains in the grave will not be disturbed.

This does not apply to graves which are dug for one interment.

Renewal of exclusive right of burial

When the period of exclusive right of burial in a grave expires, the next of kin should let the Parks & Cemetery Manager know so that a new right of burial can be completed, with the fee being determined at the date of completion on the new right of burial.

APPENDIX

Policy for Acceptance of Interment

Horden Parish Council by resolution at a meeting held on 7th March 2003 introduced a regulation to amend the Rules of Management of Thorpe Road Cemetery, Horden in relation to the acceptance of interment. This policy was amended on 10th May 2007.

Horden Parish Council shall from 10th May 2007 accept for interment only those deceased persons who are:-

a) Residents of the Parish of Horden.

- (i) and have lived within the Parish boundaries within the past 12 months.
- (ii) In the case of a stillborn child, they shall be deemed to have been resident of the Parish if one of their parents lives within the Parish.
- (iii) For serving members of HM Forces resident at the time of death in temporary quarters outside of Horden, but whose parents are resident within the Parish of Horden.

b) Non-residents of Horden who have,

- (i) Resided within the Parish of Horden for a minimum of 12 months within the previous 10 year period.
- (ii) Have an immediate blood relative already buried within the Cemetery. (An immediate blood relative shall be Mother, Father, Brother, Sister or Child grandparent or grandchild.)
- (iii) Husband, wife or civil partner already buried within the Cemetery.

This policy shall not affect those reserved plots which were purchased prior to 7th March 2003.

It shall be the responsibility of the person(s) making burials arrangements to prove compliance with this regulation by completing the necessary forms available from the Parks & Cemetery Manager.