

**Adopted July 2018  
Review due July 2019**



**THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
**THETFORD BURIAL GROUND, LONDON ROAD, THETFORD**

These rules apply to all plots but where rules vary according to the type of plot this will be clearly indicated.

### **Introduction**

**The Council seek to provide a peaceful and tranquil area for final resting and while we endeavour to observe the choices of all we require some regulations to ensure that we keep visitors safe, maintain the cemetery to a high standard and treat all equally.**

**Please find copies of our rules and regulations below. The current table of fees, memorial applications, interment forms, "what is a deed", memorial bench applications, and the cemetery booklet are all available on our website [www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk) or by contacting The Clerk at King's House, King Street, Thetford IP24 2AT**

**Please note that Thetford Cemetery comprises an older area where kerbstones are permitted and a newer area laid out as a lawn cemetery where no kerb stones are permitted and where the lawn areas must be kept clear. To ensure that no misunderstandings occur please contact your funeral director if in any doubt about which part of the cemetery a given grave is located.**

### **1. MAINTENANCE OF GOOD ORDER**

- a. **The Cemetery will be open to the public for admission on all days**  
Summer time: 8.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.  
Winter time: 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
- b. **No children will be allowed admission unless accompanied by a responsible adult. Particularly, children under 12 should not be allowed to enter the grassed monument areas unless accompanied by an adult. All visitors should keep to the walks and drives as far as practicable, refrain from touching memorials, shrubs and flowers and observe due decorum in all respects.**

- c. No vehicles are allowed in the cemetery unless prior permission is obtained. Vehicular access will be restricted to the car park except for funeral vehicles, contractors' vehicles (if required) and staff vehicles. The speed limit for the cemetery is 5 miles per hour.
- d. Visitors must not skate in the cemetery and cyclists should dismount while travelling through the cemetery.
- e. Dogs must be kept on short leads in the cemetery and dog fouling is strictly prohibited.
- f. Photographers must not take photographs within the precincts of the cemetery during funerals except upon the express desire of the relatives concerned.
- g. Any person who wilfully causes damage to any building, wall, fence, tree, plant or shrub, disfigures any wall, climb over the walls or gates or puts up any placard or wilfully destroys, injures or defaces any monument, tablet, headstone or inscription or does any other damage will be liable for prosecution.
- h. Any person who plays any game or unlawfully disturbs any persons assembled for burial ceremonies or who commits any nuisance within the cemetery, may be liable to prosecution.
- i. Smoking or vaping is strictly prohibited.
- j. Strictly no consumption of alcohol is allowed in the cemetery.

## **2. INTERMENTS**

- a.
  - (i) The Notice of Interment must be given on the Council's prescribed form at the office of the Town Clerk, King's House, Thetford at least 72 hours preceding the proposed interment (exclusive of Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday and Statutory Bank Holidays). The Council reserves the right to modify this regulation where circumstances render such a course desirable, upon payment of an additional fee (referred to as short notice burials).
  - (ii) No funeral can take place on a weekend, Christmas Day, Good Friday and Statutory Bank Holidays except where the council has agreed and charged the short notice burial fee.
  - (iii) A notice of interment can only be accepted by email or post. Notice of interments will not be accepted by telephone.
  - (iv) The council will not open a grave covered by an Exclusive Right of Burial without the written permission of the deed holder unless the burial is to be that of the deed holder (see 2 below).
  - (v) An interment is not confirmed until the undertaker has received written confirmation from the office (usually by email).

- (vi) The Council reserves the right to restrict burials, including prohibiting non parishioner burials, in order to ensure that it complies with groundwater regulations.
- (vii) The definition of parishioner/ non parishioner is for Council to establish (or a delegated committee) and may be varied accordingly, if required, in order to comply with licensing requirements. The funeral director must provide evidence of parishioner status as required before the interment, otherwise the non parishioner fees will be charged.
- (viii) In the case of a grave in respect of which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted, the Notice of Interment must be signed by the registered owner or legal representative (if the deed holder is to be interred) and the deed of grant for the grave must be produced with the Notice of Interment.
- (ix) All charges and fees shall be paid on due date being 14 days from the date of invoice unless payment is required by the Town Clerk, in advance.
- (x) Funeral arrangements, apart from digging the grave, which will be undertaken by the Town Council, including the appointing of an Officiating Minister, shall be the sole responsibility of the relatives of the deceased in association with the Undertaker.
- (xi) No funeral shall take place until the disposal certificate (green form, cremated remains certificate or the coroner's report) has been received by the Town Clerk and handed to the Cemetery Superintendent at least 48 hours before the interment (exclusive of Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday and Statutory Bank Holidays).
- (xii) Interments can take place in either a grave where the exclusive right of burial has been purchased or in a grave where no such exclusive right is bought, except in the case of cremated remains where a plot must be purchased. The main differences between these two types of graves are as follows:

**b. Graves where exclusive right of burial is purchased**

The charge for an exclusive right of burial is payable in addition to ordinary interment and other fees, and entitles the person to whom the grant is made to the exclusive right of burial in the grave mentioned. This means that the person to whom the grant is made possesses the exclusive right of burial in that grave for the period of 50 years. The Council will also permit a suitable memorial to be placed on a grave in which the exclusive right of burial has been granted. BEFORE any memorial is erected it is necessary to obtain the Council's permission for its erection and for the appropriate fees to be paid.

c. **Graves where no exclusive right of burial has been granted**

Upon payment of the usual interment and other fees, the Council permit burials in graves where no exclusive right of burial has been purchased. In these circumstances the Council reserves the right to make further burials in the same grave at a later date. Because there will normally be more than one burial in a grave where an exclusive right of burial has not been purchased, it is not possible to permit the erection of memorials over these graves. Subject to the payment of the specified fee, however, a small moveable vase may be placed on the grave.

**3. PURCHASE OF BURIAL RIGHTS**

- a. **Pre purchase of burial rights is strictly prohibited.**
- b. **The exclusive right of burial for a period of 50 years in a grave space may be purchased, by parishioners only, at the time of interment subject to the payment of the required fees.**
- c. **At the time of interment, the exclusive right of burial for a period of 50 years in a cremated remains plot, may be purchased by parishioners and non parishioners, subject to the payment of the required fees.**
- d. **The purchase of the exclusive right of burial relates only to the right to be interred and the right to erect a memorial. The plot remains the property of the Council and the purchaser has no rights over the land.**
- e. **No assignment of the exclusive right of burial in a grave will be allowed without the approval of the Town Clerk and no transfer will be valid unless the Deed of Grant has been properly endorsed by the Town Clerk for which a fee shall be charged.**
- e. **The purchase of plots for purely memorial purposes is not allowed.**

**4. HOURS**

Interments will only be allowed on Monday to Thursday between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. (Fridays 10 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.) during the months April to September inclusive, and between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. during the months of October to March inclusive except in cases of extreme emergency.

**5 DEPTH**

The first interment in each grave will be at a depth of six feet (1.83m) and no interment will take place in any grave if any part of the coffin containing the body will be at a depth of less than three feet below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.

## **6. SPACE BETWEEN COFFINS**

- (i) A layer of earth at least six inches (0.15m) thick must be left between each coffin in the same earthen grave.
- (ii) Burials will only be permitted in biodegradable coffins/caskets.
- (iii) The maximum size for a grave will not normally exceed 7' x 3' (2.13 x 0.91m) but if a grave is of greater length than 7' (2.13m) is necessary, the burial shall take place out of rotation, in the grave space at the end of the row or at the end of the next available row.

## **7. BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS**

- a. Cremated remains will be interred in plots two feet square (0.61m) in an area set aside for such burials.

Two burials will be permitted in each plot, the first at a minimum depth of three feet (0.91m) and the second immediately on top.

All caskets must be wooden and marked by an engraved identity plate.

- b. Subject to the purchase of the right of burial:
  - (i) A tablet with approved inscription will be allowed on the space. The tablet to be sunk level with the surrounding ground and to be 15" x 15" (0.38 x 0.38m) with a thickness of not less than 1" (0.31m) or not more than 2" (0.05m) and to be of approved materials, i.e. york stone, granite or sandstone, with plot letter and grave number inscribed therein.
  - (ii) A vase not exceeding 12" (0.31m) in height is permitted and can be placed on the cremation slab behind the memorial tablet.
- c. No memorials should be placed on the gravelled areas surrounding the cremation slab and memorial as these are periodically sprayed with weed suppressants and provide a pathway between plots.

## **8. MONUMENTAL WORKS AND ERECTIONS**

No grave can have a headstone erected on it unless the exclusive right of burial has been purchased. Memorials may not be placed on any grave without permission of the council and the payment of the required fee. Please refer to the Council's Memorial Management Policy for further information. The Council reserves the right to remove any unauthorised memorial and charge the cost to the deed holder

Where the exclusive right of burial of a grave has been purchased, the Deed of Grant shall be produced by the person applying for the right to erect a memorial or they must sign and deposit a statement to the effect that the Council, in granting such application, is indemnified against any action or damages that may arise in connection therewith.

- a. **On non lawned cemetery plots the following monumental work only will be allowed:**
- (i) A flat stone occupying a superficial area not exceeding 7' x 3' (2.13 x 0.91m);
  - (ii) A headstone not exceeding 3'6" (1.07m) in height;
  - (iii) A foot tablet;
  - (iv) Kerbstones or border stones enclosing a space not exceeding 7' x 3' (2.13 x 0.91m);
  - (v) A monument -
    - in the form of a vase not exceeding 12" (0.31m) in height;
    - in any other form not exceeding 3'6" (1.07m) in height and occupying a superficial area not exceeding 7' x 3' (2.13 x 0.91m);
  - (vi) No more than two vases will be allowed on any one grave;
  - (vii) Inscriptions on headstones should be on the front face of the headstone only and are subject to the approval of the Town Clerk. The name of a living person will only be permitted if there is a reference to the relationship to the deceased;
  - (viii) All headstones must be perpendicular.

- b. **On lawned cemetery plots the following monumental work only will be allowed:-**

No commemorative objects should be placed on the grassed areas in front of the headstone. Any items found will be removed without notice.

- (i) All headstones are to conform to the following maximum sizes - 3'6" (1.07m) high, 2'6" (0.76m) wide and 3" (0.08m) deep. If an apron is provided for a flower stand it shall not exceed 2'8" (0.81m) in width nor have a greater depth than 1'0" (0.31m). The receptacle for flowers must be sunk in the apron. No headstone should 'overhang' the foundation stone;
- (ii) The maximum foundation size to be 3' x 18" (0.91 x 0.46m) and at least a 2" (0.05m) projection of the foundation must be made to serve as a mowing stone. This may be increased to 3' x 20 1/2" (0.91 x 0.52m) if loose vases are to be placed on the foundation stone;
- (iii) Inscriptions on headstones are subject to the approval of the Town Clerk and the name of a living person will only be permitted if there is a reference to the relationship to the deceased;
- (iv) Where no headstone is erected a single approved vase may be placed at the head of the grave, providing the necessary permission has been obtained and the required fee paid;

- (v) Loose standing vases are permitted, but they must be made of suitably robust material to withstand prevailing weather conditions and comply with section 8d below. Additional vases must be located on, and must not overhang the foundation stone, see para 8b(ii) above;
  - (vi) No growing plants, shrubs, bushes, flowers, bulbs etc. will be permitted around graves in the lawn cemetery;
  - (vii) No headstone to be erected until a period of at least six months from the date of burial has elapsed;
  - (viii) A wooden cross 18" x 30" (0.46 x 0.76m), available from funeral directors will be permitted on new graves for a limited period of six months until a headstone is erected. After this time the cross will be removed by the cemetery staff and will be available for collection;
  - (ix) No railings, fences or gravel of any type are to be permitted on or around graves.
  - (x) Floral tributes may be placed on the grassed area immediately in front of a grave following interment for a period of two weeks. If they remain after this period they will be removed by cemetery staff, unless we receive a request in writing that the family wish to arrange for their removal.
- c. Drawings of every proposed monument and inscription must be submitted for the approval of the Town Clerk before work is commenced.
  - d. For safety and environmental reasons glass jars, bottles, lanterns, balloons, pottery, tins, plastic, food, are not allowed on graves. The Council reserves the right, without notice, to remove such memorials from graves, together with any dead vegetation or faded artificial flowers etc.
  - e. Wreaths can be placed on gravestones (or the apron for lawned cemetery plots) for a period starting 1<sup>st</sup> December and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> January. Any wreaths remaining after this date will be removed. Please note that faded wreaths may be removed before this date.
  - f. All headstones/tablets must be soundly constructed of suitable natural stone and must be kept in good repair. In default the Council reserves the right to remove any such headstone or to require the owners to remove them and if any such headstone is removed by the Council it will become the property of the Council for disposal by them as they think fit.
  - g. All headstones/tablets remain at the sole risk of the owners and the Council will not be responsible for any damage or breakage which may occur to same.
  - h. (i) The removing and refixing of headstones/tablets must be by appointment and undertaken by a person lawfully appointed by the deed holder of the grave and must be an approved BRAMM/NAMM registered stonemason.

- (ii) Every headstone/tablet removed in the process of opening a grave will be removed at the risk of the person requiring the grave to be opened, and will be temporarily removed entirely from the cemetery and must be refixed within a reasonable time. The decision of the Town Clerk as to what is a reasonable time is final and conclusive.
  - (iii) All headstones/tablets removed either for the purpose of allowing an interment to take place or for any other purpose will be re-erected in accordance with the Regulations in force at the time.
  - (iv) The Council reserves to itself the right of passage over all graves and, where such a course is necessary, temporarily to cover a grave. Such covering may comprise of excavated soil placed prior to a burial in an adjacent grave. The Council also reserve the right to remove without notice, the headstone/tablet upon any grave in order to permit the reopening of another grave in the vicinity, or for any other purpose.
  - (v) The Council also reserves to itself the right to remove, refix, move, line-up or alter the position of any headstone/tablet as it may require.
- i. The name of the masons may be cut on the plinth in letters not exceeding half an inch in height, providing the consent of the owner is obtained. Masons are requested to etch the grave number on the plinth as this aids identification.
  - j. No headstone to be erected until a period of at least six months from the date of burial has elapsed. This restriction does not apply to tablets for cremated remains plots.
  - k. The stone mason is required to level the grave when a memorial is erected.
  - l. Dispersal of cremated remains in the cemetery is strictly prohibited.
  - m. The burial of animals in the cemetery is strictly prohibited.
  - n. Names of persons not buried in a plot can only be added to headstones/tablets if their name is followed by the words "laid to rest elsewhere" or similar.
  - o. Memorial benches may be purchased from the Council by completing an application form and paying the required fee. The positioning of the bench is entirely at the Council's discretion although applicants' preferences will be taken into account where possible (Please see memorial bench policy for more detail).

## **9. CHILDREN'S PLOTS**

### **Lawn Cemetery rules apply**

- a. All graves on the babies/children's plot will be single depth only. No pre-purchase of plots is permitted.
- b. The maximum grave size will be 4 feet long (1.22m).



- c. All other rules and regulations apply as for Lawn cemetery plots above (section7b)

**10. MAINTENANCE OF GRAVE SPACE**

- a. Whenever an interment has taken place the grave will be filled with earth and left for a period of six months for natural subsidence of the earth. After six months the surface of the grave, if no memorial has been placed, will be levelled and grass seed sown depending on the season.
- b. Deed holders can request for turf to be laid on payment of a small fee (between October and March only)
- c. Artificial grass is not to be laid on graves at any time. All lawn sections of the cemetery will have natural grass covering the grave.
- d. All graves must be kept flat and level with adjoining ground and mounds or raised gardens on grave spaces is strictly not permitted.

**11. ADMINISTRATION**

- a. All notices or applications required by these Regulations are to be sent to the Town Clerk.
- b. Registers of burials are kept by the Town Clerk at whose offices searches of such Registers may be made.
- c. The fees payable are reviewed annually and are available on the website.
- d. The Council reserves the right to alter or vary the regulations or to deviate from in any particular instances if it is necessary to do so.

