



## **LONDON ROAD CEMETERY THETFORD**

**2018 - 2019**



**Thetford Town Council Acting as Burial Authority  
(Local Government Act 1972, Local Authorities (Cemeteries) Order 1977)**

**Thetford Town Council**  
**London Road Cemetery, Thetford**

**Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Rules and regulations</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Water monitoring and restrictions of burials</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Repurchase of graves</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>Fees and charges</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>Exclusive Right of Burial</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
<b>Lawn cemetery</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
<b>Cremated remains plots</b>	<b>Page 22</b>
<b>Memorial testing</b>	<b>Page 22</b>
<b>Cemetery Chapel</b>	<b>Page 24</b>
<b>Budgets and funding</b>	<b>Page 26</b>
<b>Contact details</b>	<b>Page 27</b>

**Opening times for the cemetery**

<b>Summer (April to September)</b>	<b>8.00am to 7.00pm</b>
<b>Winter (October to March)</b>	<b>8.00am to 4.00pm</b>

Please visit our website also to find information on all services the council provide:  
[www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1853 an Act was passed which enabled local authorities to administer their own cemeteries and many urban churchyards were closed. The cemetery on London Road Thetford was established in 1855 occupies about 3 acres of land.

The cemetery has been the final resting place of many well known Thetford families and also is home to some war graves.

The cemetery is divided into plots ranging from A plot to M plot in the older part of the cemetery containing traditional graves and plots N and P containing lawn cemetery graves.

In 2012 the Council were granted a licence to bury in the cemetery extension area and an Environmental Management plan was developed to manage water quality. Regular water monitoring is required to be carried out to ensure the quality of groundwater is not compromised by leeching from burial remains.

Recently burials have had to be restricted in order to keep nitrate levels below required amounts. Steps have been taken to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination and the situation is continually monitored.

The council are committed to providing a beautiful tranquil area for occupants and visitors so have adopted maintenance plans to further improve the aesthetics, this has included a controversial implementation of lawn cemetery rules in order to prevent memorialisation.

Last year saw the renovation of the cemetery cottage which was built in the mid nineteenth century. This has now been made available for a private tenancy.

The cemetery chapel is undergoing a renovation program in order to preserve it for generations to come (please see page 23 for more detail). Recently the south side has undergone essential maintenance work including replacing concrete mortar with lime mortar to allow proper ventilation of the flint work. Further work on the porch and bell cote is planned for 2018.

The cemetery is also full of wildlife and various animals and birds can be spotted while taking a walk through.

From January 2018 there will be a member of staff who will be more permanently placed at the cemetery to monitor the site and provide assistance and advice for visitors.

Plans for the future include: increasing the number of flower planters, opening the chapel for visitors, providing a memorial book, memorial Christmas tree, memorial services and other services including visitors' toilets and information.

All are welcome at our cemetery providing the rules are adhered to and the cemetery and its occupants are treated with respect.



**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 at 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 8e 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. If 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.



## **GROUND WATER MONITORING AND RESTRICTION OF BURIALS**

It is a statutory requirement that measures are taken to protect groundwater from potential pollution sources. Burial practices give rise to potential sources of pollution and so are covered by these regulations.

The Environment Agency (EA) has powers to prevent or control activities such as burials that may result in the discharge of certain pollutants to groundwater. Due to the cemetery's location overlying the Upper Chalk Formation, a Principle Aquifer which is used extensively in the Anglian region for water supplies - it was necessary for rigorous and intrusive investigation and ground water monitoring to take place in order to obtain planning permission.

After extensive bore holing, water monitoring and risk assessments of the cemetery extension site, planning permission was granted in early 2012. The EA and Breckland Council granted permission with the requirement that ongoing monitoring was completed and that a management plan was put in place to safeguard the environmental impacts of the cemetery with the underlying groundwater of principle concern.

As a result of this Thetford Town Council implemented an Environmental Management Plan in 2012 and one of the recommendations was that burials in the new extension were limited to 20 - 25 per annum. Recent monitoring has shown that this limit is likely to be exceeded in the future unless the Council introduces measures to restrict burials.

The possible consequence of the pollution of groundwater above acceptable limits is that all burials are suspended and the cemetery is forced to close. However you can be reassured that the Council is taking steps to mitigate the risk of this happening and it is very much a 'worst case scenario'. One of the measures the Council wishes to take is attempting to restrict burials in order that they do not exceed the maximum recommended amount. It was agreed at Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016 to suspend non-parishioner burials in the new extension from January 2017 except in graves previously purchased. Further, it was agreed by Council at a Full Council meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 that burials in the new cemetery will be restricted to two per month from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Burials in the older part of the cemetery and cremated remains interments are not affected presently. Further non parishioners in care homes/hospices who lived in Thetford immediately prior to their move into care will be considered a parishioner on production of a letter confirming their eligibility.

Pre-purchase of graves is no longer allowed anyway in the cemetery

This has been a difficult decision for the Council but it has been taken to try and ensure that the Council remains able to fulfill its obligation to bury parishioners.

## **RE PURCHASE OF GRAVES**

**Thetford Town Council are considering offering to buy back pre purchased Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) grants due to a requirement for burial space in the older part of London Road cemetery.**

**The council's is considering offering to purchase any unwanted deeds at a price of £205 whatever price was originally paid. These plots would then be offered as an alternative to purchasing the ERB for a plot in the newer part of the cemetery. The price charged for an older plot would be £205 compared to the cost of £500 in the newer part as an incentive to purchasers.**

**The council is attempting to trace deed owners by posting the plot numbers on council notice boards and the council website. This is entirely voluntary and is an exercise to regain any plots which are unlikely to be used in the future.**

**If you are a deed owner or have inherited the rights of the plot/plots the council are requesting that you contact them and tell them whether you would consider the re purchase or that you wish to retain the rights.**

**This requirement has occurred due to the ongoing problem of nitrates in the soil which limits the amount of burials the council are allowed to perform in the newer extension part of the cemetery. A solution that has been considered is attempting to find burial space in the older part of the cemetery that is unused and no longer required by the deed holder.**

**The distribution of burials has an impact on the nitrate levels in the soil so if burials are distributed more randomly over a larger area this can reduce the impact on pollutants in the soil.**

**Plots that are unused are available on our website, if you are the deed owner or the deed holder's next of kin (if the deed holder is deceased) and no longer require the plot please contact us.**



**THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**(Acting as Burial Authority)**

**THETFORD CEMETERY**

**TABLE OF FEES AND CHARGES**

The following charges will be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018:

	Parishloner	Non Parishloner
<b>1. <u>Exclusive Right of Burial in Earthen Grave</u></b>		
<b>Adult Grave (12 and over)</b> For the exclusive right of burial granted for the next Available Grave space for a period of 100 years. (The fee includes the Deed of Grant, Assignment of lease, special maintenance and all expenses thereof)	£525	£1,315
Reassignment of Lease	£37	£74
<b>Childs Grave (5 – 11 years)</b> Exclusive Right of Burial (as above)	£260	£655
<b>Infant Grave (0 – 4 years)</b> Exclusive Right of Burial (as above)	£Nil	£315
<b>2. <u>Interment In Earthen Grave</u></b>		
For the interment of bodies single depth (12 and over)	£535	£905
For the interment of bodies double depth (12 and over)	£535	£905
For the interment of bodies (5 – 11 years)	£270	£450
For the interment of bodies (0 – 4 years)	£Nil	£345
For second interment of bodies	£535	£905
For short notice burials (where notice given is less than the required 72 hours by special arrangement and subject to availability)	£890	£1,520
<b>3. <u>Burial of Cremated Remains</u></b>		
For interment of cremated remains in a plot 2' x 2'. (The fee indicated does not include the services of a	£160	£315



Minister).

Purchase of exclusive rights of burial for a period of 100 years, with the right to lay tablet as described above:	£315	£420
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Second inscription	£100	£200
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**4. Monuments, Gravestones etc.**

For the right to erect or place on a grave in respect of which the exclusive right of burial has been granted:

i) a headstone not exceeding 3'6" in height	£180	£360
ii) a footstone or tablet	£180	£360
iii) a tablet not exceeding 15" x 15 "	£100	£200
iv) kerbstones	£180	£360
v) a vase not exceeding 12" in height	£180	£360
vi) a flat stone occupying a superficial area not exceeding 7' x 3'	£180	£360
vii) inscription (after first)	£100	£200

**5. Hire of Cemetery Chapel**

Non deed holders	£100	£100
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Deed holders	£65	£65
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**6. Stone removal by Cemetery staff** £100 £100

**7. Searches**

For a search in the Register of Burials

One year	£21	£21
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Each additional year	£21	£21
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For each certified copy of entry in Register of Burials	£26	£32
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The foregoing table of Fees, Payments and Charges was fixed by the Thetford Town Council by virtue of powers conferred on the Council by the Local Government Act 1972 and by the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, made by the Secretary of State under Section 15 thereof.

Town Clerk

## GRANTS OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL

### Grave deeds and ownership

Many people believe that if they hold the Grave Deed this means they are the grave owner, but for Thetford Town Council to recognise the owner, that person must be specifically named on the deed, and registered with the council in the grave register.



Example

### Can more than one person own the right of burial?

Yes. Legally, a number of people can jointly own the right of burial. This may be sensible in some circumstances, but you should bear in mind that before a grave can be opened for a burial, or a memorial placed or altered, all owners must agree in writing. This could cause problems if one or more of the joint owners are unavailable – perhaps on holiday, or there is a family dispute – and this permission cannot then be obtained.

All grave owners have a legal right to be buried in the grave, and permission from any other owner is not required. When there are a number of grave owners and one dies, the rights are shared by the remaining owners. The last surviving owner only can pass on the rights at death.

### What does 'exclusive right of burial' mean?

When a grave is 'purchased' this refers to the purchasing of the exclusive right of burial in a grave space and not the purchase of the land itself. This means that you do not own the land nor have any automatic right to place anything on that land, but have the exclusive right, during the period stated in the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial, to say who can be

buried in the grave. Also, provided that you do not, during your lifetime, transfer the right to another person, and provided that the period stated on the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial has not expired, you can choose to be buried in the grave yourself.

### **Who owns the 'Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial'?**

A grant of exclusive right of burial is always issued to the grave owner(s). This should be kept in a safe place, as it will be needed should there be a further burial in the grave at some point in the future. No burials or changes to memorials can be authorised without the permission of the owner(s) of the exclusive right of burial.

### **Can I transfer the exclusive right of burial to someone else?**

Yes. The Exclusive Rights of Burial may be transferred at any time. However, this transfer must be carried out by the council and no other form of transfer can be recognised. This can be quite a complex process and we advise you to speak with Thetford Town Council beforehand. You may also wish to consider getting your own legal advice before completing any forms. We can give guidance and advice but are not able to complete forms on your behalf.

### **What if I change address?**

Please notify us as it is important to keep our records up to date and contact you should the need arise.

### **Who owns the 'Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial'?**

A grant of exclusive right of burial is always issued to the grave owner(s). This should be kept in a safe place, as it will be needed should there be a further burial in the grave at some point in the future. No burials or changes to memorials can be authorised without the permission of the owner(s) of the exclusive right of burial.

### **Can I transfer the exclusive right of burial to someone else?**

Yes. The Exclusive Rights of Burial may be transferred at any time. However, this transfer must be carried out by the council and no other form of transfer can be recognised. This can be quite a complex process and we advise you to speak with Thetford Town Council beforehand. You may also wish to consider getting your own legal advice before completing any forms. We can give guidance and advice but are not able to complete forms on your behalf.

### **What if I change address?**

Please notify us as it is important to keep our records up to date and contact you should the need arise.

## **LAWN CEMETERY**

Lawn Cemetery plots were first introduced to the Thetford Cemetery in 1986, in an attempt to reduce the high maintenance costs associated with the labour intensive strimming around graves. The idea behind lawn cemeteries is that memorials are restricted to a foundation stone with an apron and headstone placed on top within authorised measurements which allows the mowers to easily move within the rows without being restricted by additional memorials placed on the grassed areas in front. The rules relating to lawn cemeteries are reproduced in summary below and displayed on notice boards throughout the cemetery.

The recent campaign to bring lawn cemetery plots back within the rules resulted from gradual encroachment over several years and particularly in the new extension area, despite new deed holders receiving copies of the rules and the rules being displayed prominently around the cemetery.

Implementation of the rules for the lawn cemetery is now almost complete. After the completion of this campaign items that fall outside the rules will be removed without warning as soon as they appear and be disposed of.

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR LAWN CEMETERY (PLOTS N, P AND THE CEMETERY EXTENSION)**

In order to keep our lawn cemetery plots neat, tidy and well maintained, please observe our rules:

- No commemorative objects should be placed on the grassed areas in front of the headstone. Any items found will be removed without notice.
- No headstone can be erected until a period of at least six months from the date of burial has elapsed.
- A wooden cross (0.46m x 0.76m max), available from funeral directors will be permitted on new graves until a headstone is erected.
- All headstones must conform to the following maximum sizes (1.07m H x 0.76m W x 0.08m D).
- If there is an apron for a flower stand it must not exceed 0.81m W x 0.31m D and the receptacle for flowers must be sunk in the apron.
- A maximum of two loose standing vases, approved by the Council, are permitted but these must be located on the foundation stone in order that the mowing and strimming of graves is not hindered.
- Loose vases must be made from a suitably robust material to withstand prevailing weather conditions.

- 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.
- No headstone should overhang the foundation stone.
- The maximum foundation size is 0.91 x 0.46m and must have a 0.05m projection to serve as a mowing stone.
- The maximum foundation stone may be increased to 0.91m x 0.52 m if loose vases (maximum of two) are to be placed on the foundation stone.
- Inscriptions are subject to approval by the Council and names of living persons will only be permitted if there is reference to their relationship to the deceased.
- If no headstone is erected a single vase, approved by the Council may be placed at the head of the grave.
- Other receptacles, other than approved vases, are strictly not allowed on the graves.
- No plants, shrubs bushes, flowers, bulbs are permitted in the lawn cemetery.
- Please remove cut flowers in vases once they have wilted.
- No railings, fences or gravel of any type are to be permitted on or around graves.
- Floral tributes may be placed on the grassed area immediately in front on 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.
- Wreaths can be placed on 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.

Please note that the Council reserve the right to remove and dispose of any items that are not permitted as detailed above.

These regulations are in addition to the full rules and regulations relating to the cemetery which can be viewed on our website [www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk) or obtained from our offices at Kings House, King Street, Thetford, IP24 2AT tel. 01842 754247 or [mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

## **CREMATED REMAINS PLOTS**

The cemetery has two cremated remains plots, M plot in the older part of the cemetery which is full used or purchased and V plot in the cemetery extension. There are no restrictions at present on cremated remains interments in the cemetery, both parishioners and non parishioners can be buried.

Memorials should only be placed on the concrete plinth marking the plot number not on the gravelled areas to the front and behind individual plots.

Please note that the dispersal of cremated remains in the cemetery is strictly prohibited.



## **MEMORIALS AND MEMORIAL TESTING**

Memorials are usually requested by the deed holder and the next of kin if the deed holder is deceased. If the memorial is requested by the next of kin they have to indemnify the council against any costs, loss or damage resulting from the placing of a memorial upon the grave.

The council periodically carry out memorial stability testing to ensure that memorial do not present a health and safety hazard to the public. If a memorial is found to be unstable the cemetery staff will stake it to ensure it does not cause injury. In order to ensure the safety of memorials the Council will be undertaking the next phase of memorial testing in the Spring of 2018.

The council will contact deed holders if a memorial is found to be unsafe so it is important to advise the council of any change of address. The council reserves the right to lay down or remove a memorial if the deed holder cannot be traced (see rules and regulations 8f page 11).

**Examples of staked headstones and a headstone laid down are pictured below and right:**



**All memorials placed in the cemetery must have prior approval of the council and the correct fee must be paid. If a memorial is placed without authority the Council have the right to remove it and charge the deedholder the cost of doing so.**

**The Council has recently introduced a Memorial Management Policy, which is available to download from our website. This states where the responsibility and liability lays for memorial, describes the memorial inspection process and recommends how memorials are installed and that it is the owners responsibility to insure and maintain the memorials.**

**The council have also registered with the British Register of Memorial Masons Scheme (BRAMM) which ensures that only BRAMM registered masons who comply with BS8415 are allowed to erect memorials in the cemetery.**

**From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 this will be mandatory and it will be the deed holders' responsibility to to engage a BRAMM registered stone mason to carry out installations or any required repairs to make the memorial safe. Please note that if a memorial is to be removed the council should be contacted both on removal and on reinstatement to ensure safety procedures are adhered to.**

## **CEMETERY CHAPEL AND LODGE**

From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the great majority of the local population who died in Thetford, were interred in the churchyard of one of the three surviving, ancient churches, St Cuthberts, St Mary the Less and St Peter's. By the 1780's however the small churchyards of St Cuthberts and St Peter's Church were so full of interments it was a problem for the Sexton to find space for burials without disturbing earlier ones. To overcome this, parishioners from the parishes of St Cuthbert and St Peter were generally interred in the much larger St Mary's churchyard.



This system of burial continued into the late 1840s when there were calls in the town for a new burial ground or municipal cemetery. Many large towns already provided such places. Eventually, in 1853, serious discussions took place in the council chambers for the provision of a cemetery on land on the east side of the London Road. The land belonged to the Lord of the manor, Mr Baring and an agreement was made to exchange this land with land that the Corporation owned elsewhere in the Borough of Thetford. A Burial Board was also formed to manage the London Road cemetery. In June 1854 tenders were invited for the building of a cemetery chapel. In fact it was two chapels but attached to each other. One for disesenters (north side) and one for Alicans (south side). Mr Boyce's tender of £338 10s was accepted.

Today the chapel is available for funeral services and can seat approximately 50 mourners. It is hoped that the chapel will be open at certain times for visitors from Autumn 2018. A memorial book and christmas tree are among the ideas in consideration for the future.





The cemetery was completed in October 1854 and the public were notified that burials in the churchyards was to cease from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1855. It is not known if the chapel was completed when the cemetery opened.

The Cemetery Keepers Lodge was built in 1873.



## **BUDGETING AND FUNDING**

Fees are charged for Interments, purchasing exclusive rights of burial and placing memorials and additional subscriptions. The revenue generated by this is used to maintain the cemetery for now and a hundred years into the future. The cost of an ERB for a full burial is £525 and represents exceptional value for money as this will cover maintenance costs for that grave space for 100 years. However this means the cemetery does not generate enough revenue to cover the cost of administration of the cemetery and maintenance of the cemetery buildings.

This means the council have to raise the additional funding to provide burial services by collecting revenue through the precept or council tax from the residents of Thetford. Long term maintenance of buildings is currently being funded by reserves but reserves are ultimately funded by the public too.

The 2018-19 budget is summarised as follows

Income form burial fees	£50,398
Income from rental	£7,800
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£58,198</b>
Salaries	£26,561
Rates,ins etc	£5,754
Building maintenance	£3,705
Grave maintenance	£12,220
Cemetery maintenance	£28,328
Water monitoring	£9,000
Sundry	£1,488
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>£87,056</b>
<b>Deficit to be funded by precept</b>	<b>£28,858</b>

As well as maintenance the cemetery requires extensive administrative work ensuring that graves comply to regulations, memorials do not present a health and safety risk, burials are carried out in a respectful and safe manner, buildings are maintained, burial records are updated, the aesthetics are developed and that the council comply with environment agency regulations relating to water quality. The cost of this administrative work is not including in the above figures. The council appreciate the co-operation of the public in ensuring our cemetery continues to be a pleasant and tranquil environment for the residents of Thetford and other visitors.

## **CONTACT DETAILS:**

Burial Authority: Thetford Town Council

Address: King's House, King Street, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2AT

Telephone: 01842 754247

Email: [mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Website: [www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Thetford Cemetery is governed by the Cemetery Committee and the following councillors are members of the committee at from May 2018:

<i>Councillor Roy Brame (Mayor and ex-officio member)</i>	<i>Castle Ward</i>
<i>Coucillor Mrs Sylvia Armes (Chair)</i>	<i>Burrell Ward</i>
<i>Councillor Mrs Brenda Canham (Vice Chair)</i>	<i>Priory Ward</i>
<i>Councillor Denis Crawford</i>	<i>Burrell Ward</i>
<i>Councillor Colin Burnett</i>	<i>Vicarage Road Ward</i>
<i>Councillor Chris Harvey</i>	<i>Burrell Ward</i>
<i>Councillor Mrs Jen Hollis</i>	<i>Boudica Ward</i>

### **Council Staff with cemetery responsibilities:**

<i>Sarah Lewis</i>	<i>Deputy Town Clerk</i>
<i>Kerry Leeder</i>	<i>Cemetery Secretary</i>
<i>Nicholas Thompson</i>	<i>Cemetery Supervisor</i>

The committee meet approximately four times per year and welcomes members of the public to attend. Meeting agendas and minutes are available on our website, notice boards and are advertised through social media. Please contact your local council representative if you have any concerns but please be aware complaints should always be directed through the council offices, not through individual councillors. Contact details for all councilors are available on our website or from the Council offices.

Formal complaints must be made in writing and will be considered in line with our Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy which is available on our website.

The committee welcome feedback from the public and if you have any queries or suggestions please get in touch by telephone, post or email or the report it section on our website.

**Thetford Town Council Acting as Burial Authority  
LONDON ROAD CEMETERY ,THETFORD, NORFOLK IP24 3AS**



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Website: [www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)  
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