

St Dennis Cemetery Memorial Policy

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the St Dennis Parish Council Cemetery Regulations.

Memorial Rules and Guidance:

1. Application for permit to place Memorial upon a grave.

1.1 No memorial is to be installed in the Cemetery unless a permit has been granted by St Dennis Parish Council.

It is essential for St Dennis Parish Council to manage memorials placed within the Cemetery.

1.2 An application for a permit to carry out memorial works may be made by any of the following in respect of a grave which is subject to an Exclusive Right of Burial:-

1.2 (i) the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial or Right of Burial; or

1.2 (ii) any person who can satisfy St Dennis Parish Council that he or she is a relative of the person buried in the grave, and arrangements are made to transfer and register themselves as the owner of the said right.

This ensures the correct person is applying for the memorial works.

1.3 The permit application must be completed fully and include a detailed plan of the proposed memorial including the dimensions of the same, and details of the proposed fixing method. An application will only be processed upon receipt of the correct fee where applicable.

This ensures our staff can ensure the proposed memorial is within the regulations and will be fixed to an approved industry standard.

1.4 The permit application must clearly state the section of the Cemetery in which the grave is situated, together with the grave number.

Schedule 1 to this Policy Document sets out the memorials permitted within St Dennis Cemetery.

This ensures that the memorial is going on the correct grave and the proper person is authorised to instruct the work.

1.5 All such permit applications are to be submitted to the Parish Council Office. Once checked, and if agreed, a permit to carry out the works will be granted. The permit must be kept in the possession of the person carrying out the works authorised under the permit at all times whilst they are carrying out the said works within the Cemetery. Once the authorised works have been completed the permit must be signed and returned to the Parish Council office. A site check of the authorised works will then be carried out by staff from St Dennis Parish Council as soon as is reasonably practicable.

This allows for Parish Council staff to undertake checks on site to ensure the person fixing the memorial is authorised to do so.

2. Fixing of Memorials

2.1 *No works are permitted to be carried out on any grave space except by:*

- A monumental mason who is accredited to the British Registration of Approved Monumental Masons Scheme (“BRAMM”) or an equivalent scheme.
- By staff of St Dennis Parish Council (and such works may include any works associated with memorial safety inspections and subsequent making safe of any memorials).

Basic cleaning/ washing down and non-specialist cleaning of a memorial may be undertaken by any person. Specialist cleaning or the appointment of an independent Grave Care Service will require the relevant permit for any work to be undertaken. Such a permit must be obtained prior to the work being undertaken and follow the same process as section 1.

To promote high standards and protect consumers we only allow those registered to the approved national scheme to undertake any works on memorials in the Cemetery. Approved masons have all the necessary skills to ensure that any memorial they fix or repair will be able to pass a suitable stability test.

2.2 All memorials (including memorials being re-fixed after a burial has taken place and those found to be unsafe after memorial testing has taken place) are to be fixed in line with BS8415 : 2018 the nationally recognized standard for fixing memorials. This states the minimum requirements for the fixing of memorials. On occasion it may be appropriate to include additional foundations or bearer slabs and these cannot exceed 4” in width x 18” deep.

All costs for this work must be met by the person to whom a permit to place the memorial was given.

To ensure all memorials are safe they must be fixed to the recognized approved standards of the day.

2.3 The upkeep and maintenance of any memorial within the Cemetery remains the responsibility of the person to whom a permit to place the memorial was given.

All memorials remain in the ownership and are the responsibility of the grave owner or the person taking over responsibility after the grave owner is deceased.

3. Operational Times for Memorial Works.

3.1 The erection of, cutting of inscriptions on, or professional cleaning of, memorials shall be carried out between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday. Works may take place at weekends by request to the Clerk of St Dennis Parish Council.

Works can only be undertaken during normal operational hours to ensure safety within the site.

3.2 All contractors must contact the Parish Council office prior to any installation, or professional cleaning being undertaken.

This is to ensure that there are no funerals or memorial services scheduled in whilst the work is being undertaken.

4. Stability Guarantee Period.

4.1 All memorials installed within the Cemetery from the date of installation must be subject to a 'Guarantee of Conformity' granted by the mason who installed the memorial. Such a guarantee is given to confirm that the memorial has been fixed to the best standard set by NAMM at the date of fixing and should last a minimum of 6 years. If at any point during the life of the memorial it becomes loose or unstable and this cannot be attributed to ground conditions or disturbance, the mason should, under the terms of the said guarantee, refix the memorial to the original standard at no cost to the grave owner or the Parish Council.

This is a standard guarantee that must be given to any person arranging to have a memorial installed.

5. Memorial Safety Testing.

5.1 Any memorial purchased and erected on a grave space is owned by the registered grave owner and it is that person or persons who are ultimately responsible for its upkeep and maintenance.

Historically there have been a number of accidents in cemeteries around the UK, some of which have resulted in fatalities, due to memorials being unsafe. Whilst the memorials are the responsibility of the registered grave owner St Dennis Parish Council have a responsibility for ensuring that the Cemetery is safe for both staff to work in and for the public to visit.

5.2 Memorial Fixing; All memorials over 24.5 inches (625 mm) in height must be fixed to, and fully compliant, with the current British Standard (BS8415). This also extends to any memorial over 24.5" (625mm) that is being re-fixed following an interment or removal for any other reason.

5.3 The key requirements are that memorials must be fixed to an approved and suitable foundation and must be further secured using an approved locking or anchoring system.

5.4 Note that any refixing or repair works to memorials must be completed by a BRAMM (or other equivalent scheme) registered memorial mason, Temporary works to make memorials safe and remove the risk of danger will be undertaken by trained Parish Council staff.

5.5 Memorial Inspections; All memorials over 24" in height will be inspected by trained staff at least once during a rolling 5-year period to assess their safety. This will be done through both a visual assessment and a basic hand test to determine if there is movement in the memorial and to what extent.

The individual undertaking the assessment will make the decision on the memorials overall safety based on a dynamic risk assessment for which they have been trained.

5.6 Once inspected each memorial will fall into one of three categories, detailed as follows:

- Category 1 – Memorial is unsafe and poses a risk and will require immediate attention to make safe and/or protect from the public.
- Category 2 – Memorial is safe but there are minor concerns and should be re-assessed in 12 months' time to ensure that it has not deteriorated further.
- Category 3 – Memorial is safe and should be re-inspected in 5 years as part of the next round of inspections or as part of any other check that may occur, for example when checking memorials around a planned burial ahead of excavation of the grave.

The Parish Council has a legal obligation to ensure the Cemetery is safe to both visit and work in. In order to be satisfied that this is the case it is essential that staff carry out regular inspections of memorials within the burial grounds in a bid to avoid injury or death to any of its staff or visitors.

5.7 Staff undertaking the inspections will record the details of every memorial and an assessment of its safety using the categories above. These details will be recorded onto the Parish Council administration system. The details will include:

- Date of inspection
- Name of inspector
- Grave identification (Section Row & Number)
- Category of Memorial (1,2 or 3)
- Details of any actions taken

5.8 Actions post inspection; Should a memorial be identified as a Category 1 and fail the inspection staff will need to take immediate action to make that memorial temporarily safe or cordon it off until permanent repairs can be made by the grave owner. These actions will be based on a number of factors and the best solution will be administered by the Clerk based on their assessment of the memorial and the surrounding area. These actions may include:

- Laying the memorial flat – In most cases this will invariably be where a memorial can be laid down on or within an existing kerb set so as not to cause a trip hazard. A warning sign will be placed near the memorial.
- Staked and banded – The memorial will be fastened tight to a wooden post which will act as a temporary support. The banding will also hold a warning notice. All efforts will be made to contact the owner of the memorial before any further action is taken. Owners will be provided with a reasonable amount of time to have the work required undertaken. The Stake and band will be re-inspected every 12 months to ensure neither have deteriorated.
- Monolith Conversion – This involves digging out a depth roughly one third of the overall height of the memorial from the last joint in order that it can be sunk into the ground and made safe. The memorial will have a suitable material wrapped around the part under the ground and a memorial warning notice will be added to the grave. Due to foundation, it may be necessary for the memorial to be moved slightly forwards into the grave space to avoid existing foundations.

Commented [LC1]: This is something that I was unaware of. We have historically had the memorials fixed after three months of appealing for owners. Is this something that you wish to consider including or would you prefer this removed.

Commented [LC2]: This came up with the memorial training and could be an option of stabilising older memorials without the need for obtaining quotes as our staff would be able to undertake this work on most of the current memorials. It is an alternative to a costly repair bill.

- Cordoned Off – In some cases it may be necessary to cordon off a particular memorial or an area containing a number of memorials due to their safety. Warning signs will be attached to any cordon placed around a memorial or group of memorials.
- Removal – In extreme cases it may be necessary to remove a memorial from a grave and place it into storage if none of the above options are suitable.

All of the above are regarded as 'Temporary Fixes' and should not be seen as a permanent solution to deal with an unsafe memorial and are intended to reduce or remove the risk of a memorial causing harm or damage to someone. Prior to taking any actions above the memorial will be photographed and details recorded of any existing damage or issues.

5.9 Very Large memorials, those above 8' (2.5M) will be visually assessed and if any concerns are recorded the memorial will be cordoned off and if it is safe and possible to do so, Parish Council staff will carry out works to ensure the memorials are safe. If The Parish Council staff are not able to make the memorial safe arrangements will be made for a specialist contractor to undertake and inspection and provide a detailed report including costs and options to make safe.

5.10 Informing Grave Owners; St Dennis Parish Council will endeavour to contact the grave owner where any action has been taken due to a memorial failing a safety inspection. Correspondence will only be sent providing that the grave owner is not recorded as being in the grave or it is apparent that the registered address no longer exists. For any memorials over 50 years of age no correspondence will be sent but a notice will be left on the grave space for a period of not less than 12 months.

The Parish Council will make sure every effort to contact grave owners, however if the grave owner is deceased or the last burial was over 50 years ago in our experience it is unlikely that any response will be received therefore no correspondence will be sent.

5.11 In the event of any memorial failing and inspection that has been installed within the previous 6 years we will contact the memorial mason directly to request repairs be made to ensure the memorials is fully compliant with BS8415.

The stability guarantee of a memorial is the responsibility of the memorial mason and they may provide a longer guarantee period, 6 years is the standard legal period that must be covered by the installation.

5.12 Grave Owners Responsibilities: The registered grave owner has a responsibility to ensure the memorial is made safe through being properly re-fixed to the current BS8415 standard and works must be undertaken by a qualified BRAMM Mason (or equivalent). *Do it yourself repairs by families will not be permitted, memorials must be fixed to the current best standard of the day by a licensed memorial fixer. All costs associated with organising a memorial to be repaired, including the reversal of any works undertaken by St Dennis Parish Council staff, remain the responsibility of the grave owner.*

5.13 Should the grave owners fail to take any action within a reasonable time period then St Dennis Parish Council will look to apply a semi-permanent solution to the memorial, this will involve either laying the memorial flat or sinking the memorial into the ground (monolith style) or other suitable action.

The Parish Council. In its capacity as the burial authority, is legally entitled to recover the cost it may incur in ensuring that the memorial is made safe from the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

St Dennis Parish Council needs to maintain the Cemetery to a high standard and will always try to avoid taking any action that may impact on general grounds maintenance.

5.14 Grave owners are strongly advised to organise and take out their own insurance cover against accidental damage that may occur to the memorial.

The Parish Council cannot be held liable for any damage to a memorial that is caused by any factors outside of our control such as damage due to storms that may cause falling debris and recommend that any insurance covers damage of this type. Your own insurance company may be able to assist, alternatively discuss options with your chosen memorial mason.

6. Memorial Types

6.1 The following types of memorials are permitted in Hall Road Cemetery subject to compliance with rules 6.2 to 6.7 and comply with the dimensions stated in Schedule 1 of this document.

- a) Headstone or Cross
- b) Kerb sets, & stone chippings
- c) Vases
- d) Flat Memorial Tablet
- e) Sloped Memorial Tablet
- f) Baby Memorials
- g) Wooden Crosses
- h) Temporary Grave Marker

6.2 Any memorials covering multiple grave spaces may be to a maximum width of a 7' double grave. Wider memorials may be considered in consultation with the Cemetery Committee.

This allows for families wishing to have a larger memorial over a number of family owned graves to do so.

6.3 Headstones and Crosses; Headstones and Crosses are permissible on any grave space other than the Garden of Rest.

Any Headstone or Cross must not exceed 5' in height or 3" in width including the base and must have a depth of a minimum of 3" and a maximum of 12" (in the majority of its construction)

Commented [LC3]: I personally think crosses should of a different width but this is the original text from the guidance policy.

To ensure safety within the Cemetery and ensure they do not encroach onto other graves it is essential to prescribe a maximum size for new memorials. Note that it is permissible to have a wider memorial up to 7" in width per 2 grave spaces.

6.4 Kerb sets & Chippings – Kerbs are permitted on all traditional graves within the Cemetery. Kerbs must be a maximum of 12" in height and a maximum of 6" in thickness. Note that the maximum height includes for any sub base or foundation works. Landings/ covers shall be of a maximum size of 7" x 3" wide.

To ensure safety within the cemetery and ensure they do not encroach onto other graves it is essential to prescribe a maximum size for new memorials.

6.4.1 The corner stones of a kerb set shall be no more than 1' 2" in height.
This ensures the desired appearance of all burial sections remains.

6.4.2 No chippings will be permitted on any grave that is not enclosed with a kerb set as detailed above.
This ensures the desired appearance of the burial section remains.

6.5 Vases: This type of memorial is permissible on any grave space.

6.5.1 A memorial vase must measure no more than 1'6" in length x 12" wide. It's maximum height should be no more than 12"

To ensure safety within the Cemetery and ensure they do not encroach onto other graves it is essential to prescribe a maximum size for new memorials.

6.5.2 Memorial vases are to be firmly fixed upon the grave space.

6.5.3 On any Lawn Grave or Semi Lawn Graves vases must be placed at the head of the grave only.

6.6 Flat / Angled Memorial Tablet

6.6.1 Flat Memorial Tablets are permissible on any grave space. Angled Memorial Tablets are allowed in the Garden of Rest Only.

6.6.2 On Lawn and Semi Lawn Grave flat memorials tablets must be placed at the head of the grave only.

6.7 Baby Memorials: Baby Memorials are permissible on any grave space in the dedicated Children's Sections or if desired, on a full sized grave where the Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted.

6.8 Wooden Crosses: Wooden grave markers are permissible on any grave space.

6.9 Temporary Grave Marker: Temporary grave markers are permissible on any grave space for a period of no more than 12 months from the date of the funeral.

7. Unauthorised Memorials: Should any unauthorised memorials be placed on or around the grave or any Memorial put in place contravene the Rules the grave will be photographed, and the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial will be contacted. Correspondence will only be sent providing that the grave owner is not recorded as being in the grave or it is apparent that the registered address no longer exists. Should the grave owners fail to take any action within a reasonable time period then St Dennis Parish Council staff will remove the unauthorised items and place them in storage for a period of up to 1 month, after which they may be destroyed.

Pursuant to the Local Cemeteries Order 1977 no tombstone or other memorial may be placed in a cemetery without the permission of the officer appointed for such a purpose by the burial authority. If permission has not been granted the burial authority is permitted to remove memorialisation from the site.

It is essential that the burial sections are maintained to the agreed standard for the benefit of all of our visitors. It is unfair for one or two families to furnish their graves with articles outside of the rules which can cause distress to others when alternative options are available. It is not always possible to notify the grave owner of the need to remove unauthorised memorialisation, particularly if the grave owner has moved and not informed the Parish Council Office. It is for this reason that we hold items that are removed and destroy them after 1 month without necessarily giving notice.

8. The Parish Council, in its capacity as the burial authority, is legally entitled to recover the cost it may incur in removing any unauthorised tombstone or other Memorial from the person to whose order the tombstone or Memorial was placed or within two years from the placing of the tombstone or memorial, or from the personal representative of such a person.

All memorials installed within the Cemetery must be approved by the Parish Council by the granting of a permit. If any memorials are erected outside of the rules or without the proper permission they may be removed and destroyed.

9. Memorial Liabilities and Insurance.

9.1 Any memorial placed on a grave space remains the property of the owner(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial. The owner is therefore responsible for ensuring the memorial remains in a safe condition.

9.2 The Authority can take no responsibility for any damage, accidental or otherwise, to any memorial within the Cemetery. Therefore, any person arranging for the installation of a memorial must consider appropriate insurance that will cover the repair or replacement of a memorial should it become damaged in the future.

It has to be understood that memorials are exposed to all types of weather and maintenance in the burial grounds. Memorial Masons will fix to the best standards of the day however future occurrences such as bad weather may result in memorials becoming damaged or destroyed beyond repair. Your memorial mason will be able to advise of insurance options available to you.

Schedule 1**Hall Road Cemetery**

| Section | Memorial Permitted |
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| Garden or Rest | Cremated remains – Memorial Tablets or Angled Tablets of Granite or Slate laid flat maximum Size 18" x 24" |
| Sections D & I | Baby Memorials |
| Sections A, B, C, E, F, G, H | Head stones – Maximum Dimensions 5' x 3' x 12" Kerb Sets – Maximum Dimensions 18" high x 3' wide x 7' total length to include any sub base. Minimum 4' wide bearer is required. Note: Wider memorials will be permitted to span multiple graves up to 7'in width per 2 grave spaces. |
| All Sections | Vases – Maximum Height 12" |
| All Sections | Wooden Crosses – Maximum Height 4' |
| All Sections | Temporary Markers – For further information on the use of temporary markers please contact the Parish Council Office |
| All Sections | Bushes, shrubs and planted flowers – Please contact the Parish Council for further information relating to planting on individual graves. |