

**DEBENHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Cemetery Policy**  
**1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026**

Regulations made by the Debenham Parish Council under “The Local Authorities’ Cemeteries Order 1977” and the Local Government Act 1972, with respect to the Cemetery at Aspall Road, Debenham.

**A) INTERMENTS – Main Section**

1. Notice of Interment shall be on the Council’s prescribed form and delivered/posted with the fee to the office of the Clerk of the Council at least 48 hours before the proposed interment (exclusive of Sundays, 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.
2. No interment shall take place on Christmas Day or Good Friday, except by permission of the Council.
3. No notice of interment shall be accepted by telephone except in special circumstances.
4. In the case of a (historically) reserved grave plot, the Notice of Interment shall be signed by the legal representative or undertaker, and the plot number endorsed on the Notice.
5. Arrangements for the digging of the grave plot and for the Officiating Minister shall be made by the relatives or undertaker, and the Council shall accept no responsibility in connection therewith.
6. The person applying for the burial shall, prior to the burial, produce Part ‘B’ of the disposal certificate for the retention of the Clerk of the Council.
7. Hours: Interments shall take place on weekdays, between the hours of 9.30am and 4:00pm, unless by special arrangement. All interments on a Sunday shall take place between 10:00am and 1:00pm throughout the year.
8. Depth: The first interment or single interment in each grave plot shall be at a depth of six feet below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave plot.
9. Double depth grave: A layer of earth at least six inches in thickness shall be left between each coffin in the same earthen grave plot for a maximum of two coffins.
10. Depth: Section for Children-Child up to three years - Grave plot - 4 feet deep.

11. The maximum size for a grave plot shall not normally exceed 7' x 3' but, if a grave of greater length than 7' was necessary, the burial shall take place, out of rotation, in the grave plot at the southern end of the row or at the southern end of the next row available.

## **B) INTERMENTS – Cremated Remains Section**

1. Cremated remains shall be interred in plots two feet square in the urn garden.
2. Two burials to be permitted in each plot: the first burial at a minimum depth of 3 feet and the second immediately on top. Caskets shall be marked by engraved identity plate.
3. In certain circumstances, a maximum of four burials per plot may be permitted, providing the deceased are members of the immediate family. This is subject to agreement by the Parish Council.
4. A tablet with approved inscription will be allowed on the space. The tablet is to be sunk level with the surrounding ground and to be 12" x 15" with a thickness of not less than 1" or more than 2" and to be approved material.

## **C) INTERMENTS - Foetal Remains**

The Council has adopted the ICCM's recommended policy for foetal remains.

## **D) MONUMENTAL WORK AND STRUCTURES**

1. No grave plot shall have a memorial erected thereon unless the exclusive right of burial has been purchased.
2. Where the exclusive right of burial in a grave plot has been purchased, application for a memorial shall be made to the Clerk to the Council, and in granting such an application the Council are indemnified against any action or damage that may arise in connection therewith.
3. All headstones are to conform to the following maximum sizes:
  - For burial plots: 3' high, 2' wide and 4" deep with or without a base. If a base is provided for a flower stand or not, it shall not exceed 2'6 in width and 1'3" in depth. A receptacle for flowers shall be sunk in the base.
  - For Urn Garden: 22"x 4" x 2", with or without a base not exceeding 16" x 12"x 3".
4. All headstones must be perpendicular, but a sloping-book type headstone will be permissible provided that its base is no more than 1'3" deep and mounted so that it is contained within the

base area with no part extending beyond the base. Graves presently with a headstone only may have a stone base of suitable size to suit the headstone to a maximum size stated at 3 above.

5. An approved stone memorial vase will be allowed instead of a headstone, but this must also be on a base larger by at least 4" on all sides set level with the ground. No memorial or article of any kind will be allowed elsewhere on the grave plot other than at the head. Inscriptions on memorials are subject to the approval of the Clerk of the Council and should form part of the memorial application. The name of a living person will not be permitted on any memorial, only those who are buried/interred within the plot.
6. Drawings of every proposed memorial with the proposed inscription must be submitted to the Clerk to the Council for approval. Any deviation of the approved memorial and wording will render the monument unapproved and liable to removal.
7. Glass or plastic articles to contain flowers, e.g., jam jars or similar jars or bottles or receptacles shall not be allowed upon grave plots and the Council reserves the right to remove such receptacles from grave plots together with any perished vegetation.
8. All memorials shall be soundly constructed of suitable stone and shall be kept in good repair. Should any memorial fall into disrepair and become a danger to others using the cemetery, the Council will require the owners to repair/remove the memorial, failing which it reserves the right to remove any such memorial.
9. All memorials shall remain at the sole risk of the owners and the Council shall not be responsible for any damage, breakage or theft which may occur to the same.
10. The removing and re-fixing of memorials or the opening of a grave plot shall only be carried out by an approved professional appointed by the owner of the grave.
11. Every headstone removed in the process of opening a grave plot for an additional burial shall be removed by a monumental mason at the risk of the person requiring the grave plot to be opened and shall be temporarily placed in the possession of the monumental mason until a suitable period of time has elapsed for the memorial to be re-sited on the grave.
12. All headstones and memorials removed either for the purpose of allowing an interment to take place or for any other purpose shall be re-erected in accordance with the Regulations in force at the time.
13. The Council reserves the right of passage over all grave plots and, where such a course is necessary, temporarily to cover or remove, without notice, the memorial upon any grave plot in order to permit the re-opening of another grave plot in the vicinity, or for any other purpose.

14. The Council also reserves the right to remove, re-fix, move line-up or alter the position of any memorial as may be required.
15. The name only of the masons may be cut on the headstone in letters not exceeding half an inch in height, providing the consent of the owner is obtained.
16. No headstone is to be erected until a period of at least six months from the date of burial has elapsed.
17. A temporary cross grave marker with name only can be provided by the undertaker/Funeral Director. The cross should be removed when a headstone is in place. No markers other than those supplied by the undertaker/Funeral Director will be allowed.

#### **E) MAINTENANCE OF GRAVE PLOTS**

1. Whenever an interment has taken place, the grave plot shall forthwith be re-filled with sufficient earth to allow for the natural subsidence of the earth, and turf shall be replaced.
2. All grave plots shall be kept flat and level with the adjoining ground. Mounds and gardens on grave plots shall not be permitted, and neither will the planting of shrubs, trees, or plants. A small number of spring bulbs will be permitted. The owners of a grave plot will be requested to remove any items not permitted within a period of time. If this does not take place within the specified time, such items may be removed by the Council.

#### **F) MAINTENANCE OF GOOD ORDER**

1. The Cemetery will be open to the public for admission at all times.
2. All visitors on foot, vehicles, and cyclists should keep to the main drive unless tending graves or attending a funeral.
3. Photographers must not take photographs within the precincts of the cemetery during funerals except upon the express request of the relatives concerned.
4. Any person who wilfully engages in any of the following activities will be liable for prosecution:
  - Destroys or damages any hedging, trees, plant, shrub, floral arrangements, fencing or gates.
  - Defaces any monument, tablet, headstone, or inscription.
  - Plays at any game or sport within the cemetery.
  - Discharges firearms (without the express permission of the Parish Council).
  - Unlawfully disturbs any persons assembled for the purpose of a funeral or tending a grave.
  - Commits any nuisance in the Cemetery.
  - Dogs must be kept on a lead and dog owners must always clean after their dogs.

- Waste must be disposed of in the bins provided.
- Any matters should be reported to the Clerk so they can be addressed as soon as possible.

## **G) ADMINISTRATION**

1. All monies or applications required by this Policy are to be sent to the Clerk of the Council.  
The fees payable are the rates applying at the date the application for the interment/purchase of plot/monumental.
2. No gratuities are allowed to be demanded or received by employees of the Council.
3. Registers of burials are kept by the Clerk of the Council and/or nominated Councillor.  
Searches of data, not covered by GDPR, contained within such registers may be made by appointment with the Clerk.
4. The Council reserves the right to alter or vary the foregoing regulations should it be appropriate to do so.
5. Change of address/contact details -Please let the Parish Council know if you change your address / contact details, otherwise we may be unable to communicate important information or ensure our records are kept up to date.

Reviewed: February 2024 - Adopted 19 February 2024