

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council Cemeteries Regulations



Introduction

The Council welcomes all visitors to their Cemeteries.

Visitors are asked to respect the peace, dignity and reverence of these facilities.

Although these Regulations are a requirement for the management of the Cemeteries, every effort has been made to avoid restricting the rights choices of the individual.

Therefore, these Regulations have been made with a balance between individual right/information and the need to regulate for tidy and safe grounds

- Anyone visiting the Cemeteries must follow these Regulations, and any instructions Staff may give.
- These Regulations are under the Provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

Terms

The Council: Stratton St Margaret Parish Council
The Cemeteries: Lower Stratton Cemetery and Green Road Cemetery
Interment: Refers to a Burial
Plot: Grave

Council Office and Administration

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1. Admission Times and Information

- The Cemeteries are open to the public every day of the year.
- The Council reserves the right to close the Cemeteries without notice, if considered necessary.
- Interments shall not take place on Saturdays, Sundays, and UK Public Holidays.
- Lower Stratton Cemetery** interments must take place between the hours of 9.00am and 1.00pm, graveside services must take place 30 minutes prior to the last interment time.
- Green Road Cemetery** – cremated remains interments must take place between the hours of 9.00am and 1.00pm, graveside services must take place 30 minutes prior to the last interment time.
- Green Road Cemetery is closed to new full interments.
- All enquiries and complaints must be made to the Clerk of the Council.
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2. Interments

- Lower Stratton Cemetery** is open for Full Interments and Cremated Remains.
- Green Road** is open for Cremated Remains, but is closed for new Full interment.
- Provision is made for the maximum of **TWO** cremated interments in biodegradable caskets or containers in **ONE** cremated remains plot.
- A maximum of **THREE** cremated remains caskets can be placed in a new cremated remains plot at the same time.
- Provision is made for the maximum of **FOUR** cremated interments in biodegradable caskets or containers in one full burial plot.
- The Council will not be held responsible if, due to factors outside its control, the full number of interments cannot be achieved.
- Cremated remains can be poured into a plot, but it will then be closed to all future interments.
- The scattering of cremated remains is not allowed.
- Selection of Grave Plots – The Council will allocate the next available Plot.
- All grave plots are 8 feet 6 inches by 4 feet (2745mm x 1220mm), and will be dug to the required depth, but cannot be deepened after the first interment.

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3. Fees

- a. The fee is doubled if the deceased is not a resident of the Parish of Stratton St Margaret.
- b. Fees for funeral services, including the officiating person, are paid separately to the Funeral Director
- c. Non – Resident extra fees – The interment fee will be doubled where;
 - the deceased is not a resident of the Parish. If, exceptionally, the deceased lived in the Parish for the majority of their life but took up residence outside the Parish to receive full time care, in an appropriate facility, within two years of death, resident status will be granted.
 - The executors or other representatives of the deceased must provide to the Council the relevant information for claiming resident status, or,
 - a pre-purchase took place before the resident moved from the area.

4. General Points for the Cemeteries

- a. Please help the Council to provide safe Cemeteries, which are an attractive and peaceful place to visit.
- b. As a responsible plot owner you have your part to play.
- c. All members of the public enter the Cemeteries do so at their own risk.
- d. The Council is not liable (except in respect of personal injury or the death of any person caused by the Council's negligence) for any injury or damage sustained, regardless of the form of action.
- e. Memorial benches are for the use of all visitors and must remain free of any personalised memorabilia and decoration.
- f. Children under 12 are not allowed in the Cemeteries, unless they are under the care of a responsible adult, or with permission from the Council. This is for their safety.
- g. No dogs are permitted in the Cemeteries, except for dogs for assistance and accompanied by their registered user.
- h. Permission from the Clerk of the Council must be requested before photographing, filming or drawing of any objects in the Cemeteries Grounds.
- i. Council representatives are available to assist visitors, but are not allowed to receive tips or any other gifts, or undertake private work within the Cemeteries.

5. Decorations, Floral Tributes, Containers and Borders

We have a responsibility to ensure the Cemeteries are free of obvious dangers and hazards. Such as: glass, pottery, items that break, sharp objects, items placed in paths (reducing the width) and items that are a trip hazard. This includes Items that impede access or maintenance issues.

On occasions, the Council may find it necessary to remove items in the Cemeteries that cause a disturbance, or items that cause offence to visitors. All such items will be removed with or without prior notification and will be available for collection from the Council Office for a period of one month.

- a. Tribute areas – A maximum area of half a metre deep and 1m wide may be taken up in front of a headstone, for tributes and adornments.
- b. Balloons – helium and air filled balloons are not permitted.
- c. Candles, Lanterns and Solar Lights – can be placed, but only those made of plastic – not glass.
- d. Cards – celebrating occasions will be removed by Council representatives after two weeks.
- e. Christmas Wreaths – Council representatives will remove Christmas wreaths that remain on graves as soon as possible after 31 January.
- f. Flower Containers and Vases - unless part of the memorial, these are limited to one per plot, placed immediately in front of any headstone (or at the head of the grave if no headstone is erected), and must not exceed 30.48cm (12 inches) in height, 22.86cm (9 inches) in width and 22.86 cm (9 inches) in thickness including base.
- g. Flowers and Wreaths - After a funeral, the floral tributes may remain for up to 14 days, they will then be removed by the Council. The Council reserve the right to remove deteriorated or withered wreaths and flowers without notice. All dead floral tributes must be placed in the waste bins provided.
- h. Food and Drink – Leaving alcohol, fruit and other food items on graves is not permitted – it attracts pests and animals. Bottles and cans can be dangerous.
- i. Photographs – These must be placed in a plastic frame or laminated, and placed only by the headstone.
- j. Plastic Flowers and Shrubs – These are not permitted in the Cemeteries. The council reserves the right to remove them if they appear. This is because they deteriorate and are often left far too long.
- k. Wooden Crosses – These are not permitted in the Cemeteries

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- l. Cremation Plots - The planting of flowers, shrubs, roses or miniature trees around cremation plots is not permitted.
- m. Burial Plot Borders - Borders around graves or tribute areas are not permitted.
- n. Lawn Area - The Council will provide and maintain a grassed area covering the plot. Plastic Imitation grass is not permitted. The right to enclose any graves on lawn sections will not be granted. No grave mound, raised or sunken footstones, kerbs, chippings, landings, plastic or wooden fencing or memorials of any other description, except approved flower containers, will be permitted on or around a lawn grave.
- j. No decoration, tributes, wind chimes, ornaments etc. shall be placed on Council property, including trees, fence lines and buildings.

6. **Damage or Loss**

The Council does not accept responsibility for damage or loss to a plot, memorials or ornaments etc, howsoever caused. All complaints or allegations of theft should be sent in writing to the Clerk of the Council, as soon as possible after the event.

7. **Conduct in the Cemeteries**

- a. All persons shall conduct themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner, especially when burials are taking place.
- b. No person shall behave in a noisy, disorderly, or unseemly manner, consume alcohol, gamble, hold a picnic or barbecue, sunbathe, play games or music, or use improper or indecent language
- c. No person shall damage, destroy or interfere with any properties within the Cemeteries.
- d. Waste and litter should be placed in the waste bins provided.
- e. No person shall canvass or solicit orders in the Cemeteries.
- f. The Council may ban any person entering if found trying to obtain business.
- g. The Council may at any time exclude anyone who is not a mourner or officially connected with the burial of any deceased person.
- h. The Council may at any time remove anyone in breach of these Regulations, and may take such actions as deemed necessary in the event of unreasonable refusal to leave.

8. **Vehicles and Bicycles**

- a. We strive to provide a vehicle-free environment for pedestrians.
- b. The speed limit in the Lower Stratton Cemetery is ten miles an hour and the requirements of the Highway Code must be observed at all times.
- c. Vehicles may enter only if the occupants are on Council business or visiting a grave, and must drive on the road, not on the grassed areas or pathways between sections.
- d. Bicycles must not be ridden on footpaths, grass areas or planted areas. Bicycles must not be leant against any fixtures, trees or shrubs or cause an obstruction.
- e. The Council will not accept responsibility for loss of damage to any vehicle or bicycle brought into the Cemeteries, howsoever caused.
- f. Council representatives shall have the power to exclude from the grounds any vehicle which is unsuitable.

9. **Applications for Interment and Paperwork Required**

- a. No burials (full or cremated) shall take place without the prior consent of the Council.
- b. At the time of the of the first interment in a full grave, the Grantee or Owner must choose whether to have the ground excavated for up to two interments.
- c. All Notices of Interment shall be given in writing, signed by the Owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.
- d. Completed Interment Notices, certificates and the fees must be delivered to the Council Office at least **FIVE** clear working days for full burials and **FIVE** clear working days for cremated remains (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays), before the planned day of burial.
- e. The Council will not accept any responsibility for any loss or delay which may occur resulting from:
 - Any order or instruction only given by telephone concerning any funeral will be received at the sole risk of the person giving the information.
 - Any discrepancies, errors or omissions in any Notice of Interment or other document which are required to be given to the Council or for liability arising.
 - The late receipt of any document which is required to be given to the Council or for liability arising from late receipt.
- f. If the Council does not receive a completed Notice of Interment by the required time, the Council may decide to delay or postpone the funeral.

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- g. Short Notice Interments – when a burial is booked with less than 24 hours' notice for religious reasons, the Interment Notice must be hand delivered to the Council Offices by 10.00am on the day of burial to confirm booking.
- h. Alteration of day of Interment – if it is necessary to alter or postpone the day or hour previously agreed, notification must be given to the Council no later than 14.00 hrs the day before the interment.
- i. The original Registrar's Certificate (Green Form) and/or the Coroner's Order for burial must be sent to the Council Office, otherwise the burial will not take place. An exception is in the situation where the certificate has been issued, but forgotten by the Funeral Directors. If this happens, the Funeral Director must sign a declaration in accordance with the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 before the funeral can take place. This declaration must explain why the certificate has not been delivered, with a promise to deliver it to the Council Office as soon as possible, preferably on the same day as the burial or, in exceptional circumstances, the next day.
- j. Certificate of Cremation – Before the Council can authorise the interment of cremated remains of any person, a certificate must be produced.
- k. Certificate for Stillborn Children - The Registrar's Certificate must be produced in respect for every stillborn child brought for burial. If the birth does not come within the definition of still-born/still-birth, a certificate from the responsible person in attendance at birth, stating that the birth took place before the 24 week of pregnancy.
- l. Death from Infectious Disease – the Council must be informed by the person giving notice, if the deceased suffered or died from an infectious or notifiable disease or was exposed to radiation.
- m. Appointment of Person to Officiate – Representative of the deceased may appoint a person to perform a ceremony. Notice should be given when the application for interment is made, and it is subject to these Regulations.

10. Exclusive Rights of Burial – please see additional information regarding Exclusive Rights

- a. Residents of the Parish (over the age of 18 years) may purchase **one** plot per household.
- b. Residents may pre-purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial in advance.
- c. Where a non-resident wishes to purchase Exclusive Rights of Burial to a new plot, the Council may show discretion, if it is proven there is a strong family connection to the Parish.
- d. The representative of a deceased resident who does not have a pre-purchased Grant of Exclusive Right, may for that deceased resident, purchase an Exclusive Right of Burial for the interment of the resident.
- e. The Owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial shall be entitled to be interred in the plot, even if at the time of death, they reside elsewhere, but double fees will apply.
- f. The Council's Exclusive Rights of Burial Grants are set for a period of up to 99 years.
- g. At the end of the 99 year grant period, the right of burial can no longer be exercised and all rights relating to the plot and any memorial erected, revert back to the Council.
- h. Please note that the purchase of a plot is for the purchase of the Exclusive Right of Burial in that plot and not for the purchase of the land. The land remains the property of the Council at all times.
- i. Grant Certificate – On payment, the Council will issue a Grant Certificate, and the details will be entered in the Purchase Ledger.
- j. It is the duty of each Plot Owner to notify the Council Office of any change of address.
- k. No plot for which a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial applies, can be opened without the written permission of the registered owner unless the burial is that of the registered owner.
- l. If the burial is of the registered owner, the Council does not need written permission to open the plot. However, the name of the deceased as shown on the Registrar's Certificate for Disposal, must be exactly the same as the name on the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial, to make sure that only the correct person is buried in the plot. Any variation in the names must be explained before the burial can take place.
- m. The Council has the right to demand to see the Deed of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial before a plot is opened.
- n. The registered Plot Owner is responsible for the memorial and for looking after the plot.

11. General Regulations for Burials

- a. All funerals are under the direction of the Council representative present.
- b. The coffin or casket size must be confirmed in writing and the size must be exact including any external fittings. Any alteration to these sizes must be notified to the Council in writing at least **THREE** working days prior to the funeral.
- c. Structure of coffin and caskets can be made of wood, wicker or cardboard.

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- d. No American style coffins will be permitted. Interment in metal or metal lined coffins may be allowed in an earthen grave.
- e. Identification – To every coffin or casket a permanent identification marker must be attached, bearing the name of the deceased and their date of death. The identification marker will be checked by a Council representative before burial.
- f. Each individual body, whether an adult or child, must be brought into the Cemetery in a separate coffin or casket. The only exceptions to this rule will be when a mother dies in childbirth in which case both the mother and child can be in the same coffin or when twins or multiple births die in childbirth.
- g. Funeral Directors and families are to ensure that at least four people are able to bear the coffin to the graveside.
- h. All hearses, carriages and persons entering the Cemetery must proceed to the places directed.
- i. The time booked for a funeral is the time that the cortege is due to arrive at the Cemetery. You must keep to this time to avoid disruption to other funerals.
- j. If the cortege is to arrive early or is delayed, please contact the Council. The funeral may have to wait until it is convenient for it to carry on.
- k. The playing of music as part of a funeral service is allowed with prior approval of the Council. Any bands playing must cease playing at the Cemetery entrance, unless permission has been given by the Council.
- l. Notice of any large funeral gatherings must be made to the Council by the Funeral Directors at least **one** clear working day before the day of the funeral, so arrangements can be made to limit damage to the Cemeteries
- m. Any form of religious service may be used, but any other ceremony must be approved by the Council.
- n. Only Christian or orderly religious service, may take place in consecrated ground.
- o. We welcome any unusual or innovative arrangements subject to prior approval.

12. Grave Preparation

- a. When we dig graves in certain areas of the Cemeteries, we may need to request the removal of a memorial to make room for equipment. The memorial will be re-erected as soon as possible. This is a health and safety requirement.
- b. Placing of Soil – We may without notice need to place excavated spoil on plots adjacent to those that need to be opened for an interment. Any spoil will be removed immediately following the interment and the area restored.
- c. All graves will be dug by Council representatives.
- d. All graves are formed without any internal wall, brickwork, stonework or any other artificial lining.
- e. Backfill after an interment by representatives of the deceased may, at their own risk take place. Please ask the Council Office for more details.
- f. As soon as convenient after the interment, the Council will sow grass seed or lay turf over the whole area of the grave.

13. Memorials – separate guidance is available for Memorial Masons

The installation of new memorials, renovation of existing memorials, and added inscriptions to memorials is carefully controlled by the Council in the following ways, we ensure that:

- a. Only Accredited Masons are able to fix memorials or carry out works on memorials in our Cemeteries, and they must have a BRAMM Business Registration Certificate which indicates that they employ staff with a fixer's licence. This is to ensure the installation of memorials is carried out in a safe manner and to national standards.
- b. Memorial Masons working in the Cemeteries must give a Guarantee of Workmanship – a minimum of 10 years.
- c. Application for acceptance onto the Council's Register of Masons must be made in writing using the appropriate form. (The relevant application form may be obtained from the Council Office)
- d. The Council strongly recommend that the plot owner obtains appropriate insurance cover against all risks for the memorial.
- e. No work must be carried out before the Council has granted permission, and the appropriate fee paid – this includes fixing, re-lettering and cleaning.
- f. Work can only be carried out with the authority of the registered owner(s) of the rights of burial.
- g. Memorials may not be placed over plots until **TWELVE** months have passed since the interment.
- h. The Council allows temporary plot markers for up to twelve months after a full interment. They must be removed when the permanent memorial is fixed.
- i. The Council has the right to decline any memorial/inscription that is deemed inappropriate.
- j. Once the memorial has been erected, the plot owner will be held to be responsible for the future maintenance and safety of that memorial.

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- k. The Council, as part of its memorial management scheme, will routinely inspect memorials and identify work required on memorials that are in a dangerous or dilapidated state.
- l. The Council reserves the right, after notice to the Owner, and their failure to take the necessary action, remove any memorial that infringes these Regulations or is deemed unsafe.
- m. The Owner of the memorial (after notification from the Council) must make it safe without delay, either by removal or repair by an approved Memorial Mason. The costs of making the memorial safe will be borne by the Owner.

14. Cremated Remains Tablets

- a. The Council will provide a slab of 60.0cm x 60.0cm x 30.4cm (24" x 24" x 2")
- b. Memorials shall consist of desk tablets, manufactured in one piece, mounted on the slab provided by the Council measuring a maximum of 76.00cm (18") in length, 76.00cm (18") in width, and 23.00/8.00cm (9"/3") in height.
- c. Children's Sections - A variety of memorials are permitted, e.g. tablet, plinth, vase, small headstone or book. The maximum permitted is 60.0cm (24") in height, a maximum width of 60.0cm (24"), 30.4cm (12") in depth.
- d. Additional memorial tablets in front of headstones, providing further memorial information upon full burial plots are allowable but must be made of hard natural stone or granite, must lie flat on the ground and be of a flat tablet stone design only. Finished height should be ground level and it should abut up to the base stone of the headstone memorial. They must conform with the following dimensions: Maximum 45.7cm (18") in height, 45.7cm (18") in width and a minimum thickness of 5.1cm (2") and a maximum of 7.6cm (3").
- e. An ashes memorial must be removed, for the second or subsequent interment by an approved Memorial Mason.
- f. Natural flowers only can be placed in the vase situated within the memorial.
- g. No other forms of decoration or adornment on the plot is permitted.

15. Grave Memorials

- a. No memorial shall be placed in the Cemeteries without the prior consent of the Council.
- b. Memorials must be made of hard natural stone or granite of a design approved by the Council and must conform with the following dimensions: 91.5cm (36") in height, 60.9cm (24") in width, a minimum thickness of 5.1cm (2") and a maximum of 7.6cm (3"), erected onto a base with a finished height set at ground level, not above and not exceeding 91.5cm (36") in width, 45.7cm (18") in depth and 7.62cm (3") thickness
- c. Plot owners must have the Plot number inscribed on the memorial and make sure that the number can be seen.
- d. Natural flowers only can be placed in the vase situated within the memorial.

Adopted by Full Council on 29 September 2021

Adopted by Open Spaces Committee on 31 July 2024