



WATERINGBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery Rules for Families

Any enquiries or correspondence relating to these grounds and their management and maintenance should be directed to the Clerk, Wateringbury Parish Council by emailing clerk@wateringburyparish.gov.uk

These rules and conditions were agreed by Wateringbury Parish Council on 2nd September 2025 and supersede all previous rules and conditions.

In the event of the Council incurring any additional costs due to a breach of these rules, it reserves the right to charge the plot holders for these costs.

General Rules

1. By signing the applicant statement on the forms applicants are agreeing that they have read and understood these rules and undertake to abide by them. It is the responsibility of the applicant to have had sight of the rules which are available on the Wateringbury website.
2. Wateringbury Parish Council maintains all records relating to the Cemeteries, hereafter referred to as the grounds. If family history enquiries are made these are at the discretion of the Clerk and a fee may be charged.
3. Grave spaces in the current Cemetery are by Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) for a period of 100 years at the end of which the graves revert to the Council and can be reallocated or re used if required. Memorials on such expired plots may be reclaimed by the family or re-sited or removed by the Council.
4. This Council currently issues a Grant of Right as proof of ERB. ERB/Grant holders will be advised by letter at the time of first interment or reservation to keep the paperwork issued along with their Grant of Right in a safe place and to ensure that their next of kin is aware of its whereabouts. They will also be advised to transfer the ERB/Grant of Right to their next of kin or another person within their lifetime to avoid disagreements following the death of themselves or another family member regarding rights to use of the grave space in the future. Applicants for further interments or memorials shall be required to produce a copy of the ERB/Grant of Right. In the absence of this the procedure outlined in the Appendix to these rules shall be followed.
5. The legal title of an ERB/Grant of Right can only be issued in one name but may be transferred to another name either before or after the death of the ERB/Grant of Right holder. Families wishing to do so under this, or any other circumstance should complete an Exclusive Right of Burial Transfer form. A fee will be charged for this.

6. Earthen burial plots can be reserved and paid for in advance and will be for a term of 100 years. Opening fees and memorial fees will then be payable when the plots are used at the rates in operation at the time. Reservations are not refundable except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Clerk.
7. In the case of reopening of plots or the use of a reserved plot the form must be accompanied by a copy of the ERB/Grant of Right so that the Council can ensure that the applicant is entitled to use the plot. If the applicant is not the holder of the grant of right, they will be required to apply to the office to have the ownership transferred before the plot can be used. If a copy of the Grant of right cannot be provided the procedure in the appendix must be followed. Transfer of reserved plots for the use of a deceased person who is not a Watlingtonbury resident or a former inhabitant of Watlingtonbury shall not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and always at the discretion of the Clerk and upon payment of trebled fees plus a double of the 20% amount paid at the time of reservation. (The latter applicable on all reservations made after 2nd September 2025)
8. Memorials may only be erected, amended or removed with the written approval of the Council. An application form signed by the ERB holder and accompanied by the appropriate fee should be submitted to the Council.
9. Masons employed by families to carry out maintenance work upon memorials shall submit in advance an application form along with proof of their Public Liability Insurance, a method statement for the proposed work including details of any chemicals to be used and a Risk Assessment.
10. All fees charged on these grounds shall include the charge for maintenance which will only be charged once for each plot. Maintenance in this context comprises topping up the graves in case of sinkage's and mowing where it fits in with the burial authority mowing regime. It does not relate to the maintenance of memorials which is the responsibility of the Grant holder.
11. The grounds are for Watlingtonbury residents. A Watlingtonbury resident is classed as someone who can provide a paid council tax and/or polling card. If these cannot be provided, other forms of proof of residency may be requested by the Clerk. Non-residents can be buried in the Watlingtonbury Cemetery, for additional fees. The Cemetery Clerk may have discretion to waive this under certain circumstances, such as a new resident of Watlingtonbury who has only lived here for days or weeks (Some proof of residency will still be required) or a resident who lived here for many years and had to move out of the area into assisted living etc. (Some proof of residency will still be required)
12. Baby and child plots are only issued to families who are Watlingtonbury residents. These plots are free of charge for children up to 12 months. These plots are for a single earthen burial. Two additional ashes internments will be permitted in the same plot thereafter, subject to the standard residential fees at the time.
13. There is not a choice of plot, these are allocated at the discretion of the Clerk to facilitate the management of the grounds. Fees are reviewed annually, and changes come into effect upon the 2nd of September.

14. The grounds are public open spaces that are available for all to visit and walk through. Therefore, the Council cannot be held responsible for damage to, or theft from, graves, memorials or benches. Any repairs or replacement will be at the Council's discretion.
15. The placing of sentimental items such as toys or photographs is only permitted at the time of interment. They will be removed and disposed of by Council staff after one month and families should remove them during this time if they wish to retain them. Dead fresh flowers and faded artificial flowers will be periodically removed by the estates staff at their discretion. It is not permitted to lay fresh flowers in cellophane, bins are provided for families to dispose of this packaging before placing the flowers. The quantity of floral tributes laid at the time of burial must not exceed the immediate area surrounding the grave space and must under no circumstances spill over onto adjacent plots. Floral tributes shall not exceed 60 centimetres in height. Under no circumstances are food or drink to be placed on grave spaces or ashes plots. In the event of the Council incurring any additional costs due to a breach of these rules, it reserves the right to charge the plot holders for these costs.
16. The grounds are places of remembrance, peace and quiet reflection and any person behaving in an inappropriate manner may be asked to leave by a member of the Council's staff. Cycling and the playing of games is forbidden in the grounds.
17. Visitors may be accompanied by a dog provided it is kept on a lead **AT ALL TIMES**. Any dog excreta must be removed by the owner.

Rules for earthen burials in Cemetery

1. Graves are to be a maximum of double depth allowing two interments over time. Funeral directors are required to appoint their own gravedigger and to ensure that he/she is properly insured for such work in a public space. Gravediggers are required to notify the Clerk when they arrive at and leave the grounds in the interests of their own safety.
2. Coffins must be made of biodegradable materials.
3. Grave spaces will be levelled and grassed over 3-6 months after interment to facilitate the good upkeep of the cemetery.
4. Individual planting of graves spaces is not permitted and the erection of kerbstones and the placing of vases, planters, solar lights or other decorative items is not permitted. Tributes such as flowers and wreaths may only be placed at the head of the grave beneath the headstone, except at the time of interment. Funeral flowers will be left in place and then removed by the estates staff after one month. Dead, or faded artificial, flowers will be periodically removed by the Estates staff at their discretion.
5. It is permitted to erect a wooden plaque or cross on a grave at the time of interment when the intention is to place a headstone after the 6 months settling period.

6. Permission to erect a headstone or add an inscription shall only be permitted once a memorial application form containing details of the size, design, materials and inscription has been submitted by the funeral director or stonemason and approved by the Clerk. Headstones may be placed on graves after 6 months settling period. If a second burial takes place the headstone must be removed by the funeral director and only replaced at the end of the 6 months period.
7. An area has been set aside for the interment of children aged 12 years and under. Two further ashes interments will be permitted thereafter.

Advisory notes

1. GDPR STATEMENT: Watlington Parish Council will retain contact information provided by funeral directors and applicants on forms completed at the time of burial or reservation. It will be stored securely in the cemetery records to enable the Council to establish rights to the plot in the future and for the efficient management of the cemetery. By signing such forms, the applicants agree to retention of their data.
2. Applicants should take careful notice of the Rules and Regulations of the Cemetery grounds produced by Watlington Parish Council at the time of completing application forms for interments or reservations. They will be required to abide by these and should also note that Watlington Parish Council may change these rules from time to time and that they will be required to abide by any such alternations.
3. The ground is primarily clay and is susceptible to water logging and visitors should therefore take care not to slip and use the pathways in wet condition.
4. As the only open cemetery in Watlington, growth and development will need to take place to keep up with future demand as well as keeping up with Government Regulations. This will mean alterations and modifications will occur on occasion.

Appendix A

Procedure for allowing use of plot or the erection of a memorial in the absence of copy of ERB/Grant of Right

If a copy of the ERB/Grant of Right is not provided to the Council and then the Clerk will ask for further information regarding the applicant in order to establish the rights to the plot. If upon examination of the Councils records and such information, it is not possible to establish the applicant's right then the Council has the discretion to refuse use of the plot or approval for a memorial. Alternatively, the Council shall have the discretion to ask the applicant to sign a disclaimer before a commissioner for oaths on the appropriate form. A fee will be charged for administration of this. An administrative fee will be charged for issuing a replacement deed for ERB/Grant of Right.

Appendix B

Maintenance of Memorials

We want our cemeteries to be places of peace and quiet reflection and work hard to keep them in good condition. We also have a duty to make sure they are safe, and therefore carry out a rolling programme of inspections.

How it works – Inspections of Cemetery memorials are required by the [Health and Safety Executive](#), every 5 years minimum. Our inspections are carried out with care and consideration, by members of staff trained under the ICCM's Memorial Inspection Course. The Council memorial safety policy is followed to determine any concerns of a memorial. If a memorial is deemed as unsafe the council has a duty to take immediate action to make it safe.

What we'll do –

- The memorial will be temporarily stabilised by wooden stakes positioned to the rear of the stone and secured with a binder/strap. Care will be taken making sure that no damage is caused to the memorial and all actions will be recorded.
- A notice will be displayed on/near the memorial warning of its unstable condition.
- In extreme circumstances of immediate danger to the public or persons working in the cemetery, the memorial may be laid down.
- Our action is only intended as a temporary measure, and we appreciate owners of memorials and head stones will wish to have the memorial reinstated as quickly as possible.
- The council will be in contact with the Grant Holder as soon as possible, where a memorial is found to be unsafe.
- The Grant Holder will need to contact their stone mason that fitted the original memorial, or an accredited stone mason who will be able to carry out the work to make the memorial permanently safe and to reinstate.
- Any memorial found to be unsafe, must be made permanently safe within 18 months.
- Please note memorial inspections will be taking place in September 2025, to keep up with the 5-year inspection requirement. Notices to the Watlington Residents will take place for at least one month prior to the commencement of inspections.
- Going forward, future inspections will continue on a 5-year rolling basis, with all memorials inspected during this timeframe. Memorials deemed to be high or medium risk will be inspected on a more frequent basis dependent on their risk profile, in accordance with the councils Memorial Safety Policy.