



**Southborough Town Council**

**Burial Ground Regulations**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1. These regulations apply to all burial grounds owned and/or managed by Southborough Town Council. Currently the sites include:

- Southborough Cemetery
- St Peter's Churchyard (closed for burials and only maintained by Southborough Town Council)

## **2. Contact Details**

2.1. All funeral bookings, general enquiries and comments regarding Southborough Cemetery or St Peter's Churchyard should be directed to:

Southborough Town Council  
Southborough Civic Centre  
Council Offices  
137 London Road  
Southborough  
Kent TN4 0NA  
**Tel:** 01892 529176  
**Fax:** 01892 541402  
**Email:** [admin@southboroughcouncil.co.uk](mailto:admin@southboroughcouncil.co.uk)  
**Website:** [www.southborough-tc.gov.uk](http://www.southborough-tc.gov.uk)

The Council office is open from 09:00 to 13:00 Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays and any other Public Holidays.

2.2. These Regulations are in addition to the provisions of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 and any other appropriate regulations currently in force.

## **3. Admission to the Burial Grounds**

3.1. Southborough Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard are open for visitors every day of the year. Southborough Cemetery is open during the following times, though light will dictate some variation:

April to September	09:00 to 19:00 (10:00 on Sundays)
October to March	09:00 to 16:00 (10:00 on Sundays)

As the gates will be locked at the closing time given above, all visitors and their vehicles are asked to leave the cemetery in good time. No person is permitted to be in the Cemetery outside of the published opening hours without the express permission of the Town Clerk. Please note there is no vehicular access on 26 December each year.

- 3.2. Southborough Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard are places of peace and quiet reflection. They are also workplaces. Visitors to the sites are welcome, but please respect the special nature of the sites, the needs of other users and safety factors. No games, sports, riding of bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, or similar are allowed in the burial grounds. No consumption of alcohol or drugs may take place within the burial grounds and anybody under the effects of such substances will not be admitted.
- 3.3. Any person creating a nuisance or a disturbance, such as interfering with a funeral, grave, headstone, flowers, trees etc, will be required to leave the cemetery immediately and may be the subject of subsequent legal action.

- 3.4. Children under the age of 14 are welcome in the cemetery but must be supervised by a responsible adult. It is particularly important that children are not allowed to climb on any monuments within the cemetery or churchyard.
- 3.5. No dogs are permitted in the cemetery with the exception of Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs or other recognised Assistance Dogs, or with the express permission of the Town Clerk.
- 3.6. No vehicles are permitted in St Peter's Churchyard. Vehicles are permitted in Southborough Cemetery but must not exceed the speed limit of 10mph and must obey any instructions given to them by an officer of the Council. Vehicles must stick to the main driveways and avoid parking so as to cause a nuisance or damage to any graves or grassed areas. The Council or any of its employees cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to any vehicle or its contents whilst in the Cemetery.
- 3.7. Visitors with disabilities or other special requirements should contact the office for any enquiries or assistance.

#### **4. General Regulations**

- 4.1. No employee of the Council is allowed to take any gratuity, or to undertake paid private work of any kind in connection with Southborough Cemetery or St Peter's Churchyard, either in their own time or during their employed hours.
- 4.2. No person shall canvass or solicit business in the burial grounds.
- 4.3. All fees for interments or memorial works should be paid in full to the Council in advance.
- 4.4. The Council will publish a scale of fees and charges annually. If the deceased was a resident of Southborough, purchase and interment fees will be at the standard rate but if the deceased was a non-resident of Southborough, these fees will be doubled. A resident is defined as somebody who, immediately prior to their death, was a resident of Southborough. There are separate provisions in relation to the interment of babies and small infants. For clarification, contact the Council Offices.
- 4.5. The Council reserves the right to amend these regulations and to deal with any circumstances or contingency not provided for in the regulations, as necessary.

#### **5. Graves**

- 5.1. Graves are available in Southborough Cemetery, which consist of consecrated and unconsecrated sections. The selection of grave spaces shall be at the final discretion of the Council, but the wishes of applicants will be met wherever possible.
- 5.2. Every interment shall take place in a private grave (although there is a public grave option for babies and small infants). Private graves are graves to which an Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted.
- 5.3. The Exclusive Right of Burial for a grave can be purchased for a period of 60 years. The Exclusive Right of Burial also allows a memorial to be placed on the grave.
- 5.4. The Exclusive Right of Burial cannot be purchased in advance of need, i.e. graves cannot be pre-purchased or reserved. The Exclusive Right of Burial can only be transferred to another person via the legal process laid out in the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977.
- 5.5. Memorials will only be permitted on purchased graves. Memorials must conform to the regulations given at 9 below.
- 5.6. The types of graves available are Traditional Graves, Lawn Graves, Cremated Remains Graves and Children's Graves. Traditional Graves can accommodate full memorials including kerb sets and can be planted over the length of the grave; Lawn Graves are laid to lawn and only a headstone is allowed, with a small space at the head of the grave available for planting; Cremated Remains Graves are for the burial of cremated remains only and Children's Graves are reserved for the burial of babies and small infants, both of which allow for a lawn-style headstone.

- 5.7. All graves will be excavated and prepared for interment by the Council or their appointed contractors. No other person or company will be allowed to undertake any excavation within the cemetery except with the express permission of the Town Clerk. The depth of each grave will be determined by the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977.
- 5.8. Following the interment the Council will level the grave and either re-turf or topsoil and seed it as appropriate to the season.

## **6. Coffins**

- 6.1. Coffins and urns for burial must be made from suitable biodegradable materials such as wood, wicker, cane, bamboo, wool, cardboard etc.

## **7. Booking of Interments**

- 7.1. A provisional booking for a funeral may be made by telephone or email to the Council Offices.
- 7.2. The provisional booking should be followed up by the submission of a completed Notice of Interment (form supplied by Southborough Town Council) to the Council Offices at least 5 working days in advance of the intended date and time of the funeral. Receipt of the fully and correctly completed Notice of Interment will act as confirmation of the provisional booking.
- 7.3. The **exact size** of the coffin, casket or container must be given in writing to the Council as soon as possible after the provisional booking, together with any other pertinent information relating to its size and shape (e.g. locking bar handles, casket shape, wicker coffin etc). The Council will subsequently add a suitable amount to the given size in order to determine the dimensions of the grave to be excavated.
- 7.4. As much information relating to the funeral as possible must be given to the Council in advance, especially if it is unusual, e.g. large number of mourners expected, motorbike cavalcade, jazz band, piper etc.
- 7.5. If the grave is purchased and is to be reopened for a further interment, the written permission of the registered grave owner must be given.
- 7.6. It is the responsibility of the person making the funeral arrangements to ensure that any memorial on the grave is removed from it at least 48 working hours prior to the date and time of the funeral.
- 7.7. The Certificate given by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, an order of the Coroner or a Certificate of Cremation must be delivered to the Council Offices prior to the funeral.
- 7.8. The Council will determine the appropriate fees to be paid for the funeral.

## **8. Interments**

- 8.1. From April to October, funerals will normally only be permitted Monday to Thursday 09:30 – 15:00, Friday 09:30 – 13:00 (excluding Bank or other Public Holidays). From November to March, funerals will normally only be permitted Monday to Thursday 9:30 – 14:30, Friday 9:30 – 13:00 (excluding Bank or other Public Holidays).
- 8.2. All funerals will be subject to the control of the Council's ground staff, who will meet the cortege and direct it to the Chapel and/or grave as appropriate.
- 8.3. The time appointed for an interment must be punctually observed. The Council reserves the right to delay a late arriving funeral in the event that it impacts on another service.
- 8.4. Services in the Southborough Cemetery Chapel must not exceed 30 minutes unless special arrangements for a longer time have been made with the Town Clerk. Please note there is NO electricity at the Chapel.
- 8.5. It is the responsibility of the person making the funeral arrangements to organise a Minister or Officiate for the funeral if one is required.

- 8.6. Any floral tributes from the funeral will be placed on top of the grave following backfilling and will remain in situ for a minimum of 14 days before being cleared by Council staff (unless family have already removed them).

## **9. Memorials**

- 9.1. The Council has adopted a Memorials Management Policy dealing with current and future memorial installations, safety inspections and making safe unstable memorials. Masons carrying out work in the burial grounds must comply with the Council's Memorials Management Policy.
- 9.2. Only those memorial mason businesses that are BRAMM accredited, and those memorial masons that hold a current BRAMM Fixer Licence, will be able to work in Southborough burial grounds. Fixers who do not hold a BRAMM Fixer Licence will only be permitted to work under the direct supervision of a mason who holds a BRAMM Fixer Licence.
- 9.3. Memorials will only be permitted on purchased graves.
- 9.4. Memorials other than those fixed by a BRAMM accredited memorial mason are not allowed. Fences cannot be erected around a grave nor the space defined, other than through planting of suitable plants or the installation of proper kerb-sets by a BRAMM accredited memorial mason. On lawn sections, planting is confined to the head of the grave and no objects must be placed on the length of the grave.
- 9.5. Before any memorial may be erected or works undertaken to an existing memorial, an application must be submitted to the Office Administrator on the appropriate form available from the Council's website. The grave owner must sign the form to give their permission for the proposed memorial/works. On approval by the Council, a permit will be issued to the responsible memorial mason.
- 9.6. Memorials must be constructed of materials suitable to the environment and period of grave lease. All materials must be approved by the Council, furthermore, the Council reserves the right to reject an application for any memorial that it deems unsuitable.
- 9.7. The maximum height of memorials on Lawn, Cremated Remains and Children's Graves is 3'6", the maximum width is 2'6" and the maximum depth is 14". The memorial must be a minimum of 3" thick. On Traditional Graves the Council will consider applications for larger memorials, maximum height 5' and width 2'6", subject to the Council being satisfied that the installation is compliant with current recognised industry standards. The Council will also consider the installation of kerb sets, if they are constructed to current recognised industry standards.
- 9.8. The memorial mason must inscribe the company name only on the reverse of the stone towards the base in lettering not more than 1" high. No trademark, phone number or other advertising will be allowed. The memorial mason must also inscribe the grave number towards the bottom right-hand side of the reverse of the memorial in letters not exceeding 1" high. On kerbstones the grave number must be inscribed on the right-hand side of the foot kerb.
- 9.9. Memorial masons must remove all arisings from the cemetery at the conclusion of their work and must leave the area in a tidy condition. It is not possible for memorials to be stored in the cemetery prior to re-fixing following a burial – all such memorials must be removed from the site by the memorial mason appointed to remove the memorials prior to the grave being excavated.

## **10. Care of Graves and Memorials**

- 10.1. All memorials are erected at the sole responsibility of the owner and the Council shall not be held responsible for any damage to or caused by the memorial, howsoever incurred. The memorial remains the responsibility of the grave owner during the lease period of the grave.

The Council reserves the right to repair or make safe any memorial, which becomes unsafe or falls into disrepair, and to recover any expenses from the registered owner. The Council will undertake routine safety checks on all memorials and will notify the grave owner via their last registered address of any necessary works required to make the memorial safe. The grave owner will be given a period of 6 months from the date of the letter to arrange the necessary repairs. The Council reserves the right to temporarily make safe any memorials that pose a threat until such works are completed. If the grave owner does not arrange for the repairs to be made, the Council may repair or remove the memorial at the owner's expense.

- 10.2. Grave spaces must be kept in a neat and tidy condition and all litter must be removed from the site.
- 10.3. All flower holders or other items left on graves must be made of non-breakable material. Any items left on graves are at the owners' risk and the Council cannot be held responsible for any damage to them, however caused. The Council may remove any articles from any grave that are likely to cause risk, damage, or offence to other visitors to the cemetery or which interfere with the Council's maintenance of the site.
- 10.4. No trees may be planted on graves. Only suitable planting, such as annual bedding or small shrubs, will be permitted on traditional graves and in the head border of lawn graves. The Council may remove any plants that it considers unsuitable or that infringe on other grave spaces or interfere with the Council's maintenance work.

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