**Ottery St Mary Cemetery Rules & Regulations**

**Overview:** The cemetery is owned and maintained by Ottery St Mary Town Council. It is a peaceful place for people to remember and mourn their loved ones. Visitors are asked to respect this environment.

These rules are effective from June 1st, 2025, and replace any earlier versions.

**Burials**

1. **Funeral Director**: Only a nationally approved Funeral Director can carry out burials.
2. **Permission**: You need permission from the Town Clerk or administrator before any burial or cremated remains can be interred.
3. **Burial Requests**: Funeral Directors must submit burial requests at least 3 working days before the planned burial.
4. **Grave Specifications**: No metal coffins or large American-sized coffins are allowed. Grave digging must meet the Council's standards.
5. **Tributes**: Fresh and artificial flowers may be placed only in the flower holder on the memorial stone.
6. **Exclusive Right of Burial**: Owning an Exclusive Right of Burial means you have the right to decide who can be buried in a specific grave space, apply for a memorial to be erected and the engraving thereof, for a period of 50 years. It's important to note that this does not mean you own the land itself, but rather the right to use that grave space for burials.

Here are some key points about Exclusive Rights of Burial:

**Duration**: The right is granted for a specific period, after which it can often be renewed.

**Ownership**: Up to two people can jointly own the right, but all owners must agree before any burial or changes to the grave can occur.

**Transferability**: The right can be transferred to another person, either during the owner's lifetime or through their estate after death.

**Documentation**: A Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is issued as proof of ownership and should be kept securely.

1. **Reservation**: Plots can be reserved with payment. All first interments shall take place in grave spaces in rotation.

**Memorials**

1. **Materials**: Only natural materials (e.g., stone, granite, or marble) and coloured in a shade of black, brown, white or grey are allowed for memorials. Plastic, wood and metal memorials are not permitted.
2. **Size**: Headstones must meet specific size guidelines and must be set on a plinth.
3. **Memorials for Burial plots**: Standard headstones only shall be permitted in the cemetery, measuring 27” high X 21” wide X 3” thick. These will be set on a plinth 24” wide X 12” deep (front to back) X 3” high.  Concrete sub bases for standard headstones must be set flush with ground level, not visible, and conform to the British Standard size. All memorial stones and memorial vases should have the correct grave number and the mark of the stonemason etched on the reverse side of the memorial. Up to **two** memorial vases are permitted integral to the headstone.
4. **Memorials for Cremation plots: Cremation memorials rules differ dependant on position of the plot; Cremation plots in; Older Plots West and New Plots West** - The dimensions of every cremation tablet shall be no more than 18” x 18”  and fixed on a 24” x 24” paving slab provided by the Monumental Mason (the paving slab to be laid under the tablet,  with the tablet laid on top, so that its upper surface is level with the ground) . The tablet will be laid flat in position.  **Roman Catholic Older Plots East** – A perpendicular headstone not exceeding 18”x 9” x 2”. Set on a plinth 18” x 9” x 2” in each corner. (the design of which will be subject to approval by the Town Council). Each tablet should have the correct interment number etched on the bottom left-hand corner.  Memorial vases are permitted integral to the tablet.
5. **Inscriptions**: Inscriptions should be simple, in black, white, gold, or silver. Artistic designs and photo images should also be simple, no larger than 5’’ x 5’’ and positioned in the top left corner, top right corner or top centre of the headstone. Approval is required from the Town Council in relation to the inscription and any artistic design. The use of subtle colours for the design is subject to approval from the Town Council.
6. **Vases**: Up to two memorial vases are permitted integral to the headstone, and it must be made of appropriate materials. A free standing memorial vase, used in place of a memorial stone or tablet shall be cuboid in shape measuring no more than 7” x 7” x 7” made from granite, stone, or marble and coloured in a shade of black, brown, white or grey.
7. **Maintenance**: The owner is responsible for maintaining the memorial, ensuring it's safe and visually acceptable. The Council can intervene if necessary. Should the memorial stone, or memorial vase become unstable within 5 years of its erection/placement, the monumental mason shall return and refix it without cost to the Town Council according to the standards of NAMM/BRAMM.

**Cremations**

1. **Caskets**: Only biodegradable caskets are allowed.
2. **Placement**: Cremated remains must be placed at least 18 inches below ground in the designated areas or may be placed in family graves.

**Maintenance & Safety**

1. **Cemetery Care**: The Town Council will maintain the cemetery, including grass cutting. It is the responsibility of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial to maintain the memorial stone and grave in a safe and sightly condition and to remove dead flowers etc. The Town Council reserves the right to take any remedial action should it prove necessary. In the event of the Town Council having to undertake any maintenance works in relation to a grave or a memorial stone, which is the responsibility of the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial and which the said holder has failed to carry out, then the Town Council will reclaim all costs incurred by them from the said holder in so carrying  out such works.
2. **Damage**: The owner is responsible for any damage caused to the memorials.

**General Rules**

1. **Waste**: Please dispose of waste in the provided containers.
2. **No Planting**: Plants, shrubs, or trees are not allowed to be planted on graves.
3. **No Non-Approved Items**: For safety and environmental reasons, items like toys, lanterns, glass ornaments, and balloons are not allowed after two months following interment.
4. **On the day of interment**: flowers and wreaths may be place on the actual area of the grave, but the Town Council reserves the right to remove these tributes after a period of two months.
5. **Work:** To agree not to carry out any work on site whilst a funeral is in progress.
6. **Fees:** The Town Council reserves the right from time to time to make any alterations in fees and charges or the foregoing Rules and Regulations.
7. **Damage and loss:** The Town Council does not accept responsibility for any damage or loss occasioned to any person, vehicle equipment or otherwise in Ottery St Mary Cemetery.

**Dogs & Behaviour**

1. **Dogs**: Dogs must be kept on a leash, and owners must clean up after them.
2. **Respectful Behaviour**: No disruptive behaviour is allowed, and legal action will be taken for any damage or inappropriate actions.

By following these rules, we can ensure that Ottery St Mary Cemetery remains a respectful and peaceful place for everyone.

For further information please contact;

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