

# Parish Council of Coleford

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Miss V Watts  
Clerk to the Council  
Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428  
Email: [clerk@colefordpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@colefordpc.org.uk)

Gallant Hill Farm  
Foxcote  
Radstock  
BA3 5YB

## Cemetery Policy Adopted August 2020

### Coleford Parish Council Cemetery

1. The Cemetery is open all year round.
2. It's an offence to create a disturbance, commit a nuisance, interfere with any grave, play games or sport (Local Authority Cemetery Order, 1977).
3. No dogs will be admitted (except guide dogs).
4. Any religious or other service requires the prior authorisation of the Parish Clerk.

### The Burial Authority

1. Coleford Parish Council is the 'Burial Authority'.
2. The Parish Council manages the cemetery, with the Parish Clerk administering burial requests, allocating grave spaces and keeping burial records.
3. A plan of the cemetery may be seen at the office of the Clerk of the Parish Council. No funerals will be allowed on Sundays.

### Arranging a burial or interment

1. Anyone requesting a burial or interment of cremated remains must complete the Council's request form and give it to the Parish Clerk at least three working days before the date planned for the funeral.
2. On every re-opening for an interment in a purchased grave, the written consent of the owner, or his or her representative must be left with the Clerk of the Parish Council. A purchased grave if unattended for 25 years will revert to the ownership of the Parish Council.
3. The Clerk will acknowledge the request and state the fee. The Clerk will confirm the arrangement and allocate a grave space on receipt of the certificates required by law. The time fixed for the funeral will be the time the procession is to arrive at the cemetery gates.
4. As a guide hours of interment will be between 10.00am to 6.00pm from 25<sup>th</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> September, and 10.00am to 4.00pm from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 24<sup>th</sup> March.

5. The person organising the funeral must arrange for:
  - A priest, minister or other person to officiate
  - Excavation of the allocated grave or cremation space
  - Sufficient bearers to convey the coffin with due reverence
6. Persons bear coffins at their own risk. The Council accepts no liability.
7. Interment may only take place when the Parish Clerk receives confirmation from the funeral directors that all fees are to be paid.
8. Fees are due within three working days of the funeral or interment.
9. No-one acting on behalf of the Council may accept a gratuity.
10. Other rules:
  - The Council permits only one funeral or interment at any one time unless by prior arrangement
  - The Council's permission is needed before scattering cremated ashes
  - No coffin or cremation container may be opened, interred open or removed
  - Only HM Coroner, the Courts or a Chief Constable may order removal of a body
  - Only the Home Secretary may order an exhumation
11. If, in the Clerk's opinion, there is a dispute or doubt over the application, the Council reserves the right to refuse, cancel or delay any burial or interment.

## Memorials

1. Permission must be sought to erect a memorial, cut or add an inscription or carry out other work.
2. There is a fee payable with the application.
3. Applications must include the materials to be used, dimensions, specification and wording of an inscription.
4. The Council allows only masons listed in the *British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons* or in the *Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers* to erect or work on memorials.
5. The Council permits memorials only at the head of a grave.
6. Maximum dimensions and specifications allowed are:
  - Headstone: 2'6" high and 2'6" wide (760 x 760 mm)
  - Foundation: 3' long and 18" wide (900 x 450 mm)
  - Hardwood cross: 2'6" high, 20" wide, 4" deep (760 x 500 x 100 mm)
  - Cremation tablet: 18" square (450 x 450 mm)
7. All fixing (and re-fixing) of memorials must comply with current British standards.
8. All stone memorials must be inscribed with the grave number
9. The name of the mason may be inscribed in a discrete location on the memorial like the reverse side of the memorial base.
10. Stones recommended for use in Coleford Cemetery:
  - Bath Stone
  - Yorkshire Grey (York)
  - Cornish Granite
 White Marble is not recommended.

11. Memorials erected with the Council's permission remain at the sole risk of the owner. The Council takes no responsibility for any damage, however, caused.
12. An owner is responsible for keeping the memorial in good repair. If an owner fails to do this, the Council may repair or remove the memorial and recover costs.
13. Grave boundaries of any material will not be approved.

### **Preparation of graves**

1. Funeral directors are responsible for:
  - Employing the grave digging contractor
  - Ensure the grave digging contractor complies with the Coleford Parish Council's Grave digging Code of Practise.
  - Digging the grave, making a tidy temporary soil heap and back filling
  - Placing a marker on the grave that shows clearly the name of the deceased
  - Ensuring that digging machines do not damage grass and paths
  - Ensuring removal from the Cemetery of all surplus soil, materials and waste
  - Levelling the grave surface within 3 months of interment
  - Maintaining and levelling grass on the grave for 12 months
2. Standard sizes and specifications are:
  - Grave space: 7' long by 3' wide (2130 x 900 mm)
  - - single depth 5' deep (1500 mm)
  - - double depth 7'6" deep (2300 mm)
  - Cremation space: 18" square (460 x 460 mm)
  - All parts of a coffin must be at least 3' below ground level (1000 mm)
  - 6" of compacted earth (150 mm) must separate a coffin from any below it
3. The Parish Council reserve the right to specify the maximum depth that can be dug.

### **Maintenance and care**

4. Memorial owners are responsible for the care of memorials they have erected.
5. The Council maintains grass, paths and all other aspects of the Cemetery.
6. The Council expects owners and those caring for graves to:
  - Remove within 30 days any floral tributes etc. laid on the grave at the funeral
  - Put dead flowers, wreaths, weeds etc. from graves in the refuse bin
  - Keep the grave space neat and tidy
  - Not to use glass vases. Only one vase allowed per grave which must not to exceed 18" in height.
  - Not to plant shrubs or trees over any grave, except with the approval of the Parish Council.
7. The Council reserves the right to remove any unsightly items from graves.
8. Council consent is required to plant, fell, prune or otherwise alter any tree or shrub. The Council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any unauthorised plants.

## Memorial safety

1. The Council has overall legal responsibility for Cemetery safety and must ensure, as far as reasonably practical, it maintains both in a safe condition.
2. An owner of a memorial is responsible for its maintenance and safety.
3. A memorial mason is legally liable for the work he or she carries out.
4. The Council's policy and procedures follow the guidance from the *Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)*.

## Safety inspections

1. The Council will:
  - Inspect the safety of all memorials once every five years
  - Give at least 28 days' notice of an inspection and invite the public to attend
  - Communicate via its website and noticeboards, at the Cemetery and in the Parish magazine.
  - Monitor each year any memorials assessed as not fully stable
  - Keep records of memorial inspections and results
2. A trained councillor will lead each five-year visual inspection and hand test of stability.
3. The Council prohibits lone working, requires wearing of suitable gloves and footwear and demonstration by the lead councillor of the safe technique of hand testing memorials.
4. Memorials will be assessed using the *ICCM* procedure and assigned a risk priority:
  - Priority 1 – immediate action required to make memorial safe or stop public access
  - Priority 2 – no immediate danger but not fully stable so monitor each 12 months
  - Priority 3 – perfectly stable so inspect in five years
5. A dangerous or unstable memorial is one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with an exertion of a force of 25kg or less.
6. The Council will use a temporary support system to make safe such memorials.
7. The Council will then:
  - Place a notice on the memorial warning that it has been found to be unsafe
  - Contact all the owners it can and ask each to make the memorial permanently safe
  - Publish inspection results on its website, noticeboards and at the Cemetery
8. If needed, the Council will make a further attempt to contact owners after 3 months. With no response or a negative, the Council, at its discretion, will make the memorial permanently safe by partial burial, removal, repair or other means.

Approved by the Parish Council 13/03/19  
Reviewed and amended and approved 12/08/20