



South Staffordshire Council

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Rules and Regulations

**In respect of Sytch Lane Cemetery,
Wombourne, South Staffordshire**

Effective from December 2009

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1. Introduction

These Rules and Regulations are a necessary requirement for the management of South Staffordshire Council's Cemetery at Sytch Lane, Wombourne. Every effort has been made to avoid restricting the rights and choices of the individual. Therefore, these regulations have been prepared with a balance between individual rights/information and the need to regulate for safe and tidy grounds. For example, the prohibition of glass and breakable items is based on these items becoming a hazard when mowers are used. It is not based upon aesthetic considerations.

The reasons or explanations for certain Rules and Regulations can be found in *italics* underneath the specific Rule or Regulation.

Where you remain dissatisfied, you can utilise the Council's complaints procedure. Further information on this procedure is available upon request.

Anyone visiting the Cemetery must follow these regulations.

You must follow these regulations and any instructions that the Manager or their staff may give you when you visit the Cemetery.

Records of burials, graves, Cemetery plans and subsequent memorials are available for inspection at the Council Offices in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Contact Details: South Staffordshire Council
Architectural & Landscape Services
Council Offices
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
WV8 1PX

Tel: 01902 696111

Fax: 01902 846553

e-mail: bereavementservices@sstaffs.gov.uk

2. General Regulations

2.1 Terms

In these Rules and Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires the following terms shall have the meanings given to them below:

"The Council" means South Staffordshire Council.

"The Council Office(s)" means the main Council Offices at Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX.

"Cemetery" or "Site" means the Cemetery, which belongs to and is operated by the Council which is situated at Sytch Lane, Wombourne.

“South Staffordshire Council Bereavement Services” means the Bereavement Services department of the Council.

“The Cemetery Manager” means the person appointed by the Council to be responsible for the management of the Cemetery and their staff.

“Rules and Regulations” means the South Staffordshire Council Bereavement Services’ ‘in-house’ rules set out in this document.

“Table of Fees” means the list of fees and charges for goods and services provided by South Staffordshire Council’s Bereavement Services.

“Exclusive Right of Burial” means an exclusive right of burial granted in accordance with section 4.

“Register of Burials” means a statutory register of all burials in a Cemetery kept and maintained by the Council.

“Private Grave” means a grave space in respect of which an Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted.

“Lawn Grave” means a grave which is laid to lawn and fixed to a pre-cast concrete raft and which complies with paragraph 5.1.

“Unpurchased Grave” means a grave where no Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted and no other right of burial has been conferred, in accordance with paragraph 5.2.

“Natural Grave” means a grave within the allocated natural burials area in the Cemetery and complies with paragraph 5.3. Natural graves provide a living memorial in an area which will be maintained as a natural meadow.

“Four Seasons Woodland Grave” means a grave or grave space in the allocated woodland area in the Cemetery and complies with paragraph 5.7. Cremated remains are scattered beneath the surface and no cremated remains in containers are interred in the Four Seasons Woodland.

“Memorial” means an object serving as a remembrance and for the purposes of these rules include a headstone, cross, chippings, vase, flat memorial plaque, wooden grave markers, temporary grave markers and those memorials permitted under sections 5 and 6 of these Rules and Regulations.

2.2 Opening Times

The Cemetery will be open every day of the year at the following times:

Summer

1st April to 30th September
Daily 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Winter

1st October to 31st March

Daily 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Please note that the locking up procedure will commence 15 minutes prior to the stated closing time.

The Council Offices funeral booking facilities (Tel: 01902 696111) are open to the public from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday but closed at weekends and on Public Holidays.

The management reserve the right to close the Cemetery without notice if it is considered necessary.

2.3 Pre-Purchasing of Grave Space

The pre-purchase or reservation of any type of grave space offered within the Cemetery is not permitted.

Burial space within the District is limited, therefore provision of burial space as it is required and not for the future is considered appropriate.

2.4 Conduct

No radios or other musical instruments may be played in the Cemetery grounds. Permission will generally be granted for music to accompany a funeral service.

Music can disturb other visitors to the Cemetery.

No person shall obstruct the Cemetery staff in their duties.

No person who is inappropriately dressed or who is in a state of intoxication or under the influence of drugs shall be admitted within the Cemetery. Any person contravening this regulation shall be asked to leave the Cemetery immediately by Cemetery staff.

Visitors must refrain from drinking alcohol in the Cemetery grounds.

To ensure that visitors to the Cemetery behave in a safe and respectful manner and to maintain the integrity of the site.

Visitors must refrain from interfering with any tree, shrub, bush, plaque or other form of memorial.

To ensure that the Cemetery grounds are kept in an appropriate condition for the purposes of the site.

No person shall use improper language or behave in an indecent manner or make unnecessary noise or act in a boisterous manner or otherwise conduct themselves in an indecorous manner within the Cemetery grounds.

This is to maintain an appropriate level of respect for mourners and visitors to the Cemetery.

No person shall climb over any gate, wall, fence or building within the Cemetery grounds.

This is to ensure the safety of visitors and to maintain the infrastructure of the Cemetery.

2.5 Children

Children under 14 are not allowed in the Cemetery unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult. This is for their own safety.

2.6 Vehicles

Visitors to the Cemetery must observe and adhere to all traffic control signs and road markings.

This is to ensure the safe and orderly use of the Cemetery by vehicular traffic.

Vehicles shall only use the main roads and must not exceed 5 m.p.h. You must not drive on any of the grassed areas.

Parking is allowed on the right hand side of the Cemetery road within the grounds going in a clockwise direction or in the designated parking area, but priority must be given to any funeral cortege.

There is to be no parking on the access road.

Coaches and buses are not permitted in the Cemetery grounds as the driveway is not suitable.

The Council advises visitors to ensure their vehicles are locked and any valuables hidden from view. The Council accepts no responsibility for any theft from vehicles parked in the Cemetery grounds.

2.7 Animals

Dogs are permitted in the Cemetery grounds but must be kept on a lead at all times. Dog owners are reminded of their responsibility under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

Horses are permitted in the Cemetery only as part of a funeral procession.

All other animals may be permitted at the discretion of the Cemetery Manager.

This is to ensure that the integrity and respectfulness of the Cemetery is maintained.

2.8 Photography

No person shall take any image of any grave, memorial or funeral gathering within the Cemetery without the prior permission from the Council.

This is to ensure the privacy rights of individuals.

Some visitors may be offended by being filmed or photographed within the Cemetery or whilst attending funerals.

2.9 Advertising & Sale of Goods

No advertisements shall be displayed in any part of the Cemetery and no person shall distribute business cards, advertisements or literature of any kind.

The sale of goods and/or the soliciting of orders within the Cemetery is strictly prohibited to help protect visitors consumer rights and to ensure that the bereaved can visit the Cemetery without fear of being disturbed.

2.10 Fees

All funeral directors and memorial masons must agree to the following terms:

- All fees and charges payable to this Council will be recovered on a monthly basis.
- All invoices are payable within 30 days. Failure to comply will incur a penalty charge of 10% of the outstanding amount per calendar month.

Families who wish to self-arrange a funeral must pay in full all fees and charges to the Council a minimum of 5 working days before the funeral.

This is to ensure that financial transactions are complete and up to date.

2.11 Faith Leaders

Relatives or their representatives (e.g. funeral director) must make arrangements for a faith leader to officiate when a religious service is required.

2.12 Gratuities

Council staff or contractors are not allowed to accept any gifts or money from the public or from representatives of companies. Council staff or contractors are not allowed to undertake private work of any kind in connection with the Cemetery either in his/her own time or during the Council's time.

Council staff are not allowed to accept any form of payment or gratuity from members of the public.

If you require any works within the Cemetery please contact the Council Offices where our staff will be happy to provide you with the relevant information.

2.13 Responsibility for Orders

The Council will not be held responsible for any misunderstandings that arise from orders or instructions given over the telephone. Written confirmation should follow such orders and instructions.

The Council will only act on clear, comprehensive and non-ambiguous written instructions to avoid errors being made.

2.14 Right of Movement

The Council reserves to itself, its officers, employees and its contractors the right of passage over any grave for any purpose connected with the maintenance and management of the Cemetery and to remove any memorial from an adjoining grave to facilitate an interment if this should be necessary.

In the event of such action being necessary, the full cost of such works shall be borne by the person arranging the interment.

This is to ensure that the day to day maintenance operations can be carried out effectively.

2.15 Amendments to Rules and Regulations and Table of Fees

The Council reserves the right to make any alterations to these Rules and Regulations as and when required.

The Council reserves the right to make any alterations to the Table of Fees as and when required. In any event the Table of Fees will be reviewed on at least an annual basis.

As the service changes and improves it may be necessary to amend the current Rules and Regulations and Table of Fees accordingly or at short notice. Wherever possible when this happens the Council will take all reasonable steps to inform those affected by any changes.

2.16 Individual Requests for Funeral Services

We welcome any individual requests for a funeral service, i.e. horse drawn, pipers, military, family to video the service, but please inform the booking office at your earliest convenience so these requirements can be considered and allowed for.

We will try to accommodate requests relating to cultural or personal preferences wherever practicable.

3. Burials

3.1 Guiding Principles for Burial Services

The Council has adopted the guiding principles for burial services that are issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM). The Council is a corporate member of the ICCM and individual Bereavement Services staff are associate members.

3.2 Booking Burial Service Times

Applications for burial must be made to the Council Offices between the hours of 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

All initial bookings for a burial (including the burial of cremated remains) in the Cemetery must first be made to the Council Offices either by telephone (01902 696111) or in person and confirmed in writing as soon as possible thereafter using the Council's specified Notice of Interment form referred to in paragraph 3.3 below.

This ensures all of our relative processes and procedures can be followed to minimise any problems that may arise.

Interments must take place between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. straight to grave. During the months of November, December and January the last burial time will be 2.30 p.m. straight to grave.

3.3 Notice of Interment

The correctly completed Notice of Interment must be delivered to the Council Offices along with the Registrar's Certificate for Disposal or the Coroner's Order for Burial by 10.00 a.m. at least 2 clear working days before the planned day of burial. No burial will take place unless the completed Notice of Interment form has been received.

The coffin or casket size must be confirmed in writing. The size must be exact and to include mouldings and any opened handles. Funeral directors must be aware that the coffin size submitted to us must be the exact dimensions and no additional measurement is to be added. Any additional dimensions necessary will be added by the Administration and Bereavement Services Officer. If it is found on the day of the funeral that the funeral director has added dimensions to the size of the coffin there will be a penalty of £100.

Any alteration to the sizes given must be notified to the Council Offices in writing at least 1 working day prior to the funeral.

Alterations to arrangements can only be accepted in writing prior to the burial date, this ensures there can be no misunderstandings if only verbal alterations are given.

In the instances where a burial is booked with less than 24 hours notice for religious reasons, the Notice of Interment must be faxed (01902 846553) or e-mailed (bereavementservice@sstaffs.gov.uk) to the Council Offices by 12.00 noon on the day of burial to confirm the booking.

3.4 Scattering or Interment of Cremated Remains in Existing Lawn Graves

Scattering of cremated remains (under turf) in an existing lawn grave is permitted providing that permission has been gained from the Council and from the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial. The remains must be scattered towards the head of the grave.

Cremated remains may also be buried in an existing grave, however, this may affect the number of further full coffin interments possible. The number of cremated remains interments allowed in this instance will be at the discretion of the Cemetery Manager.

3.5 Arriving at the Cemetery

The time booked for a funeral is the time that the cortege is due to arrive at the Cemetery. The funeral director must inform the Council Offices of the expected time of arrival at the Cemetery to make sure that the Cemetery staff are present.

This time must be strictly adhered to and in default the Cemetery Manager may, at his discretion, allow another funeral to take precedence.

It is essential that funerals arrive on time at the Cemetery to ensure the efficient operation of the service.

3.6 Certificate for Disposal

The Registrar's Certificate for Disposal or the Coroner's Order for Burial must be delivered to the Council Offices at the same time as the Notice of Interment, before the burial can take place.

If you do not deliver the Registrar's Certificate or the Coroner's Order for Burial to the Council Offices the burial must not take place except in the situation where the Certificate has been issued but forgotten by the funeral director. If this happens, the funeral director must sign a declaration (Form 18) 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 and promise to deliver it to the Council Offices as soon as possible, preferably on the same day as the burial, or in exceptional circumstances, on the next day.

3.7 Structure of Coffin

All bodies brought to the Cemetery for burial shall be contained in a suitable coffin or shroud to a pattern agreed with the Council.

For burial purposes coffins can be made of wood, metal, wicker or cardboard. All cremated remains must also be held in a suitable container.

The coffin or suitable container must be clearly marked for identification purposes and include the full name of the deceased (full name to be shown on all connecting paperwork).

Coffin structures will however be at the discretion of the Cemetery Manager.

To properly respect the deceased and also prevent distress that may be caused to other visitors or staff it is essential that the body of the deceased person is properly covered.

Cremated remains will only be accepted in a suitable container prior to burial or scattering within the Cemetery.

3.8 Re-Opening Graves

No grave for which a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial applies can be opened without the signature of the registered owner. If the deceased is the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial they automatically have the right to be buried in the grave providing there is sufficient burial space available.

Transference of ownership may be necessary to permit the opening of a grave and before a memorial permit will be passed. Contact the Council Offices and/or see paragraph 4.1 below for further details.

To make sure that only the correct person is buried in the grave, any variation in the names must be explained and confirmed by a statutory declaration before a burial can take place.

3.9 Producing the Grave Deed

We have the right to demand to see the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial before a grave is opened.

If you lose the Exclusive Right of Burial, we have the right to demand a statutory declaration to say that you have lost it.

3.10 Grave Excavations

We have the right to put soil on graves next to those that need to be opened for a burial without notice. In this event, an information notice will be placed on the soil mound indicating the period of time that the soil will remain in place. Cemetery staff will remove the soil as quickly as possible and leave the grave tidy.

3.11 Moving Memorials

When graves are dug in certain areas of the Cemetery, it may be necessary to move a memorial on the surrounding areas for health

and safety reasons. An approved memorial mason will remove and re-erect the memorial back in the correct position as soon as possible after the burial to current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) standards.

3.12 Bearers

The funeral director or family are responsible for providing a minimum of four bearers to carry the coffin from the hearse to the grave and lower the coffin into the grave.

In the instance of family members choosing to bear the coffin, the Council cannot accept any responsibility for injury caused in doing so.

Family members who wish to bear a coffin should seek appropriate advice from their appointed funeral director as to the safe procedure for bearing a coffin.

This is to ensure that the health and safety of mourners, visitors and staff is maintained at all times.

3.13 Backfilling of Graves

On completion of the burial service Cemetery staff will backfill the grave in the appropriate manner.

Representatives of the deceased may, at their own risk, backfill the grave after an interment, but must strictly adhere to instructions from the Cemetery staff and/or contractors in attendance.

The shoring will remain in place and will only be removed by Council contractors at the appropriate time during the backfill.

Written notification of this intent must be received at the Council Offices at the same time as the funeral booking.

This is to ensure that the health and safety of mourners, visitors and staff is maintained at all times.

3.14 Flowers

Floral tributes will be removed from graves when they have withered or are unsightly, but in any case not until a full fourteen days after the interment.

Cemetery staff will remove seasonal wreaths from graves from 6 weeks after the event (i.e. Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day etc.).

The Council reserves the right to remove withered or unsightly floral tributes at its own discretion.

This allows Cemetery staff to keep the Cemetery tidy for our visitors.

4. Exclusive Rights of Burial

An Exclusive Right of Burial allows the purchaser of such to bury human remains in an agreed grave space. A grave which is subject to an Exclusive Right of Burial may not be opened and no additional remains may be buried there without the owner's permission and providing there is sufficient burial space available.

An Exclusive Right of Burial may be granted for a period of no more than 100 years beginning with the date upon which the grant is made and upon such terms and conditions as the Council deems appropriate.

Under the current legislation, an Exclusive Right of Burial may only be granted for up to 100 years.

The Council will grant Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave for 50 years. The Council may extend the period of such a grant for up to a maximum of 100 years from the date upon which the extension is granted. An additional fee is payable for the extension of an Exclusive Right of Burial up to a maximum of 100 years in 25 year increments. The fee for an Exclusive Right of Burial and extension thereto is set out in the Table of Fees.

An Exclusive Right of Burial does not constitute any ownership of land, this remains in the Council's ownership. It is purely the right to have a burial in a selected grave.

The rights are granted on the understanding that the owner of those rights complies with these rules and regulations, in particular any such rules which are applicable to the particular type of grave and to which the Exclusive Right of Burial relates. For example, if an Exclusive Right of Burial is granted in respect of a lawn grave, then the grant holder will be required to comply with the rules relating specifically to lawn graves.

The purchase of burial rights is not in any way the purchase of the land in which the grave lies, it is essential that the public are aware that the grave is sold on a lease basis and that the only rights with that lease are the rights to a burial in the grave.

The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial does not include permission to erect a memorial. The right to erect a memorial must be applied for separately. Please see section 6 of the Rules and Regulations for further details on how to apply.

The owner(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial must be the same as the owner of the Right to Erect a Memorial.

The registered owner(s) of the deed of grant for the right to erect a memorial is responsible for the memorial and its upkeep and maintaining the memorial in a safe condition for the period of the deed of grant for the right to erect a memorial.

The pre-purchasing of Exclusive Rights of Burial is not permitted.

4.1 Transfer of Exclusive Rights of Burial

An Exclusive Right of Burial to a grave space may be transferred by deed or bequeathed by will.

In cases where the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial is still alive the transfer may be done by completion of a Form of Assignment. A Form of Assignment is available from the Council Offices. This form should be completed and signed by the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial and the person taking over the ownership of the said right and submitted to the Council Offices together with the original Deed of Grant.

The Deed of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will then be updated to show the details of the new owner(s).

A fee, as set out in the Table of Fees, in connection with this service is payable to the Council.

This is the recognised legal way of transfer of grave rights where the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial is alive.

Where the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial is deceased, and provided that the Exclusive Right of Burial has not been specifically left to another person, then upon production of a will or Letters of Administration the Exclusive Right of Burial may be legally transferred to the person in possession of the Letters of Administration or the beneficiary of the residue of the estate under the terms of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial's will.

The grave rights form part of the estate of the deceased and can thereby be transferred to the appropriate person upon proof being submitted to the Council Offices.

In cases where the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial is deceased and there is no will or Letters of Administration available then the Exclusive Right of Burial may not be transferred to another person, however a further burial in the grave space may be permissible (if there is available depth) subject to the applicant for the burial completing a statutory declaration and ensuring that any other person equally entitled counter signs the statutory declaration. A statutory declaration must be witnessed by a Solicitor or a Commissioner for Oaths.

This is a legally recognised way of dealing with this issue.

Transfer of ownership of Exclusive Rights of Burial can be dealt with in a number of other ways dependant upon individual circumstances. Please contact the Council Offices for further details.

4.2 Premium Fees for Burial of Non-Residents

Families of non-residents of South Staffordshire who wish their relatives to be interred at Sytch Lane Cemetery need to be aware of the premium fees. Currently the fees are trebled for this service.

When the deceased lived in the District for the majority of their life and took up a place in full-time care outside the District within two years of their death premium fees will not be applicable. In this instance the family is to provide the relevant information for claiming this exception to this Council which will be cross-referenced against the Council's electoral register.

This is to ensure that the primary beneficiaries of the Cemetery provision are residents of South Staffordshire.

5. Types of Grave

We offer a variety of types of grave to suit the needs of the bereaved. These range from lawn graves through to natural burials. A choice of grave types allows the bereaved to correctly ensure they can choose the most appropriate type of grave for their needs.

Images of each of the grave types on offer will be available from your funeral director at the time of booking, to assist you in making an informed choice. It is strongly recommended that bereaved family members organising the funeral visit the site to have a clear understanding of the type of grave chosen and its location and grounds maintenance regimes thereafter.

The Council will supply a temporary memorial which will be removed 12 months after the date of burial or when a permanent memorial is erected (whichever is the sooner). The cost of the temporary memorial is included in the fee for the Exclusive Right of Burial.

Shrubs, plants, trees or flowers are not permitted to be planted over any grave within the Cemetery at the discretion of Cemetery staff.

Each individual body whether an adult or child must be brought into the Cemetery in a separate coffin. The only exceptions to this rule will be:

- (a) When a mother dies in childbirth, in which case the mother and child can be in the same coffin.
- (b) When twins or multiples die in childbirth, the babies can be interred the same coffin.

A letter stating this intention must be submitted to the Council prior to the burial taking place, at the same time as the Notice of Interment.

Soil conditions dictate the full depth of the grave. All graves will be dug to accommodate two coffin interments, unless a single depth grave is requested. Where a coffin or casket exceeds 20 inches (500mm) in depth, this will reduce the number of interments possible in a grave.

5.1 Lawn Graves

The typical lawn grave is a grave that is laid to lawn and fixed to a pre-cast concrete raft. This allows for a memorial to be placed immediately after or, if required, before the burial takes place.

All lawn graves will be excavated to accommodate two coffin burials, unless a single or triple depth grave is requested.

Adjacent to the concrete raft a border approximately 300mm wide is provided in which additional floral tributes may be laid in accordance with the permitted tributes regulation (see paragraph 5.8).

Memorials shall be:

- No more than 4 feet in height (1200mm) including base;
- No more than 3 feet 6 inches in width (1100mm) including base;
- Headstone to be no more than 6 inches (150mm) thick;
- Base to be no more than 1 foot in depth (300mm) including headstone

A base forming an integral part of the design of a headstone may be included, provided it does not project more than 2 inches (50mm) beyond the headstone in any direction and provided that it is fixed onto the pre-cast concrete raft provided by the Council to current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) standards.

If desired, the base may include a socket to receive a vase, in which case it may extend by up to 1 foot (300mm).

For the first 6 months after an interment the grave will be repeatedly topped up with soil. After 6 months or so (depending on the time of year, usually autumn and spring) grave spaces will be turfed or soil/seeded by Cemetery staff.

Lawn Graves are required to be clear of any materials to allow for regular and easy maintenance and also ensure that the Council are able to keep and maintain a lawn effect throughout the section.

5.2 Unpurchased Graves

Unpurchased graves are provided for people who want to be buried but cannot or do not want to buy the Exclusive Right of Burial. The charge for an interment in a grave where the Exclusive Right of Burial has not been purchased does not include any right or privilege relating to the grave space.

All unpurchased graves are dug for a minimum of three interments dependant on soil conditions.

New unpurchased graves may be on the same sections as the purchased graves for which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been sold.

The Council will provide a small slab and plaque at the head of all new unpurchased graves stating the grave number only.

The family of the deceased have five years in which to purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial. After this time the Council may bury another unrelated person in that same grave.

No memorials are to be erected on an unpurchased grave unless the Exclusive Right of Burial and a deed of grant for the right to install a memorial have been purchased.

We do not allow mounds on unpurchased graves.

This is what is termed a public grave and no memorialisation is permitted unless the right of burial is purchased. Any person may apply to undertake a burial in an unpurchased grave and would only have to pay the interment fee as set out in the Table of Fees.

However, it should be noted that other unrelated burials may take place in the same grave and no headstone or other memorial will be permitted on the grave.

5.3 Natural Graves

Natural graves provide a living memorial in an area which will be maintained as a natural meadow which will be attractive to a range of wildlife and have its own distinct intrinsic value. Full details can be found in our leaflet "Natural Graves".

Each grave is for one interment only and there is no mounding. No memorial or marker will be permitted on a grave in the natural burial area.

All chemicals used in the normal preparation of a body for interment are prohibited in the natural burial area.

Coffins or caskets will be made of readily bio-degradable material or the body will be fully wrapped in a simple shroud and placed on a board.

Floral tributes are allowed to be placed on the grave for 14 days following the interment. After this period all floral tributes and memorabilia will be removed and no further memorabilia or floral tributes will be permitted in the natural burial area.

The location of the grave plot will be identified electronically and recorded and logged on the Cemetery site plan at the Council Offices.

Maintenance of the natural burial area is carried out by the Council to ensure the area is in keeping with a naturalised meadow area. Therefore mowing will be carried out at a maximum of twice per year and natural plants and flowers will be encouraged.

The maintenance programme has been established to encourage natural species to flourish in the area, those wanting a much more 'formal' appearance should consider an alternative grave type.

5.4 Babies and Children's Graves

A variety of memorials are permitted in the babies and children's (under 16 years of age) section, e.g. headstone, flat stone, vase or book-set.

Memorabilia on these graves must be reasonable and in keeping with the character of the Cemetery and its surroundings (see paragraph 5.8 below). All memorabilia will be subject to the approval of the Cemetery Manager or their delegated staff.

Memorials within this section shall be:

- No more than 3 feet in height (900mm) including base;
- No more than 2 feet wide (600mm) including base;
- Headstone to be no more than 6 inches thick (150mm)
- Base to be no more than 1 foot in depth (300mm) including headstone

Book-sets must be a maximum of 15 inches (380mm) in height (overall).

5.5 Burial of Stillborn Children and Foetal Remains

No interment of a stillborn child (over 24 weeks gestation) shall be permitted unless the Registrar's Certificate for Disposal or the Coroner's Order for Burial is received at the Council Office before burial.

The body of any stillborn child or foetal remains brought to the Cemetery for burial must be enclosed in a suitable receptacle.

To properly respect the deceased and also prevent distress that may be caused to other visitors or staff it is essential that the body of any deceased person is properly covered.

The graves of stillborns and foetal remains are not subject to Exclusive Rights of Burial and will be classed as unpurchased graves, however they may be interred in any privately owned grave space within the dedicated Babies and Children's section.

In order to satisfy the needs of bereaved families, the only memorial allowed on stillborn or foetal remains graves, at the discretion of the Cemetery Manager, is a low-cost, uniform memorial plaque (flat) that may be purchased from the Council.

A non-statutory register of burials of foetal remains (under 24 weeks gestation) will be kept and the Cemetery plan marked accordingly.

5.6 Cremated Remains

There are three options for the interment of cremated remains:

(a) standard lawn memorial (installed on pre-cast concrete raft)

There is space for up to a maximum four interments of cremated remains, dependant on the size of the container.

Cremated remains lawn memorials shall be:

- No more than 3 feet high (900mm);

- No more than 2 feet 6 inches wide (770mm);
- Headstone to be no more than 6 inches thick (150mm)
- Base to be no more than 1 foot in depth (300mm) including headstone

If desired, the base may include a socket to receive a vase, in which case it may extend by up to 1 foot (300mm).

Adjacent to the concrete raft a border approximately 30cm wide is provided in which additional floral tributes may be laid. (In accordance with permitted tributes regulation, see paragraph 5.8).

Please be mindful and considerate to others so that you do not obstruct the pathways or create tripping hazards.

(b) flat plaque memorial

There is space for up to a maximum two interments of cremated remains, dependant on the size of the container.

The flat plaque memorial will be installed on top of the interred container(s). The plaque will be flush with the surrounding turf area.

The flat plaque memorial shall be:

- 18 inches in width (460mm)
- 24 inches in length (610mm)
- 2 inches thick (50mm)

(c) Cremated remains may also be interred in any other full size grave where an Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted provided that the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial has given the necessary permission to inter in that grave, or if desired cremated remains may be interred in an unpurchased grave space. A maximum of eight containers dependant upon container size and remaining available burial space may be interred in a full size grave.

Cremated remains must be held in a container suitable for burial. The container must have the full name of the deceased clearly visible.

Suitable identification of the deceased person is essential to ensure the correct remains are interred in the correct grave.

No burial of cremated remains will be permitted unless a copy of the Certificate of Cremation from the crematorium where the cremation took place, is delivered to the Council Offices, together with the necessary completed Notice of Interment.

5.7 Four Seasons Woodland (Cremated remains under-turf scattering area)

Cremated remains are scattered beneath the surface and no cremated remains in containers are interred in the Four Seasons Woodland.

In order to preserve the aesthetic appearance of the woodland as a natural memorial the Council respectfully requests that visitors note the following:

- (a) There is to be no memorabilia, including vases, photographs, wind chimes, plants, creating of private gardens, floral tributes (including artificial flowers), containers etc. permitted in the woodland.
- (b) Any memorabilia left in the woodland will be disposed of at the discretion of Cemetery staff.

Exact locations of cremated remains in the woodland area will not be recorded, however, the seasonal section will be noted, i.e. spring, summer, autumn, winter.

5.8 General Points for All Graves

The following are examples of items that will not be permitted, however the list is not exhaustive:

Glass
Pottery
Windmills
Flags
Lanterns
Wind chimes
Solar powered lights
Garden ornaments
Garden trellis or fencing

Artificial flowers will be permitted in the Cemetery but will be removed at the discretion of Cemetery staff once they have become unsightly or spent.

Concrete rafts are provided for memorials and all floral tributes and ornaments must remain within the gravel channel provided and not encroach onto the grassed area or neighbouring grave space in order to ensure that grounds maintenance tasks can be undertaken without the risk of causing damage. Any breach of this will result in the items being removed to the compound where they will be stored for a period of one month for owners to collect.

The Council will not accept responsibility for damage or loss of any memorials, ornaments etc. howsoever caused. The Council has a responsibility to ensure the Cemetery is free of obvious dangers and hazards. Examples of hazards are glass and pottery items which could break, sharp objects, items placed in paths reducing the width of the path and items which pose a tripping hazard. Such items will be removed with or without prior notification and temporarily stored for a period of one month for owners to collect from the on-site compound. In this event, owners will be informed of the removal of such items in writing. In addition it may be necessary from time to time to remove items in the Cemetery that cause disturbance or offence to visitors attending the Cemetery.

As part of routine grounds maintenance, the weeds/grass along the front of the gravel channel and to the sides of memorials may be controlled using herbicide and/or a strimmer.

Please be aware that the Cemetery is a working site and at times for operational reasons some items on graves may have to be temporarily moved and subsequently replaced for a burial to take place.

Please help the Council to provide a safe Cemetery and one which is an attractive and peaceful place to visit. As a responsible grave owner you have a part to play.

6. Managing Cemetery Memorials

6.1 General

The installation of any memorial, renovation of an existing memorial and adding of inscriptions to memorials will be carefully monitored by South Staffordshire Council to ensure that:

- (a) work is only carried out with the authority of the registered owner(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial and owner(s) of the right to erect a memorial.
- (b) all memorials will comply with South Staffordshire Council regulations applicable to the erection and maintenance of memorials and work is carried out in a manner that will ensure that all health and safety regulations are adhered to.

Memorials and surrounds may not be erected over any grave in which the Exclusive Right of Burial has not been purchased, with the exception of graves for stillborns and foetal remains where a uniform flat plaque may be purchased from the Council.

Once any memorial has been erected, the owner of the Right to Erect a Memorial or their executor or personal representative will be held responsible for the future maintenance and safety of that memorial. Any memorial deemed to be unsafe by the Manager or delegated Cemetery staff must, without delay, either be removed from the Cemetery or repaired by an approved memorial mason to current NAMM standards.

The costs associated with any emergency stabilisation works carried out by the Council shall be recoverable from the owner of the Right to Erect a Memorial.

It is strongly recommended that appropriate insurance cover is obtained for the memorial by the owner of the Right to Erect a Memorial against all risks.

The Council may remove any memorials from private graves when the period of Exclusive Right of Burial or the period of the deed of grant for the Right to Erect a Memorial has expired and no application to extend the

period has been made within 12 months of expiry (*Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977*).

The Council as part of its memorial management scheme will routinely test the stability of memorials on a 5 yearly basis and work may be required on memorials which are deemed to be in a dangerous or dilapidated state.

The Council reserves the right, after reasonable notice to the person concerned and failure to take the necessary action, to remove or change any memorial, which infringes these regulations or, in the opinion of the Cemetery Manager is in a state of disrepair.

6.2 The Right to Erect a Memorial

Before any memorial is erected in the Cemetery the Right to Erect a Memorial must be applied for, for which a fee is payable. The person applying for the Right to Erect a Memorial must be the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

An application form is available from the Council or from your memorial mason who will complete the form on your behalf. You will need to confirm that you are the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

This is essential so that the Council can manage memorials placed within the Cemetery.

The Right to Erect a Memorial will last for a period of 10 years after which if no application for a further period of 10 years is made the memorial may be removed by the Council and stored for a period of 12 months for the owner to collect.

The Right to Erect a Memorial period may be extended by increments of 10 years up to a maximum of 100 years providing that the Exclusive Right of Burial is still valid.

6.3 Permit to Erect a Memorial

Before any person carries out any form of work to any memorial on any grave, application must be made for permission to do so on a form supplied by the Council (see paragraph 6.1 above). Whilst the initial installation of a memorial and first inscription is included in the original deed of grant for the Right to erect a Memorial fee, any additional works will incur a further fee (details available upon request).

Details of any proposed memorial must be submitted to the Council on the appropriate form including design, inscription, colours and dimensions prior to commissioning a memorial mason to carry out the work. The application must be submitted to the Council Offices for approval and must include a drawing of the memorial to the scale of 1mm to 10mm (1 inch to 1 foot) and with a copy of the proposed inscription. Every application shall be signed by the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial. All fees must be paid before a memorial is admitted into the Cemetery.

No form of memorial whatsoever will be admitted into the Cemetery until the permit issued by the Council, following approval of the application, has been granted.

Memorial masons must contact the Council to seek an appointment date and time, which must be adhered to in order to carry out the work.

Memorial masons carrying out the work shall keep a copy of the permit available for inspection at all times whilst working in the Cemetery. Cemetery staff will be entitled to view such permit on demand.

Any person or company commissioned to carry out the work shall observe and conform to these regulations in every aspect.

The Council is flexible regarding the shape and design of a memorial as long as they do not exceed the sizes given. Please note that a memorial's overall height must include the height of its base.

The Cemetery Manager has the right to decline any memorial and/or inscription that they deem inappropriate for the Cemetery.

The Council will not issue a permit to any memorial mason who has not previously supplied the Council with copies of their public liability insurance valued at a minimum of £5,000,000, method statement and risk assessments for work within the Cemetery.

6.4 Accreditation

Only memorial masons who appear on the BRAMM (British Registration of Accredited Memorial Masons) and/or NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) register are permitted to carry out work on memorials in the Cemetery to ensure the installation of memorials is carried out in a safe manner to the currently adopted National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Working Practice. All memorial masons working within the Cemetery must carry personal BRAMM and/or NAMM accreditation.

6.5 Materials for Memorials

Memorials, headstones and plaques shall be made of natural stone or of such material capable of withstanding continuous exposure to the weather. Other materials may also be considered providing they are practical, appropriate and in keeping with the surroundings.

The Council may reject memorials, headstones and plaques made of any materials which in their opinion are unsuitable or incongruous with their surroundings.

6.6 Memorial Inscription

All inscriptions shall be either bronze, lead, raised or inset, or incised and painted, or carved in relief, or gilded lettering or other similar approved.

Every memorial must have the grave number and name of the memorial mason inscribed upon it in lettering not more than ½ inch (12mm) in height and 6 inches (150mm) in length on the side of the base.

6.7 Damage to Memorials

The Council accept no liability for any damage whatsoever that may be caused to any form of memorial or inscription in the Cemetery, howsoever the same may be caused.

Any damage caused by the Council's contractors engaged in Cemetery operations will be the responsibility of the said Contractor who will hold a certificate of public liability insurance valued at a minimum of £5,000,000.

6.8 General Points for Memorial Masons

All memorial masons' vehicles must vacate the Cemetery by 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Fixing of memorials is not allowed on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays.

All materials for graves and memorials shall be conveyed into the Cemetery in such a manner as to avoid damage to the grounds. All such materials, refuse or soil shall be removed from the Cemetery immediately upon completion of the works.

The Council has the right to demand for the memorial mason to dismantle a memorial to demonstrate that the correct fixing methods have been used at the memorial masons cost.

Contravention of these regulations will be reported to BRAMM and/or NAMM and may result in memorial masons being prohibited from working within the Cemetery.

7. Legislation

7.1 All relevant legislation must be complied with, particularly the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (LACO) 1977, a copy of which can be provided by the Council upon request.