

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet gives a brief overview of how we - Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council - run the Cemetery and should be read with the full Cemetery Regulations ("the Regulations").

The Regulations, and the current Cemetery Fees, are available at www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/what-we-do/Cemetery.

The rules summarised in this leaflet are intended to ensure that the Cemetery remains a peaceful and fitting setting for those who are interred, and to provide a place where friends and relatives can properly remember them - your observance and co-operation will help to ensure that these aims are achieved.

The Cemetery is open to pedestrians only. Dogs (with the exception of guide dogs) are not allowed in the Cemetery.

WHO CAN BE BURIED IN THE CEMETERY?

Only those residents living in the parishes of Stratfield Mortimer or Wokefield at the time of death, or ex-residents who lived within either parish during the 5-year period prior to death, have an automatic right to be interred in the Cemetery (ex-residents being subject to a higher rate of fee).

In exceptional circumstances we may consider other burials (if permission is granted a higher rate of fee will apply).

The Cemetery is open to the burial of all, regardless of religion, ethnic origin or creed.

BUYING A NEW BURIAL PLOT

When you purchase a burial plot, you do not actually buy the freehold of the land that the plot occupies –

that remains in our ownership. What you are purchasing is a 50-year lease of the plot with an Exclusive Right of Burial ("ERB") relating to it - all plots are for a maximum of two burials.

When you lease a plot, we will issue you with a Deed of Grant for that ERB - the Deed is proof of your ownership of the ERB and is a very important document to be kept safely (since you may be asked to produce it should you ask for a second burial to take place within the plot – fees apply).

The ERB also means that (in due course and upon payment of an additional fee) you may place a memorial on the grave (provided that it conforms to the Regulations – see further below).

At the end of the initial lease period you (or your successors – see below) will be given the opportunity to purchase further years. If you/they choose not to, the rights to the plot will revert to us and any memorial on the grave may be removed.

CAN I SELECT A PLOT?

Burial plots are allocated in strict sequential order only and plots cannot be reserved in advance.

CREMATION PLOTS

A part of the Cemetery is set aside for cremation burials. Different fees apply, but all other rules are the same as for full burials. Ashes may not be scattered in the Cemetery.

ADJACENT PLOTS

Please note that it may become necessary to excavate a grave next to your plot.

If so, we may need to place boards over your plot to protect it and you may not be able to visit your grave for a short while. Please be assured that this will

only be necessary where there is no other option, and that your plot will be cleaned, tidied and returned to its usual condition as soon as the burial has taken place.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLOT HOLDERS

As the holder of a plot, you are responsible for the safety and condition of any memorial on the grave - although we have responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety of visitors and staff in the Cemetery, the responsibility for the safety of your individual memorial rests with you. If a memorial becomes dilapidated and/or unsafe we have the right to remove it or make it safe, and to recover the cost for any such work from the plot holder.

We undertake regular safety checks on all the memorials in the Cemetery. Where possible, the plot holder will be contacted if a memorial is found to be in need of work, and given the option of having the work done themselves, using a mason of their choice (see below), or paying the Council to do the work for them. If neither option is chosen, we retain the right to remove the danger presented by the memorial.

In order to keep our records up to date so that we may contact you if necessary, it is important that any changes of address is notified to us as soon as possible (please see below regarding new individuals – eg if someone inherits the ERB).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

We will maintain the Cemetery to a decent standard by sowing grass seed, cutting the grass regularly and ensuring that it is topped up and levelled if it should sink.

We will also carry out periodic testing of the stability of any memorial on each grave, and will contact plot owners if there are any problems (but, as stated above, we are not responsible for the maintenance of individual memorials).

TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

Plot owners can choose to transfer the rights to a plot and ERB to another person, but this must be done using a form available from the Parish Clerk (and subject to an administration charge).

Where a plot owner dies their Executors or Personal Representatives will need to contact the Parish Clerk in order to effect a transfer to a new owner (so, if you are a plot owner, you should identify your chosen successors in your will).

MEMORIALS

Memorials (headstones) on graves must be of good quality, hard-wearing materials and must be approved by us before being fixed.

Full guidance is given in the Regulations, but in brief only those memorial masons that are BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) accredited will be allowed to undertake work in the Cemetery. More information is available from the Parish Clerk.

FLOWERS AND OTHER TRIBUTES

We require cooperation in keeping the grassed area of graves free of pots, plants and other artefacts - so that the grass can be cut using mowers without causing damage or risking injury to the operator and visitors.

You may wish to leave tributes. Again, the Regulations give full guidance, but we allow flowers

and plants, and suitable artefacts, to be placed at the head of the grave where they are at less risk of damage by mowing. Vases/pots must be made from a non-breakable material such as metal or stone, and not from glass/ceramic/plastic which might shatter during freezing weather - broken shards present a danger to visitors, staff and wildlife in the Cemetery.

Please think carefully about your choice of container and seek advice from the Parish Clerk if necessary.

Please note that if you place any articles along the length of the grave we will not be able to cut the grass and the grave will look untidy compared to those around it - we reserve the right to remove such articles and dispose of them.

THE REGULATIONS

The Cemetery is a community asset, and all plot holders and other users must comply with the Regulations (for example in relation to what may or may not be placed on a grave).



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

CEMETERY INFORMATION

Parish Council Cemetery
Church Lane
Stratfield Mortimer
RG7 3NX

Opening times:

All day, every day

Contact details:

The Parish Clerk
Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
27 Victoria Road

Berks
RG7 3SH

the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk