



Stotfold Cemetery Handbook and Rules

Mill Lane, Stotfold,
SG5 4NY



Introduction

Stotfold Town Council welcomes all visitors to our cemetery, situated on Mill Lane, Stotfold, a short walk from the High Street.

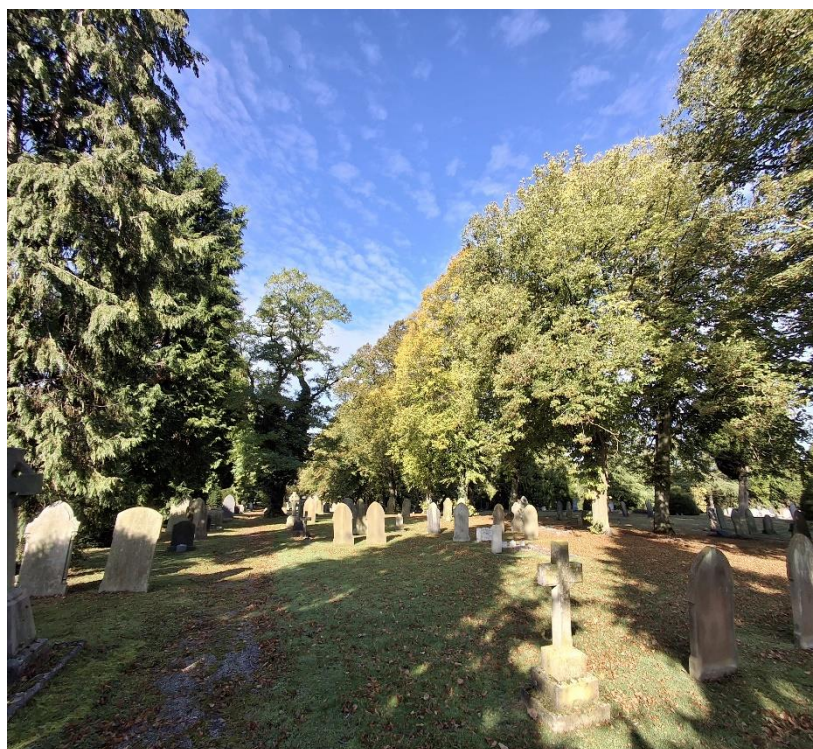
We aim to provide the highest standards within our Cemetery Service to meet the needs of the bereaved and all those who visit our cemeteries. It is therefore essential that Cemetery Rules and Regulations are in place to maintain the dignity and sanctity of our cemeteries, as well as to inform all cemetery users of the reasonable requirements applicable to them, to enable us to effectively manage the service.

These Cemetery Rules and Regulations include the statutory requirements contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 and any other relevant legislation governing this service.

These regulations have been established to ensure the Cemetery and Gardens of Remembrance are managed and used in a sensitive, safe and appropriate way for everybody. These are communal spaces for quiet reflection and remembering our loved ones.

It is important to note that the Cemetery is not consecrated and open to all, we

welcome people of all faiths.



The cemetery is open to pedestrian access all year round. Vehicle access is permitted for persons of restricted mobility, please respect other visitors when parking or use the car park provided next to the pedestrian entrance.

The Cemetery Officer is based at Stotfold Town Council Offices at the Greenacre Centre, Valerian Way, Stotfold. Funerals take place by

prior arrangement with the Council who can be contacted on 01462 730 064 or email us at enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

History

Established in 1898, the Cemetery has been in constant use to today, nearly 130 years. The first burial took place on Whit Monday, 30th May 1898 when 3-year-old Lancelot Albert Dear, the son of Harry and MaryAnn Dear was interred.

Owned, managed and maintained by Stotfold Town Council currently, it was originally built under Stotfold Parish Council in 1897 with Stotfold being recognised as a town in 1974.

We have a late Victorian Chapel constructed in 1896 to provide the local community with an appealing building in which to hold burial services for their loved ones, pictured on the front page of this handbook. Local builders Messrs S&J Redhouse built the chapel and hearsehouse, using Gault clay bricks from the small brickworks at Wrayfield, these were hand-made and known as 'Stotfold Whites'



Refurbished in 2012, using specialist forms to restore the chapel and wooden ceiling. The brickwork was cleaned, pews French polished and the wooden floor renovated. The chapel is now available for use by families whose loved one is going to be interred in the Cemetery or cremated locally via Austins Funeral Services.

War Graves

The Cemetery is home to five individual war graves identified from the First and Second World Wars. In addition, we have a granite obelisk memorial that can be found inside the main entrance, which was first unveiled 18th July 1920, when it was erected in Brook Street. It was moved to its current location in 1987 and commemorates some 78 local servicemen. This is a Grade II listed memorial designated in 2015 and is recognised as of historic interest as well as architectural interest. Conservation work was carried out in 2014 funded by the War Memorials Trust.



Natural Environment

The Cemetery benefits from a wide mix of trees, which make an important contribution to the character of the Cemetery as well as providing important wildlife habitats. The front of the Cemetery boasts a mature Beech hedge considered truly native to south-east England and Southeast Wales. This is an important habitat for birds, butterflies, moths and small mammals.

One of the more notable tree species are the large mature Lime trees that line the central path leading up the hill from the Chapel. The trees contain Nest boxes for animals and birds, including barn owls.



Easily seen through the open door at the back of the Chapel, the lime trees have been allowed to grow free and then trained to form an avenue of leaves.

The fluttering leaves were thought to symbolise the 'eternal flame' so often planted as an avenue in Victorian cemeteries.



This photograph from 1902 shows the Cemetery a few years after its inception. The avenue of lime trees is clearly visible as is the central path above the chapel. The top of the hill where the avenue finishes is the boundary of the Old Section of the Cemetery.

Cemetery in 2024, showing the growth of the trees since the Cemetery was established.

The iron railings at the front of the cemetery were removed along with the Gate during WWII to be melted and used in the war effort. It was decided to replace these with the Copper Beech hedging and install new gates after the war ended.



The Top of the hill in the earlier photo is now two thirds of the way from the main road. The cemetery has expanded above the main avenue of lime trees to the Beacon Section. Another avenue of trees were planted to mirror the original tree avenue and extends through to the top of the Beacon area.

We have a wide range of coniferous trees and bushes, Weeping Ash, Holm and English Oak, Maple, Elder, Rowan, Common Yew, Cedar and Holly trees throughout the Cemetery, as well as a dedicated remembrance rose garden and lavender planting through the Upper Garden of Remembrance.

Our memorial trees we offer are Irish yew, said to purify the deceased when they arrive in the underworld in pagan times. Now yew has come to mean rebirth and resurrection so features widely in Cemeteries across Europe. Considered as sacred, places of worship were often built on areas where yew will happily thrive, and we have a large number of memorial trees now across the Cemetery.

General Information

Opening times

Grounds

Visitors to the Cemetery are asked to behave in a quiet, orderly manner to preserve the quiet reverence and peaceful atmosphere created in the Cemetery.

Memorial masons and contractors may only work in the cemetery between 8.00am and 4.30pm on Mondays to Fridays, excluding Public Holidays.

Office

Stotfold Town Council Offices is open Mondays to Fridays between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

Burials

All burials must initially be booked by telephone with the Cemetery Officer who will then confirm the details of the booking to the Funeral Director electronically.

In the case of burials requiring new graves or new plots for cremated remains, the Cemetery Officer will advise on plot availability and provide guidance on the appropriate Section needed. We have spaces availability for both full burial in our Beacon section as well as offering our two Garden of Remembrance sections for Ashes.

The Notice of Interment form must be completed in full and delivered or transmitted electronically to the Cemetery Officer at least 72 hours before the interment, together with appropriate remittance.

Hours of Burial

Burials shall normally take place on Mondays to Fridays inclusive and must not start before 9.00am. The latest times a burial can take place is 3.30pm from April to September, and 3.00pm from October to March. Burials at Weekends and Public Holidays are at the discretion of the Cemetery Officer and will be subject to an additional fee.

The time arranged for a burial shall be that of arrival at the graveside. If there is to be a service before the burial, care should be taken to allow sufficient time for its duration and for the journey to the Cemetery.

Types of coffin / container

The type of coffin/container that will be accepted for burial at Stotfold Cemetery must be appropriate for the type of burial:

- Standard earth graves: any type of coffin except zinc lined, lead lined or made of steel.
- Green Burial: only biodegradable coffins made of wicker, bamboo, cardboard or solid unvarnished wood. No chipboard and MDF coffins are permitted.

The standard grave allowed at Stotfold Cemetery accommodates most sizes of coffin and casket. However, in the case of a particularly large coffin or casket, it will be necessary to allocate a double width grave space to enable the burial to take place, for which additional charges will be payable.

Cemetery Charges

The current scale of fees is available from the Town Council Offices. All charges and fees for interments shall be paid for at the time of order. All fees for memorials shall be paid prior to their erection.

Unless the person being buried, or the applicant in the case of pre-purchase of a burial plot, has lived in Stotfold within two years of the application for the burial, they will be charged treble fees.

This means that:

- If the person lived in Stotfold when they died, single fees will be charged.
- If they moved out of Stotfold up to 2 years before they died, single fees will be charged.
- If they moved away more than 2 years before they died triple fees will be charged.
- If the person moved out of Stotfold into a care home, hospital or similar facility – direct from living in Stotfold, however long they have been living in that facility, single fees will be charged.

In all cases proof of period living in Stotfold must be provided.



Grave ownership and Purchasing of Burial Rights

The Exclusive Right of Burial gives individuals the 'right' to decide who is buried in a particular grave. As in all cemeteries, the purchase of the Exclusive Right of Burial does not grant the purchaser any interest in the land as real property.

This 'right' also includes the right to erect a memorial, but to do so requires approval of the memorial by the Town Council.

No burial may take place within a grave and no memorial may be erected upon a grave without the written consent of the registered owner(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial in that grave.

If the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial dies, they have an automatic right to be buried or have their ashes interred in the grave. After this the rights become part of the deceased's estate.



Transfer of Burial Rights

This permission cannot be transferred to another person without a formal procedure. The Council is unable to simply transfer deeds upon request and must be satisfied that any person receiving the deed is legally entitled to it. Ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial is therefore a very important matter. Ownership can be transferred either during the owners' lifetime or after their death.

Transfer during the Owners lifetime is a straightforward process and requires completion of a form provided by the Cemetery Officer. This can be completed to add an additional name or names to the Deed, or a complete Transfer of ownership. Transfer after the registered owner is deceased is more complicated and requires evidence of the legal right to administer the deceased's estate.

If the registered owner left a Will and their estate went to probate then the Original Seal of Probate, a document with an embossed seal in the right-hand corner will need to be seen by the Cemetery Officer, photocopies are not acceptable. The Executor named on the Probate will need to complete a Form of Assent to provide the name and address of the person(s) who will take the registered ownership. Once the Transfer has taken place the probate document will be returned

If the registered owner left a Will, but their estate was insufficient to apply for Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration a Statutory Declaration will be required (available from our offices).

What is a Statutory Declaration?

A statutory Declaration is a typed sworn statement explaining the registered owner of a grave/plot is deceased and names who is entitled to the Exclusive Right of Burial and why. This statement must give the names of all those persons entitled to the rights, whether they wish to be owners or not. Any person wishing to renounce their claim can do so by completing a Form of Renunciation (available from our office). If the registered owner is deceased and did not leave a Will a Statutory Declaration is required.

NB: The Statutory Declaration is to be made before a Magistrate or Commissioner for Oaths

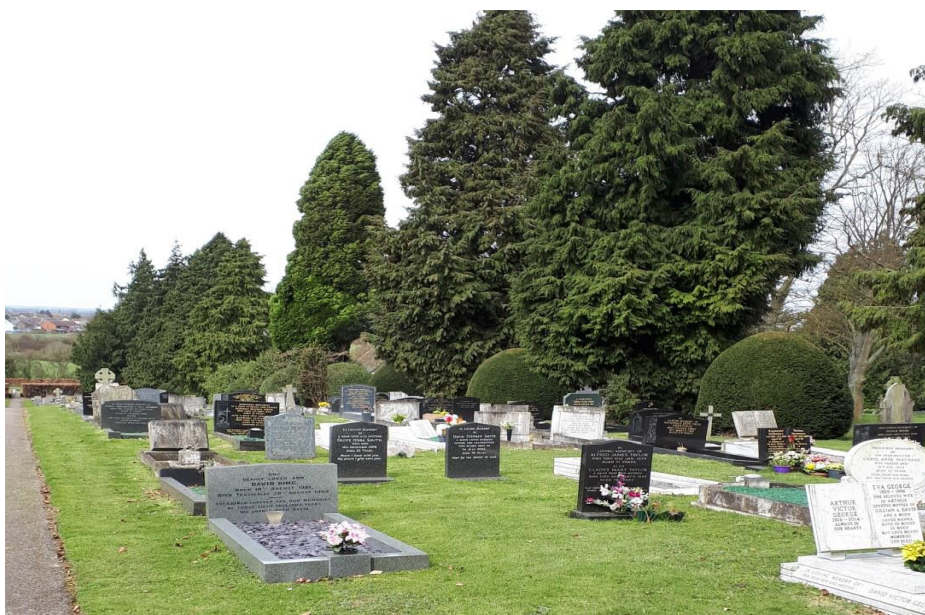
Please note that a registered owner may be buried or have their ashes interred in the grave, however the plot needs to be legally transferred should family members want to arrange for a further burial or a memorial or additional inscription to be placed on the grave.

Memorials



Details of any memorial or additional inscription on a memorial must be submitted to the Cemetery Officer using the Memorial Application Form. The memorial may only be erected / installed followed written approval by the Cemetery Officer, this is issued in the form of a permit for which a fee is payable (See Charges).

Only the Registered Owner(s) may apply for this permit, and transfer of burial rights may be required for this to occur.



All Memorials must conform to the specific standards set for each type of grave. Please see Town Council Memorial policy for memorials permitted in the relevant Section, together with Installation Regulations.

All memorials shall be erected to conform to the most recent edition of the National Association of Memorial Mason's Recommended Code of Working Practice or the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons' Blue Book. All monumental Masons wishing to carry out work within Stotfold Cemetery must be BRAMM or NAMM accredited, or both.

The name of the Memorial Mason and the burial number of the grave must be inscribed on each memorial in letters not less than one inch high on the rear of any headstone.

Materials

Memorials may not be made of Bath, Caen or other soft stone. Kerbing must be of a similar material to the memorial. The materials and workmanship must be to the satisfaction of the Council. Wooden crosses are only allowed as a temporary memorial prior to a permanent memorial being erected. Kerbstones consisting of garden paving or wicker or wire is a hazard and not permitted in the cemetery.

Temporary memorials are permitted for a period of three years from the date the temporary memorial was put in place. After three years they will be removed by the Council and returned to the family, where possible.

Subject to the type of grave selected, it may be necessary to allow a period of 18 - 24 months to pass following a burial before a memorial can be erected upon a grave. For ashes this period is a minimum of 3 months to allow settlement before this takes place.

Stotfold Town Council reserves the right to remove any memorial, which either does not conform to its description on the Memorial Application form or which is erected without the permission of Stotfold Town Council. Please see our Regulations.

Installation and ongoing care of memorials

The maintenance of the memorial is the responsibility of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial. The Council has powers under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 to take action which is necessary to remove danger which arises by reason of the condition of a memorial or deal with it in any way to ensure proper management regulation and control of the Cemetery.

If for any reason the memorial becomes unstable or dilapidated, Stotfold Town Council reserves the right to lay flat or remove and dispose of the memorial, subject to giving one month's written notice of the intention to do so to the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial at their last known address. If removed the memorial will be retained at the Council Offices for 3 months only, pending collection by the individual concerned, after which it will be disposed of if unclaimed.

The insurance of the memorial is the responsibility solely of the purchaser. The Council will not be responsible in any way howsoever for damage to or loss of memorials.

Any person to whom a right to place and maintain a memorial or a right to put an additional inscription on a memorial has been granted must:

- At their expense and that of their estate thereafter maintain the memorial in a safe and secure condition and indemnify the Council against all claims, demands proceedings of persons injured because of the unsafe condition of the memorial.

Memorials - General

The Council reserves the right to remove faded and dead flowers, vases, bottles or any other objects which in their opinion are objectionable or unsightly. The public must deposit all litter or faded flowers in the receptacles provided for the purpose. No planting of trees, shrubs or other large perennial plants will be permitted on grave plots. Planting of flowers or the addition of small adornments will only be permitted within the kerbing where a full memorial has been registered and installed.

Where a headstone only memorial has been registered and installed then no additional planting or adornments beyond that will be permitted other than within the confines of the memorial baseplate. Nothing else is permitted to be placed on or in the ground that has not been authorised in writing by the Council. The Council reserves the right to remove all extra grave adornments, and unauthorised items that do not conform to the regulations.

Memorial Benches and Trees

In addition to traditional grave memorials the Council will purchase memorial benches, which may be placed in the Cemetery or in a suitable position on Council property following submission of request and approval of location by the Council. We will also be happy to consider requests for planting of a memorial tree within the cemetery. Further information is available from the Council.

General rules



No games or sports to be played in the Cemetery.

Dogs are welcome in the cemetery; owners are responsible for their behaviour and disposal of fouling in bins provided
No trees are to be planted without the permission of the Council.
Please note that the water supply in the

Cemetery is turned off during the winter to avoid frozen or burst pipework.

Visitors to the Cemetery shall not pick, cut, fell or remove from the Cemetery any flower, tree or shrub, nor sit on any memorial, monument, headstone or structure other than a seat provided for the purpose.

Littered and withered flowers should be placed in the appropriate receptacle provided. Please note that our Groundsman will remove any dead flowers. Please note that wreaths placed over the Christmas Festive period will be cleared by the end of January each year.

Full Regulations, current fees and plans of the Cemetery are available for inspection at the Council Offices during opening hours, without charge. Burial records dating back to the first interment in 1894 are held in the Council Offices and can be inspected by appointment. Records can also be searched on our website www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk from the period 1898 to 2006.

The Council reserves the right to alter or add to these regulations. The Cemetery Officer will be pleased to provide advice or assist with enquiries:

Stotfold Town Council,
The Greenacre Centre,
Valerian Way, Stotfold,
Hitchin, Herts, SG5 4HG
Tel: 01462 730064
Email:
enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk

