

**Whetstone Parish Council**  
**Frequently Asked questions about Burials and Cremations in**  
**Whetstone Cemetery**

**What is a lawned grave?**

Whetstone Cemetery is a lawned cemetery. This type of grave was designed on the war grave principle (to have only a memorial of limited size at the head of the grave (on a concrete plinth) with the rest of the grave laid to lawn.) This allows our groundstaff to mow and maintain the cemetery to a high standard.

**Why are the graves dug so deep?**

Graves have to be dug to a sufficient depth to allow for future burials to take place. Therefore, the grave needs to be deep enough to allow for not only the depth of the coffin/casket to be buried but also to accommodate legal requirements of undisturbed earth to be between each coffin and the amount of earth that must cover the last interment.

**Are graves filled in straight after a funeral or are they left until the next day?**

Graves are prepared for burial at least one full day before the funeral and are covered overnight. The ICCM (**Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management**) Guiding Principles for Burial states that immediately after the mourners have departed the graveside, the grave shall be entirely backfilled and made tidy. The work is completed on the day of the burial and coffins will not be left uncovered overnight.

**When will I be able to erect a memorial?**

Whetstone Cemetery is a plinthed cemetery which means that a memorial can be erected immediately following the interment. The memorial must be fixed in accordance with our cemetery rules and must comply with the current NAMM (**National Association of Memorial Masons**) recommended code of practice. Please see the Rules, Regulations and Fees of our cemetery for full details and costs.

**Why is the grave not lawned immediately, it looks sunken and messy?**

After an interment has taken place, the ground will need to settle and consolidate. During this time (which could be a period of up to 3 years) the Groundstaff will top up the grave on a regular basis with soil and grass seed until the settlement ceases.

**Why have I only been sold the grave for a set period of time, I want it forever?**

The law stipulates that graves cannot be sold for more than 100 years and authorities cannot go against that law. The policy at Whetstone Cemetery is that graves are not resold so the right to the grave can be renewed at the end of the period.

**I own the grave – can anyone else be buried in it if I do not want them to?**

Graves cannot be opened without the written permission of the registered owner of the grave. The only exception to this rule is where the burial is to be that of the registered owner in which case no written authority is required. The law protects your rights as the registered owner of the grave.

## **What happens when the owner of the grave dies ?**

When the owner of the grave dies, the family or successor may wish to place a memorial on the grave, add an additional inscription on an existing memorial or, if there is space in the grave arrange a further interment at a future date. As the registered owner of the grave is the only person legally allowed to instruct on matters relating to the grave a transfer of ownership of the grave would be required to facilitate these requests. The ownership may pass to the heir/successor of the registered owner on production of documentation showing their legal right to be the owner of the grave i.e. a copy of the will/grant of probate, documents such as a birth certificate showing the link to the registered owner of the grave (if applicable), a marriage certificate/other document showing any change of name (if applicable) and photographic identification. If the documents supplied satisfies Whetstone Parish Council a Transfer of Deed would then be issued to the new owner ( there is currently no charge for the transfer).

## **Can I have what I want on the grave?**

When a new grave is purchased, it is not the ownership of the land itself that is purchased, but the rights to have burials take place in that grave. These rights are granted together with the rights to erect a memorial on the grave in accordance with the Rules, Regulations and Fees of the Whetstone Cemetery. There are also strict regulations as to ornaments/pots/shrubs and these are all contained in the Rules, Regulations and Fees of the cemetery which was given to you on purchase of the grave. A copy of these Rules, Regulations and Fees is also on our website. Any illegal grave furniture/ornaments will be removed and stored.

## **Can I Inter the body without a funeral director?**

This is not allowed under any circumstances. A Funeral Director or Minister must be present at the interment, this ensures all legal requirements and cemetery rules are met.

## **Can I scatter ashes on my family's grave?**

This is not allowed under any circumstances; we have to consider the health and safety of everyone in the cemetery.

## **Can I hang ornaments and chimes on the trees in the cemetery?**

This is not allowed under any circumstances, we need to maintain the trees in the cemetery and keep it tidy and peaceful for all users of the cemetery who may want peaceful reflection.

## **Can I put drinks and/or sweets on my family's grave?**

This is not allowed under any circumstances, although you may think of this as being an appropriate tribute for a birthday/Father's Day/Mother's Day etc, these could be ingested by a child and cause serious damage. When these items are spotted in the cemetery they will be removed.

## **Why do I have to pay more if I am not a resident of Whetstone?**

The cemetery is reserved primarily for the residents of the Parish who will have contributed to the upkeep of the cemetery through the Whetstone Parish portion of their Council Tax.

Lee Breckon, **Clerk to the Burial Authority**, Whetstone Parish Council,  
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