

Stoke St Michael Parish Council

Cemetery Regulations

Adopted – 8th May 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Cemetery is owned and managed by Stoke St Michael Parish Council (Burial Authority). These rules are authorised by the Burial Authority and may only be changed by the Burial Authority. All users of the Cemetery are required to comply with the Cemetery rules.

2. Contact Details

- 2.1 All requests for Interments, Erection of Memorials, general enquiries and comments should be directed to:
- 2.2 The Burial Clerk, Email: clerk@stokestmichaelpc.org Tel: 01749 343910
- 2.3 These Regulations are in addition to the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and any other appropriate regulations currently in force.

3. Admission to the Burial Ground

- 3.1 The current Burial Ground is accessed through the Churchyard and are open for visitors every day of the year, please make the gate is closed upon leaving.
- 3.2 The Churchyard and Burial Ground are places of peace and quiet reflection. Visitors are welcome but please respect the special nature of the site, the needs of other users and safety factors. No games, sports are allowed in the Churchyard and Burial Ground.
- 3.3 It is particularly important that children are not allowed to climb on any monuments within the Churchyard / Burial Ground.
- 3.4 Dogs are permitted in the Burial Ground provided they are on the lead and owners will pick up after their dog.

4. General Regulations

- 4.1 No person shall canvass or solicit business in the Burial Ground
- 4.2 All fees for interments or memorial works must be paid in full to the Council in advance.
- 4.3 The Council will publish a scale of fees and charges annually.
- 4.4 The Council reserves the right to amend these regulations and to deal with any circumstances or contingency not provided for in the regulations as necessary.

5. Graves / Plots

- 5.1 Graves for internments and plots for the burial of ashes are available provided space is available. The cemetery is consecrated. The Burial Ground plot will be allocated by the Burial Authority and will be the next in rotation.
- 5.2 Memorials will only be permitted on purchased graves. Memorials must conform to the regulations under the Headstone / Memorial section (item 10).
- 5.3 The types of graves available are Traditional Graves and Cremated Remains Graves. Traditional Graves can accommodate full memorials such as Headstones, Crosses, and Monuments. Cremated Remains Graves are for the burial of cremated remains only.
- 5.4 All graves will be excavated and prepared for interment by an appropriate appointed Grave Digger. The depth of each grave will be determined by the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.
- 5.5 Following the interment, the Grave Digger will level the grave and the Burial Authority may over the course of time may top with soil as the grave settles.

6. Booking of Interments or Erection of a Memorial

- 6.1 An enquiry for Interment or erection of a Memorial must be made to the Burial Clerk.
- 6.2 This should be followed up by the submission of a completed Application for Internment in the Burial Ground and returned at least forty-eight hours in advance of the intended date and time of the interment.
- 6.5 If the grave is purchased and is to be reopened for a further interment, the written permission of the registered grave owner must be given, except where the burial is that of the registered grave owner.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the person making the interment arrangements to ensure that any memorial on the grave is removed to the date and time of the interment.
- 6.7 The Certificate given by the Registrar of Births and Deaths or an order of the coroner must be delivered to the Burial Clerk prior to the interment.
- 6.8 The Burial Authority will determine the appropriate fees to be paid which must be paid fully in advance.

7. Interments

- 7.1 Interments will normally only be permitted Monday to Saturday 10.00 – 16.00 (excluding Bank or other Public Holidays).
- 7.2 Application for interments should be made to the Burial Clerk. The cemetery land will remain in the ownership of the Parish Council. Spaces above (in graves deep enough to accommodate two coffins) may be re-opened on payment of the appropriate fee.
- 7.3 The Burial Ground is not generally capable of being dug deep enough to accommodate more than two coffins and in some plots, it may be difficult to accommodate more than one. The Burial Clerk will keep a plan of the cemetery and will allocate all plots. Prior reservation of plots will not be permitted
- 7.4 Any grave will only be opened / reopened with the express permission of the grave owner / owners in writing. The only exception is this being where the grave is opened or reopened for the burial of the grave owner themselves

8. Cremated Remains

- 8.1 Interments will normally only be permitted Monday to Saturday 10.00 – 16.00 (excluding Bank or other Public Holidays).
- 8.2 Application to inter ashes should be made by contacting the Burial Clerk. Ashes may be interred in an existing grave, if space allows.
- 8.3 Cremated remains should preferably be put into the ground without a box although a container which is biodegradable is acceptable.

9. Headstones / Memorials

Memorials cannot be erected without prior consent from the Burial Authority

- 9.1 Before any memorial may be erected or works undertaken to an existing memorial, an application must be submitted to the Burial Clerk on the appropriate form supplied by the Burial Authority. The grave owner must sign the form to give permission for the proposed memorial / works. On approval by the Burial Authority permission will be given to the Memorial Mason
- 9.2 **Headstones** (Including any plinth) should be no more than 1200mm (4') high above ground, 900mm (3') wide and 180mm (7") thick and no less than 750 (2'6") high above ground, 500mm (1'8") wide and 75mm (3") thick and should not be erected within 1200mm (4') of the outer wall of the church. The stone should preferably be sunk without any plinth having one-third of its total length below ground level. Alternatively, the headstone may be securely fixed below the level of the turf to a ground anchorage complying with British Standard 8415 or giving an equivalent degree of stability.

Examples allowed within the Cemetery



- 9.3 **Crosses** no more than 1200mm (4') high above ground are acceptable.
- 9.4 **Monuments** should be of natural wood or natural stone. Local building stone or stones similar to local stone are preferred. Black and pearl granite, white marble, synthetic stone and plastic are not permitted. Stone shall not be mirror polished.



- 9.5 **Memorial Plaques** over cremated remains shall be just below the level of the turf and measure not more than 450mm (18 inches) x 400mm (16 inches) will be permitted. They should be set in the ground level with the surface of the turf.



- 9.6 **Horizontal ledgers** (over burials) shall be just below the level of the turf. The maximum size is 2100mm (7') x 900mm (3') and the minimum is 1200mm (4') by 600mm (2')
- 9.7 **Vases shall be separate** – measuring not more than 300mm x 200mm x 200mm (12 inches x 8 inches x 8 inches). They may be sunk into the ground by the memorial plaques so the top is level with the turf.
- 9.8 **Monuments** should be of natural wood or natural stone. Local building stone or stones similar to local stone are preferred. Black and pearl granite, white marble, synthetic stone and plastic are not permitted. Stone shall not be mirror polished.
- 9.9 **A monument shall not include** any raised kerbs, railings, stone or other chippings, picture or photograph, statuary or bird bath. All monuments shall be simple in shape. No colour shall be introduced except black, white, silver or gold.
- 9.10 **No advertisement or trade mark** is permitted on any monument, but the name of the mason may be incised on the side or reverse in unpainted and unleaded letters no more than 13mm high.
- 9.11 Memorial masons must remove all arisings from the cemetery at the conclusion of their work, and must leave the area in a tidy condition.

10. Care of Graves and Memorials

- 10.1 All memorials are erected at the sole responsibility of the owner. The Burial Authority shall not be held responsible for any damage to or caused by the memorial, howsoever incurred. The memorial remains the responsibility of the grave owner during the lease period of the grave. The Burial Authority reserves the right to repair or make safe any memorial which becomes unsafe or falls into disrepair, and to recover any expenses from the registered owner. The Burial Authority will undertake routine safety check on all memorials, and will notify the grave owner at the last registered address of any necessary works to make the memorial safe. The grave owner will be given a period of 3 months from the date of the letter to affect the necessary repairs. The Burial Authority reserves the right to temporarily make safe any memorials that pose a threat until such works are completed. If the grave owner, does not arrange for the repairs to be made, the Council may repair or remove the memorial at the owner's expense.
- 10.2 Grave spaces must be kept in a neat and tidy condition, and all dead flowers, wreaths, trimmings, or other refuse must be taken away.
- 10.3 Any items left on graves are at the owner's risk and the Burial Authority cannot be held responsible for any damage to them whatsoever. The Burial Authority may remove any articles from any grave that are likely to cause risk, damage or offence to other visitors to the cemetery or which interfere with the Council's maintenance of the site.
- 10.4 No shrubs or trees may be planted without permission from the Burial Authority. Any tree or shrub may be trimmed or removed by the Parish Council if not cared for.