

SOLIHULL BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESERVE A GRAVE OR CREMATED REMAINS PLOT

TERMS OF SERVICE

2021

Interment

Interment times

Interments within all of the Cemeteries take place on Monday to Friday with the earliest being 10:15 and the latest at 13:45.

Please be aware that the time booked for the interment is the time that the cortege is due at the graveside. In order to avoid disruption to any other funerals we request that you keep to this time. A charge, as detailed in the fees and charges, may be levied for late arrival.

Charges

No interment will be allowed in any grave for which an unpaid charge is outstanding.

Interment Papers

To ensure that we have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for an interment we request that a correctly completed Interment Application Form is delivered to the Crematorium Office by 3pm at least 3 working days before the interment. Please note that no interment will be allowed to take place until all of the correct paperwork has been submitted. By allowing this amount of time allows us to check that all of the information is correct including grave number, grave ownership, if it is an existing grave or allocation of a new grave, coffin size etc.

Bearers

The Funeral Director is responsible for arranging sufficient bearers to carry and lower the coffin in a dignified manner. We understand that family members and friends often wish to assist with this and we respect that decision. We do ask you to be aware that any mourners who do assist with the bearing or lowering of the coffin do so at their own risk. We are unable to supply additional bearers so please ensure that there enough bearers prior to the interment.

Exclusive Right of Burial

Please be aware that when a grave in a Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Cemetery is purchased, what the purchaser is actually buying is the Exclusive Rights of Burial for a period of 75 years which may be extended for a further period on agreement with the Cemeteries and Crematoria Office.

The purchaser is not buying the Freehold of the Grave and will not own any land. The purchase is for the right to determine who may be buried in the grave and whose cremated remains may be strewn or interred in the grave.

Grave spaces are allocated by the cemetery and the selection of a particular grave is not permitted.

Please note that there are different charges for residents of the Borough and non-residents. The Grant is in the form of a written document known as grave deeds which is issued once the relevant fee has been paid. The period for which any rights apply is stated on the deeds.

The person registered with the Council as being the grave owner of the Grant has the sole right to decide who may be interred in the grave. At the end of the stated period, unless the deed holder has renewed the Grant, then all rights cease to exist.

Please be aware that a grave for which an Exclusive Right of Burial applies can only be opened with the written permission of the registered owner of the Exclusive Right unless the interment is for the owner themselves.

If the registered owner has died the Exclusive Right of Burial can be transferred to a new owner. There is a legal process for doing this and the office will be happy to assist you through this process.

However, if the interment is that of the registered owner then a transfer is not required because as owner of the grave they have a legal right to be interred within it.

It is important to keep the grave deeds in a safe place, as this is a legal document confirming the owner's entitlement to future interments. Please also ensure that the office is notified of any change of address.

Interment Fee

Please be aware that in addition to the fee charged for the Exclusive Right of Burial an Interment Fee for opening and closing of the grave is charged. The Interment Fee is charged every time the grave is opened for an interment and the amount charged is dependent upon residency of the deceased.

It should be noted that from time to time the soil excavated from one grave which is being prepared for an interment may be placed on an adjacent grave but we will try to ensure that this is for as short a time as possible.

Memorial Rights

The Exclusive Right of Burial includes the right to place a memorial (which must be approved by the Council), installed in the designated area on the grave.

Grant owners are required to apply for permission if they wish to have a memorial erected upon a grave. Normally, the application will be completed and submitted, on behalf of the Grant owner, by the Funeral Director or Memorial Stonemason contracted by the owner to carry out the work. Please note that all Memorial Masons working within our cemeteries must be BRAMM registered (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) to ensure the memorial and its fixings comply with current Health and Safety Legislation.

There are restrictions upon the size and design of a memorial, the material used in its construction and the method used for fixing. Considerations will also have to be given to the potential for causing offence to other cemetery visitors.

In all cases the Owner of the Grant will be required to give permission for any inscription, any additional inscription or any refurbishment works carried out to the memorial placed on the grave. Where the Owner of the Grant is the deceased a Statutory Declaration may be completed by the applicant for the interment for an additional inscription to be added to an existing memorial.

Please note:

Memorials placed on graves, which have not been authorised, do not comply with Memorial Regulations, or where a memorial is considered to be a danger to other visitors, will be removed by the Council. Grave surrounds of any kind are not permitted at any of our cemeteries and will be removed. Please do not

remove the grave mound. The mound is necessary as the ground settles and any additional soil will be removed by the Council.

Memorial Safety

Sometimes the foundations of a memorial can move due to settlement of the surrounding ground. The Council operates a rolling programme of safety testing all memorials across the cemeteries. Should any memorials be found to be unsafe the Council will place a warning notice on them and write to the grave owner to let them know that remedial works will need to be carried out. It may also be necessary to make the memorial safe on a temporary basis to avoid injury. This is usually done by placing a wooden post in the ground and placing a band around the post and the headstone. Should the grave owner fail to make a permanent repair to the memorial within the specified timeframe then the memorial will be part buried within the grave space.

Unpurchased Graves

An unpurchased grave (sometimes referred to as a common or public grave) is one where the Exclusive Right of Burial, is not sold and the rights to the grave remain with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Cremated Remains Grave

This is a purchased grave which allows the interment of 2 sets of cremated remains, except for North CR1 at Robin Hood Cemetery which allows up to four sets of remains.

Child's Grave

In both our Woodlands and Widney Manor Cemeteries we have a section for the interment of children. These graves are only excavated to a depth which will allow one interment but cremated remains can also be interred in these graves.

Stillborn Baby's Graves

There are a number of graves which are owned by the Health Authority which are for the specific interment of Stillborn babies/Foetuses. These have a headstone with the names of the interred on them.

Grave Maintenance

For a number of years now all new burial areas within the cemeteries have been laid out in what is known as 'Lawn' style. Using this system, the Council is able to gain easy access to all graves within the burial section, which allows for more effective maintenance of grave surfaces and ensures access for the excavation of graves for future interments.

In order to ensure continual access and ease of maintenance of all grave areas, owners are permitted to place any memorials, artefacts, flower containers etc. only on the memorial foundation area at the head of the grave. Owners are encouraged to maintain this area themselves in order that the Contractor's staff do not have to disturb any flowers or articles present.

Flower containers should not be made of glass or porcelain, as these materials will often fall over or crack due to water freezing during periods of cold temperature. Similarly, plastic materials become brittle due to prolonged exposure to sunlight.

In the period following an interment the grave surface will be subject to settlement. The initial settlement lasts for 12 -18 months. Once this initial settlement has taken place, the surface will be grassed over. Over future years the grave will continue to settle and may require re-instating from time to time, which will be carried out periodically by the Council.

In the traditional areas of Robin Hood Cemetery, properly installed masonry surrounds may, with the approval of the Council, enclose grave surfaces. It is the responsibility of the Grant Owner to arrange for these enclosed grave surfaces to be maintained.

Please note:

For lawn graves planting, the locating of flower vases or artefacts within the grave area is not permitted once the Council has completed the laying of turf. All such items must be located on the memorial foundation area only. Any items placed which prevent or interfere with the maintenance of the grave, may be a health and safety hazard to staff or visitors or which in the opinion of the Council is dilapidated or unsightly the Council reserves the right to remove and dispose of such items at their discretion.