

# **KEYNSHAM CEMETERY**

**KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL HAS A DUTY AS A BURIAL AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE A QUALITY SERVICE AT ALL TIMES. TOWN COUNCIL STAFF WILL ALWAYS TRY TO HELP AND BE CONSIDERATE OF THE BEREAVED'S FEELINGS**

**BELOW IS A BASIC LIST OF DUTIES CARRIED OUT BY OUR GROUNDSTAFF FOR FUNERALS AT KEYNSHAM CEMETERY.**

- **Dress Grave: Mats, Webbing, Bier, Pudlocks**
- **Direct Hearse to parking space**
- **Inform Undertaker/Coffin Bearers of any Health and Safety Issues relating to the grave and surrounding area**
- **Check name and details on the coffin.**
- **Watch from a distance to see the coffin lowered into the grave**
- **When the graveside is clear start to remove mats etc.**
- **Backfill the grave, dependent on time, it may have to be finished the next day.**

## **BURIALS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**(Exclusive Right of Burial – ERB)**

**Why are graves dug so deep (it is distressing to see the coffin go down so far.)**

**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 not only for the depth of coffins/caskets that will be buried but also to accommodate legal requirements of undisturbed earth between each coffin and the amount of earth that must cover the interment.**

**Why are there so many different types of graves available at some Cemeteries?**

**Some authorities have introduced a wide range of grave choices to give people as many options as possible when arranging the burial of a loved one. For many the lawn grave is considered to be the best option but for others a more traditional, elaborate and larger type of memorial is required.**

**Why can't a full memorial be put over the surface of a lawn grave?**

**A lawn grave is designed to have only a headstone of a limited size with the rest of the grave laid to lawn. In this way the limited area available for burial is best utilised. Maintenance is easier to accomplish with large mowing machinery being used to keep the area in a neat condition. Full memorials are only allowed on traditional graves, only lawn style memorials allowed on lawn plots.**

**Care should be taken when selecting the type of grave.**

### **Are graves filled in straight after the burial or are they left to the next day?**

Graves are prepared for burial at least one day before the funeral and are covered overnight.

ICCM advise that immediately after the mourners have departed the grave shall be entirely backfilled and made tidy. The work is usually completed on the day of the burial and coffins should not normally be left uncovered overnight

### **Can anyone witness the grave being filled?**

Yes, but the Cemetery will need to be advised of this before the funeral takes place so that they are prepared.

### **Why do some people wait while the grave is filled?**

Some cultures require that the grave is filled in while the family watch or they may wish to undertake the backfilling themselves. When families want this it is essential that the Cemetery is made aware of their requirements when the burial is first arranged.

This will ensure that their wishes are met and that their safety is protected during the backfilling.

### **When will I be able to put a memorial on a lawn/kerb grave?**

In Keynsham Cemetery the ground needs time to settle after a coffin burial so a headstone cannot be placed on the lawn/kerb grave for 6 months after the burial. Cemetery staff monitor any sinking and top the plot up periodically with topsoil.

The Memorial Mason must erect the headstone according to BRAMM or NAMM Regulations/Code of Practice.

### **Why have I only been sold the exclusive right of burial to the grave for a set period of time?**

Graves are no longer sold in perpetuity (forever). The Law states that graves cannot be sold for more than 100 years and Authorities cannot go against this.

However, the Law does permit grant of exclusive right of ownership to be extended and some Burial Authorities write to the owners offering the opportunity to “top up” their lease, in this manner, the grave can stay in the family for as long as they wish, although ownership will never be issued for more than 50 years at any one time.

### **I own the grave, can anyone else be buried in there if I don't want them to?**

No, graves cannot be opened without the permission of the owner of the grave, except where the deceased is the owner of the grave in which case no written authority is required.

### **I am told that the grave is for 2 people – there is only 1 person in the grave and I now want 2 more burials to take place?**

When a grave is purchased to take 2 full body burials the depth to which the first burial is excavated for the first burial must take into account the need for a second burial. i.e. Grave for 2 coffin burials, 6ft. and 4ft. Grave for 3 coffin burials 8ft. 6ft and 4 ft.

There are legal requirements as to how much earth must be left on the top of the last coffin and therefore it is not physically possible to put an extra coffin in a grave without breaking the law.

However, after the grave is full of coffin burials cremated remains caskets can be interred in the grave.

#### What happens when the Exclusive Right of Burial/Lease expires?

When you buy a grave you purchase the ERB in that grave for a set period of time i.e. 50 years.

At the end of the period you should be given the option of renewing the ERB for a further period.

It is vitally important that you keep the cemetery office fully informed should you change address otherwise you may not receive a notice of renewal at the appropriate time.

#### Who is responsible for the memorial?

The Burial Authority is responsible for maintaining the Cemetery in a safe condition and the owner of the grave has the responsibility of keeping the memorial in a safe condition.

If you fail to do this the Cemetery staff may take action to make the memorial safe.

Cemetery staff carry out routine inspections of memorials in the Cemetery and if one is identified as unstable and likely to fall and injure someone it may have to be cordoned off, laid flat or have a temporary support applied.

You will receive a letter under these circumstances and it will be your responsibility to arrange suitable repairs.

Should your memorial still be under guarantee with the memorial mason they should carry out the repair at no cost to yourself.

Should no repairs be carried out the memorial may be lawfully removed from the Cemetery.

*Your memorial mason has a responsibility to provide a memorial of good quality and to erect it in a safe manner. The memorial must be erected in accordance with the NAMM or BRAMM Recommended Code of Practice and seek a guarantee from your memorial mason.*

#### What happens if/when all the owners have died?

Ownership of the ERB in a grave can be transferred from a deceased owner's Estate. This means of transfer can be complex and whilst there is a set procedure to follow, each case must be looked at individually. Contact the Cemetery office where staff can arrange for a transfer to take place with due compliance to the law.

#### Why can't 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 and Regulations of the Cemetery.

It is important that you select a Cemetery that will provide you with the type of memorial that you require as regulations differ from area to area.

#### **Why is a permit needed?**

Prior to a memorial being erected on a grave the written authority of the owner of the grave must be given on a permit/application form authorising the proposed erection of the memorial. Memorials need to conform to cemetery regulations with regard to size and fixings and the memorial also needs to be checked for stability under health and safety regulations.

The Cemetery staff need to check that the memorial conforms to its regulations and is erected in a safe manner.

You may ask your memorial mason for a guarantee of the work or details of insurance.

#### **I want to bury cremated remains in the grave. Why do I have to decide whether there will be any more burials before this can be done?**

It is against the law to disturb human remains without licence (including in caskets and urns) and therefore no further burials will be possible in the grave until a licence has been obtained.

However, cremated remains can be buried in the grave at full depth i.e. 8ft. or 6ft. in which case they will not be disturbed by further full body burials, however to dig a grave to these depths there will be additional charges incurred.

Cemetery/questions on burials