

St Nicholas-at-Wade & Sarre Parish Council

ST NICHOLAS-AT-WADE CEMETERY

The 'Charter for the Bereaved'

The Parish Council has adopted elements of the 'Charter for the Bereaved', published by the Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management. If you have internet access you can view the Charter at www.iccm-uk.com/downloads/Reference%20Charter.doc. Alternatively information may be obtained from local funeral directors. More specifically your 'Rights' include:-

- (a) You have the right to purchase the "Right of Burial" in a grave for a period not exceeding 100 years.
- (b) You have the right to purchase the "Right to Erect and Maintain a Memorial" on a grave for a period not exceeding 100 years.
- (c) You have the right to be buried in an unpurchased grave.
- (d) You have the right to place and maintain a memorial within the constraints of regulations in force or to leave the grave unmarked.
- (e) You have the right and responsibility to maintain the memorial upon the grave during the period of memorial rights granted to you. The memorial cannot be disturbed or moved during this period, without your permission, unless it poses a safety hazard. The safe erection and maintenance of the memorial is your responsibility during the period of the rights
- (f) You have the right to use any memorial mason of your choice.
- (g) It is your right to define the type of religious or secular format of the service, within the constraints of time and decency.
- (h) It is your right to define the type of music or other ceremony you wish to have at the service.
- (i) It is your right to choose the type and design of coffin, within the constraints of availability, regulations and safe materials.
- (j) It is your right to receive a prompt response to any form of communication with the Parish Council.
- (k) It is your right to organise a funeral without the use of a funeral director.
- (l) It is your right to be shown a specified standard of grounds maintenance. Where standards fail to meet the specification, you have the right to complain.
- (m) It is your right to be given a table of fees upon request.

When can burials take place?

Burials can take place on any weekday, except on bank holidays. Please talk to your funeral director or contact us to discuss any specific needs.

What types of graves are available?

Lawn-type graves - These are graves that have a memorial located at the head of the grave. After the burial, the grave is allowed to settle for a minimum period of 12 months after which, the grave is made level and grassed over. We will maintain the lawn areas, at no additional expense to the grave owner but so that we can maintain these areas, nothing else is allowed to be placed or grown on or around the grave.

Can I bury Cremated Remains in the Cemeteries?

Yes, there is a Garden of Remembrance for cremated remains at the cemetery. Cremated Remains can also be placed in purchased graves.

What is an unpurchased grave?

An unpurchased grave represents the least expensive burial option, all you pay for is the funeral. The grave itself remains the property of St Nicholas-at-Wade & Sarre Parish Council and we will use it to bury other people who also want an unpurchased grave. When the grave is full we will place a small stone on the grave with the names of those interred below. You

may not place any memorial upon the grave and should not expect to be able to bury another relative in the same grave.

What are 'Exclusive Rights of Burial'?

Purchasing the 'Exclusive Rights of Burial' means that the grave may not be reopened and no one may be buried there without your permission. You may purchase this right for 100 years. After the rights have lapsed the grave ownership reverts to the Parish Council and we may reuse or resell any space remaining. You must make sure that you and your family can maintain the grave for this period of time.

How many burials can take place in a grave?

This will depend on the depth of the grave dug but usually no more than two burials can take place in each grave space. The Parish Council allows up to four interments of ashes in each plot in the Garden of Remembrance.

What happens if the owner of these rights dies?

If the owner of the Exclusive Rights dies, it is assumed that they give permission to have themselves interred in their grave. After this time the Rights become part of their estate and may be left in a will to someone else. If the Rights are not specifically mentioned in the will, they will form part of the 'residue' of the will, usually willed as 'and all my other worldly goods' at the end of the will. Whoever inherits the Rights will need to contact us and arrange a transfer of ownership before the grave can be opened again. As paperwork can go missing it is best to do this as soon as possible after inheriting the Rights.

Can I transfer ownership to someone else?

Yes, simply contact the Clerk to the Council and he will send you a form.

(FAQ) The owner of the rights died years ago and the family want to reuse the grave.

Not a problem, contact the Clerk to the Council and he will work out how we may transfer ownership to you. You may need to show us copies of Wills and/or Grants of Probate. This process may take some time so don't wait until you need to arrange a funeral. You may need to make a formal declaration in front of a Magistrate, we can advise you of the process and supply the paperwork for you. Ownership is the family's responsibility. We cannot accept a booking unless ownership has been sorted out.

(FAQ) Can two people own these rights?

Ordinarily we will only grant Exclusive Rights to an individual. Occasionally Rights may be left to two or more people in a will, in this case, one person will have to be chosen as the owner and the others must renounce their ownership (we have a form for this).

What are Monumental Rights?

The right to erect a memorial will automatically be granted when Exclusive Rights of Burial are purchased. You will still need to apply for permission to erect the monument and there will be a charge. There are also prescribed specifications for memorials in the St Nicholas cemetery. These are:-

A Flagstone - not exceeding 6 feet by 3 feet (in the old section only)

Kerbstones or border stones enclosing space not exceeding 7 feet by 3'6" (in the old section only)

A Headstone – maximum height 3'6"

A Vase - not exceeding 12 inches in height

A Tablet

Any other monument (in the old section only) to be agreed with the Clerk to the Council.

Can I reserve a grave ahead of time?

Yes, you may purchase Exclusive Rights of Burial for a grave at any time, not only just prior to a funeral.

What if the Deed to the Rights goes missing?

If you are the registered owner of the Rights we will send you an official letter to confirm this. If you are entitled to be the owner through inheritance, we will guide you through the correct transfer procedure and then issue a letter stating your position.

What if I inherit the Rights to a grave that I do not wish to maintain?

You may surrender the Rights to the Parish Council at any time. Simply put this in writing and return the deed(s) to us if you have them.

How do I purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial for a grave?

Normally, your funeral director will help to make the necessary arrangements for purchasing the 'Exclusive Right of Burial'. Some people may want to make their own arrangements at the time of the funeral. You can organise this by directly contacting the Clerk to the Council who will be happy to advise you.

If you would like to view the section of the cemetery where the burial is to take place before the funeral, the Clerk to the Council or funeral director can arrange to meet with you on the site.

How do I purchase Memorial Rights?

Normally, the application will be completed and submitted on your behalf by the funeral director or memorial stonemason appointed by you to carry out the work.

There are restrictions on the design of a memorial, the material used in its construction and the method used for fixing. Consideration also has to be given to the potential for causing offence to other cemetery visitors.

In all cases you, as the owner of the Grant, will need to give permission for any inscription, any additional inscription or any refurbishment works carried out to the memorial placed on the grave.

Choosing a Memorial and Selecting a Memorial Mason

Because a memorial is a lasting monument and a tribute to a person's life, perhaps a final gift to someone dearly loved, it is important to choose it carefully. Hasty decisions made while still in great distress frequently result in later regrets, so it can be sensible to wait - and to spend time on selecting a suitable design.

You may wish to use a company recommended by a friend or relative, or you may need to look around. Whichever you do, it is generally advisable to use one which specialises in memorial masonry. They should understand stone and so be able to give you reliable advice as to whether the stone you are choosing is suitable for the type of memorial you require - and for the area in which it is to be fixed. Weather, pollution and surrounding vegetation can have an effect on this.

Many Memorial Masons are members of the **National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM)**. They are bound by strict Codes of Business and Working Practice. Members are obliged to give a guarantee of the stability of their workmanship. Many masons will have been accredited by NAMM in the use of their Code of Working Practice relating to the safe fixing of memorials.

Memorial Maintenance

If a burial is to take place in an existing grave you will need to ensure that the memorial, decorative items such as pot plants, artifacts, and so on are removed before the grave is opened (where required). This may be carried out by arrangement with the funeral director or memorial mason.

You are responsible for making sure that any memorial installed on your grave plot has been properly constructed, and has been installed in accordance with the best practices of the memorial industry. You should expect your memorial supplier to guarantee their work for a limited period. We recommend you insure the memorial against theft, loss, or damage. Most memorial masons can arrange for appropriate cover.

You are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the memorial, and any other items placed on the grave. We strongly recommend that you have the stability and condition of the

memorial checked each year. Failure to do so may result in you being held liable for any injury or damage caused to a third party, particularly if the injury or damage is shown to be due to the condition of the memorial or the way it was installed. We have a duty of care towards cemetery visitors and we will carry out safety inspections of memorials.

If a memorial is identified as being unsafe or potentially dangerous we have to take action to reduce the risk to visitors. If the memorial is unstable, and liable to fall, the memorial may have to be laid down on the ground, or temporarily made safe to reduce the risk of injury to others and damage to the memorial. We will attempt to contact you at your last known address, to tell you why we are taking action. If you arrange for regular memorial inspections you could avoid the need for us to take this action.

Grave Maintenance

For a number of years the cemetery has been laid out in what is known as the 'lawn' style. Using this system we are able to easily reach all graves within the burial section. This helps us maintain the grounds and makes the excavation of graves for future burials far easier.

So that we can reach the grave areas and maintain them, please place any memorials, artifacts, flower containers and so on the memorial foundation area at the head of the grave. We may have to move items placed on the grassed area of the grave. You are encouraged to maintain this area around the memorial yourself so that we do not have to disturb any flowers or articles.

Flower containers should not be made of glass or porcelain, as these will often fall over or crack due to water freezing in cold weather. Similarly, plastic materials become brittle when exposed to direct sunlight for long periods.

In the period following a burial the grave surface will need to settle. This takes between nine and twelve months. Then the surface will be grassed over. Over the years the grave may continue to settle and may require work from time to time, which we will carry out

On the traditional section of the cemetery, properly installed memorial surrounds may, with our approval, enclose the whole grave area. It is your responsibility to arrange for the maintenance of the enclosed grave area.

Fees and Charges

Fees, payments and sums fixed by St Nicholas at Wade & Sarre Parish Council are pursuant to the powers contained in both the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Cemeteries order 1974. There is a 25% increase in fees for persons who, immediately before their death were not an inhabitant or parishioner of the parish of St Nicholas-at-Wade & Sarre.

A schedule of current cemetery charges is available on the website or from the Clerk to the Council.

Please Note: As owner of the Rights to a grave you are responsible for informing the Parish Council of any change of address. If a problem occurs with the grave or the monument and we cannot contact you, we have the right to take whatever action is necessary to rectify the problem. If this involves a cost to the Council, this may be levied against the grave, and must be paid before any more interments can take place.