

Houghton Cemetery – Regulations

Houghton Cemetery is owned and managed by Houghton & Wyton Parish Council.

The Parish Council hopes that all visitors to the cemetery find it a place of peace and tranquillity. The following regulations are to ensure this remains the case.

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the cemetery, cutting the grass and hedges and maintaining the path and structures. Regular checks are carried out by the councillors and the Clerk, but please advise us of any issues that you believe need address

In this document, unless the contract requires otherwise, the terms 'Council' or 'Parish Council' mean Houghton and Wyton Parish Council.

These regulations refer to the cemetery located at Houghton Hill Road, Houghton, Cambridgeshire and apply to all persons using, working in, or visiting the cemetery.

All enquiries concerning the use of the cemetery should be made to the Parish Clerk, at St Mary's Centre, Chapel Lane, Houghton, Huntingdon. PE28 2AY. tel: 01480 467209, email: clerk@houghtonwytonpc.co.uk.

1. Conduct

Behaviour in the cemetery is covered by the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

Visitors and grave owners are asked to behave with respect in the cemetery. Please do not walk over other graves, if possible, and respect the neighbouring graves and others in the area. In addition, no person shall wilfully create a disturbance, commit any nuisance, wilfully interfere with any grave, memorial, flowers, plants or any such matter, or play any game or sport in the cemetery. Any person soliciting orders within the cemetery will be removed.

Dogs are permitted in the cemetery, but should be kept on leads and under control. The person responsible for the dog must clear any dog mess.

Owners shall keep the graves tidy.

We reserve the right to exclude or remove any persons failing to abide by the Regulations.

2. Hours

a. Opening hours

Houghton Cemetery is open at all times, but Houghton & Wyton Parish Council reserves the right to close the cemetery or limit access at any time.

b. Interment hours

Interments shall take place between the following times:

Mondays to Saturdays – 9.30am to 4.30pm.

No interment may take place on a Sunday, Christmas Day or Good Friday, except by

the direction of the Medical Officer of Health or on religious grounds. Interments on these days may incur an additional charge.

3. Burials

a. Exclusive Right of Burial.

Due to lack of land availability at Houghton Cemetery purchase of plots is only available to current residents of Houghton & Wyton. Plots may be made available to those who have left the village recently or have a very strong close connection to the village, at the discretion of the Parish Council. This may incur additional charges.

All enquiries to purchase plots or request interments must be made to the Parish Clerk. It is recommended that a local Funeral Director is engaged as soon as possible to ease the process.

The exclusive right of burial is normally purchased at the time that a request for interment is made.

On purchasing the exclusive right of burial for a grave or cremated remains plot, a deed will be issued to the purchaser valid for a period of 99 years, with the option to renew the rights at the end of this period.

The person to whom the Exclusive Right of Burial is granted (referred to as the deed holder from this point on) has the sole right to determine who is interred in a grave or ashes plot. It does not confer ownership in respect of the land concerned. In any grave, a maximum of one coffin, or two if a double-depth plot, and, space permitting, two cremated remains may also be buried. In ashes plots a maximum of four cremated remains only may be buried.

The exclusive right may be assigned or transferred by deed or bequeathed by will to a relative or nominated person. If the right has not been assigned, it is conferred on a relative as interpreted in the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977. A fee may apply.

The council will keep records of any rights granted. Any transfer, assignment or bequest of those rights must be notified to the Council as soon as possible after an assignment or bequest is made.

After interment the burial will be recorded in the Council's Register of Deaths.

b. Notice of Interment

The form of notification of interment, together with all fees, must be delivered to the Parish Clerk not later than 10am two days prior to the date of interment.

The Parish Clerk may require notice in excess of the period stated. In calculating the notice period Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday and public holidays are to be excluded.

Telephone reservations remain provisional unless the appropriate form is returned giving the notice required.

The Council reserve the right to refuse to accept a notice of interment in special circumstances.

On every opening of a grave or vault in which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased, the Deed of Grant and Certificate of Ownership must be produced to the Parish Clerk when the notice of interment is given.

The coffin containing the body of a still born child must bear an indelible description, including the name of the parent.

c. Disposal Certificates.

A certificate for burial, the 'green form', from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages registering the death or, in cases where a Coroner's Inquest has been held, the Coroner's Warrant, must be produced to the Parish Clerk prior to the interment.

In the case of a still born child a certificate in accordance with the Births and Deaths Registration Acts 1926 will be required.

4. Fees

Various fees and charges are applicable. The Council reviews fees and charges biennially. Anyone intending to use the cemetery is advised to obtain an up-to-date copy of the fees and charges which will be supplied on request.

All fees and charges must be paid to the Council when submitting the form of notification of interment and in all cases, in advance of any works.

The Council reserves the right to retain all or part of the interment fee in the event of a Notice of Interment being cancelled after work on the preparation of the grave has commenced.

5. Graves

No grave may be dug, interments carried out or memorials erected without the permission of the Parish Clerk.

The maximum permitted size of graves is:

Burial Plots –1.22m by 2.44 m (4' by 8')

Cremation Plots – 0.6m by 0.6m (2' by 2').

A plan is to be provided showing where in a grave, ashes are interred.

Ashes cannot be scattered in the cemetery.

The Council will not be responsible for the preparation of graves. All excavations will be the responsibility of the funeral undertaker. If grave diggers use machinery, boards need to be laid under the tracks - to prevent damage to all surfaces. The Parish Council reserves the right to ask for a grave to be hand-dug if the soil conditions are wet or the position of a grave is difficult to access by machine.

The Parish Clerk has authority to remove any Headstone which, in his/her opinion, should be removed to facilitate the opening of any adjoining grave. Any headstone removed will be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

All burials are to be in graves dug in a single plot; the purchase of two plots for one interment is not permitted. Double depth graves may be possible depending on ground conditions. This can be requested on application.

Graves are to be backfilled immediately after the mourners have left the graveside. Excess soil should be removed from the cemetery, unless specifically requested otherwise by the Council. Floral tributes should be gathered together and placed on the finished grave. Tributes will be removed once spent (Normally after two weeks.)

With the exception of previously purchased graves, interments shall take place in consecutive order, if the soil permits. The selection of a purchased grave space is, in all cases, subject to the approval of the Council. The wishes of the persons applying will be met as far as deemed practicable.

The Council reserves the right of placing a mark of reference to all graves.

Undertakers shall at all times provide sufficient bearers for carrying and lowering of coffins into the grave.

The undertaker, or any other person having charge of the funeral, must arrange with a minister to conduct any religious service.

Ground settlement will invariably occur in the months following a burial. For six months, the

Council will periodically inspect the grave and, as ground settlement occurs will re-level the surface of the grave and sow grass seed where required.

6. Coffins

Coffins or caskets should be of a standard size, fit in a standard hearse and be able to fit easily in a single plot without disturbing adjacent graves or plots. The size of the coffin or the ashes casket is to be provided to the Council as part of the application for interment.

The coffin or casket should be made mainly of wood (not MDF), or other biodegradable material, e.g. cardboard, wool or wicker. Coffins and caskets comprised of metal or plastic are not permitted.

7. Gravestones and Memorials

Memorials are only permitted by agreement with the Parish Council. Memorials may only be erected on a grave in respect of which an Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted

Deed Holders of the Burial Right must apply to the Clerk to erect or alter a memorial or headstone (see separate form and regulations). No memorial may be removed from the cemetery unless the consent of the owner of the memorial has been obtained and approval given by the Parish Clerk.

A memorial may not be erected on a grave prior to the first interment, or within 12 months of an interment except by agreement with the Parish Clerk.

The only persons allowed to erect, repair or carry out work on long-term memorials are qualified stone masons.

Masons or other persons engaged in the erection, renovation or repainting of any stone monument must perform their work expeditiously and in all respects in accordance with these regulations. The work must be carried out at the sole risk and liability of the person executing it, and any damage caused by or in the execution thereof must be made good to the satisfaction of the Council or the person whose property is so damaged.

Headstones must be prepared ready for fixing before being taken into the cemetery. Masons and other workmen must provide and afterwards remove all tools, planks, blocks etc required in the work of erecting headstones. Work in the cemetery will not be permitted on Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday or outside normal working hours.

Stonemasons may add their details discretely on the reverse of the headstone in letters not more than 1.5 inches (15mm) high.

The Council may remove any memorial erected in contravention of these regulations and recharge the deed-holder for the costs incurred.

a. Types of memorial

Only one memorial stone is permitted per plot. Within the ashes section only one tablet is permitted per plot. All memorial stones shall be subject to the approval of the Council. The application for approval shall be forwarded to the Parish Clerk for the Council's approval, including details of material, design, size and fixing methods and the proposed inscription. Preference is given to non-imported or local stone. White Marble will not be permitted.

The Parish Clerk's approval of the material will be based on Memorial firms' catalogues and what is judged fitting with other headstones in Houghton Cemetery.

Memorials must not encroach upon adjacent plots or other areas of the cemetery.

Text is to be approved by the Parish Clerk prior to inscribing. Pictures and photographs are not permitted.

b. Memorial size

Maximum Height x Width x Depth: 1000x600x300 mm

Plaques for ashes plots: 460x460 mm;

c. Ground anchor system.

All memorials shall be erected to conform to the most recent edition of the National Association of Memorials Mason's Recommended Code of Working Practice and BS 8415. A Guarantee of Conformity should be issued to the parish council once works are complete

d. Lawn Cemetery

The upper part of the cemetery is a lawn cemetery and therefore no kerbs or stone chippings are allowed. Any that are installed will be removed and the grave owner contacted.

e. Safety of Memorials.

No responsibility will be accepted by the Council for the care or safe keeping of, or damage to any, memorial in the cemetery. Memorials shall be kept neat and in good order by the owners or their representatives. The primary responsibility for safety and ongoing maintenance of a memorial rests with the deed-holder.

The Council has a general duty of care to ensure its cemeteries are safe for visitors and its employees. In view of this, the Council will undertake periodic inspections of all memorials.

Where a memorial is found to be unsafe, the Council reserves the right to make it safe by temporary means. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify the deed-holder that the memorial needs attention to make it safe on a long-term basis.

If the deed-holder is not contactable, or the deed-holder fails to make the memorial safe with a reasonable period after notification then, in accordance with the Local Authorities' Cemeteries order 1977, the Council reserves the right to make the memorial safe on a long-term basis, including the repair, repositioning, removal or destruction of the memorial, The Council may attempt to recover the costs of making the memorial safe from the deed-holder should the opportunity arise at any time in the future.

f. Flowers, wreaths etc.

Owners should keep the graves tidy and remove dead flowers. If not kept tidy or dead flowers removed, the Council will do so and reserves the right to charge the deed holder. Dead vegetation can be placed in the bin by the gates, not on the soil heap

g. Plants.

Plants, bushes and trees are not permitted to be planted on graves, but may be considered elsewhere. The Parish Council has a [Memorials Policy and application procedure](#) that applies throughout the Parish.

h. Vases

Must be a max of 380mm high and removeable.

Potted plants and flowers should stand securely on the base of the memorial when in place.

i. Removal of items

Temporary memorials will be tolerated but may be removed by the Parish Clerk after a suitable time.

Any unagreed memorials or objects placed on graves will be removed at the discretion of the Parish Council. The grave owner will be contacted and given two weeks to claim the objects, after which they will be disposed of.

At the discretion of the Parish Council, any plants or objects in place before these regulations came into force may be allowed to remain but should be maintained to remain within the grave space and be no taller than 100cm. If a grave is obviously no longer maintained the Parish Council reserve the right to remove any plants or objects and return the grave to grass.

The Council does not accept responsibility for any loss or damage to any memorials or objects placed on graves or cremation plots in the cemetery.

8. Vehicles

Please note, there is no vehicle access into the cemetery itself (except for grave digging), nor is there any dedicated parking. There is a layby on the A1123 almost opposite the cemetery and a car park at the Playing Field on St Ives Road, Houghton. All cars are parked at the owner's risk.

Any concerns or problems should be reported to the Parish Clerk.

1st January 2022