

Great Gonerby

Memorial Management

Policy

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Policy statement

This policy sets out the Great Gonerby Parish Councils approach to managing memorials at the Hill Top Burial Ground and St Sebastian's Church Parish burial ground. The policy covers the responsibilities, the approval process, assessment and testing procedures, practices for temporarily making memorials safe and the processes for memorial owners to effect repairs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Burial Ground Regulations.

Please see the Parish Council website www.greatgonerby.parish@lincolnshire.gov.uk for the latest versions of all relevant documents.

Definitions

Memorial - any headstone or tablet or plaque or other memorial affixed or placed upon a grave plot.

ERoB (Exclusive Right of Burial) - a deed of right to burial and the installation of a memorial issued by the Burial Authority. Note: The ERoB does not confer any land ownership rights.

Burial Ground Regulations - the rules established by the Burial Authority that govern the operation of the Burial Ground which must be adhered to by ERoB owners.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council/Burial Authority

The Parish Council acts as the statutory Burial Authority under the Local Authority Cemeteries Order 1977. The terms Parish Council and Burial Authority are effectively synonymous for the purposes of this policy.

Responsibility for the overall safety (duty of care) within the burial ground lies with the Burial Authority. The Burial Authority has responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that ***as far as reasonably practicable*** the burial ground is maintained in a safe condition. This includes ensuring that anyone who enters the site to carry out work, attend interments, visit graves or for any other reason, can do so safely.

The burial ground is open to the public at all times, therefore the Health and Safety of visitors, employees and contractors who are visiting or working in the burial ground is the primary concern of the Burial Authority. Fortunately the Burial Grounds are located away from population centres and do not generally attract many visitors. The general level of risk is therefore considered low.

However, the Burial Authority will carry out inspections of memorials to identify potential hazards and reduce risk where possible. Any memorials identified as Category 1 - (Unsafe) will be made safe temporarily and, where possible, memorial owners contacted. The full procedure for inspection, testing and communication with owners is set out later in this document. While responsibility for general safety lies with the Burial Authority, there are specific responsibilities that lie with the owners of any memorials and the memorial masons responsible for installing them.

Memorial Owners

Owners of the Exclusive Right of Burial (grave owners) are responsible for maintaining any memorial associated with their burial plot in good, safe condition in accordance with the Burial Ground Regulations.

The Burial Authority will regularly inspect graves, test memorials and, where possible, bring any defects to the attention of owners. **ONLY** those memorials found to be Category 1 unsafe (as defined) will be temporarily made safe by the Burial Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, making safe may include laying the headstone flat.

Memorial installation and ownership is a significant and long term undertaking and the Parish Council urges memorial owners to obtain adequate insurance as they would with any other property. Advice on insurance is best obtained from memorial masons who are familiar with the market.

Memorial owners must keep their contact details (address, phone and email) up to date with the Burial Authority as these will be used to contact owners in the event of a problem. Failure to advise the Burial Authority of a change of address could lead to unnecessary distress for all involved.

Memorial Masons

Memorial masons are legally liable for the work they carry out and must ensure that memorials are erected safely and in accordance with British Standard BS8415. Memorial masons must also comply with the Burial Authority Regulations and obtain a signed permit (form BG8 on the website) before the work can proceed.