

Diocese of Down and Dromore

REGULATIONS AND CHARGES FOR GRAVEYARDS AND GARDENS OF REMEMBRANCE

These general guidelines will be reviewed triennially by the Diocesan Council.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL GUIDE FOR SELECT VESTRIES

1. Regulations

1.1 Before they are implemented, Select Vestries are required to submit to the Diocesan Council for approval, through the Diocesan Secretary, proposed regulations for the management of graveyards and gardens of remembrance vested in the Representative Church Body.

1.2 The regulations attached to this Guide for Select Vestries are a template which should form the basis of the Regulations to be adopted by each parish in the Diocese.

1.3 The structure, content and wording have been approved for use by Diocesan Synod and should be adhered to as closely as possible. Minor local variations are envisaged, but if there are exceptional parochial circumstances which the Select Vestry feel will necessitate significant deviations these should be referred to Diocesan Council before proceeding further. Fees and charges as agreed by the Select Vestry must be inserted as appropriate in the lilac-coloured boxes. Where fee options are shown the Select Vestry must decide which figure to include in the regulations for their parish.

1.4 When submitted to and approved by Diocesan Council, a copy of the parish regulations from Section 4 onwards should be placed on the Parish Website, displayed in an accessible place in the parish and forwarded to local undertakers.

2. General Information – Graveyards/Gardens of Remembrance

2.1 Most parishes restrict availability to parishioners, their immediate families or former parishioners. The allocation of burial rights to any new grave space should only be made when its use becomes necessary. It is advised that the allocation of multiple plots is kept to a minimum.

2.2 In all parish regulations, the clergy and churchwardens must be identified as the ones who have final responsibility for the graveyard/garden of remembrance on behalf of the parish. While a Graveyard Secretary or Church Officer is often involved, his/her role falls under the directing authority of the clergy and churchwardens.

2.3 No ground may be consecrated (even as a Garden of Remembrance for ashes only) without the appropriate faculty from the Bishop of the Diocese, and without the appropriate permission of the civil authorities, including planning permission. If a previously consecrated churchyard is to be used in this way, this procedure is not necessary. If there is any doubt about the consecration of any ground, please contact the Diocesan Office.

2.4 It is good practice for each parish to maintain a map or plan of its graveyard, with detailed records of the names and addresses of those who hold the registration papers for

each plot. A formal Register of Burials must be kept by each parish in accordance with Chapter III Section 25 of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

2.5 Where the registered grave keeper is deceased, the prerogative to bury rests with those holding the grave papers until the matter is regularised by re-allocation. It is recommended that parishes are proactive in keeping these records up to date to avoid possible difficulties in the future. Any charge for the issue of new papers is intended to cover administrative costs only and is similar to that for duplicate papers.

Re-Registration / Re-Allocation of Graves:

2.6 A grave (previously registered) in which no burials have taken place can only be re-registered to someone else provided that either:

2.6.1 The previous registration-holder has waived their claim (preferably in writing to the clergy and churchwardens); or

2.6.2 All reasonable efforts to trace the registration-holder / family concerned have been exhausted.

In which case a Registration fee applies.

2.7 Any grave in which a burial has previously taken place cannot be re-registered to a different family. However, it may be re-allocated to another member within the same family circle (current or subsequent generations).

In which case a Re-allocation fee applies.

2.8 Where application is made for a burial in a particular grave, and the registration-holder for that grave (or their next of kin) is deceased or cannot be traced – the grave may be re-allocated to the person making the application, and the burial permitted, provided there is clear evidence of familial connection.

In which case a Re-allocation fee applies.

2.9 In old graveyards (where records are incomplete) it may be necessary to carry out an update of the graveyard register. Following a full search of the records and of the Register of Burials and an in-depth consultation within the parish, advertisements should be placed in relevant Local and National newspapers on at least two occasions requesting that anyone who may have an interest in any of the graves makes contact. The subsequent issue of re-registration papers in respect of those grave plots where papers are incomplete or out of date may incur a charge like that for duplicate papers to cover administration costs. Where the existing papers are correct and up to date no additional re-registration fee is appropriate.

Maintenance

2.10 The maintenance of graveyards can become a financial burden to parishes and often the collection of annual maintenance charges is impractical where those holding grave registration papers no longer live within the parish or are not subscribing parishioners. While the use of Bank standing orders may overcome this loss of income, parishes may consider charging a consolidated maintenance fee in addition to the fee for opening a grave. Up to a 10-year consolidation is suggested later in the Regulations.

3 Gardens of Remembrance

- 3.1 Where a parish decides to use an area of ground in its churchyard for the burial of cremated remains in biodegradable containers or directly into the soil, the Select Vestry is required to prepare specific regulations for its control and submit them and their fees to the Diocesan Council for approval.
- 3.2 These regulations are applied solely at the discretion of the clergy and churchwardens, to whom all relating matters should be addressed.
- 3.3 Interments should be recorded in the parochial Register of Burials. In addition, some parishes may wish to use a Memorial Book with the month, week or day of death being recorded and the Book made available within the Church building.
- 3.4 Where a garden with undefined plots is used, care needs to be taken that the whole expanse of the ground is used systematically, in order to allow for the biodegradable containers to degrade. This may be done with gridlines on a map which the gravedigger uses for guidance purposes.
- 3.5 If defined plots are to be allocated to families, parishes may opt to permit plaques with the name of the deceased, their years of life and a plot number marked on them. Alternatively, the stone or concrete block set on top of each plot may be engraved, with approval. Where a single approved style of plaque is to be used, it is appropriate that plaques should be purchased and installed by the parish and that the costs incurred are included in setting the charge for the allocation of the plots.
- 3.6 In designing the garden, parishes may wish to use plants, including bushes and small trees to provide all year-round colour at the fringe of a grassed or wood-shaving covered area. The location of the gardens should be sufficiently open to allow a significant number of people to observe the interment. Thought should be given to the provision and proximity of a tarmac area for observers nearby if the plot itself is small.

GRAVEYARD REGULATIONS AND CHARGES

PARISH OF

Name of parish

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Burial Ground at *Name of church* is managed by the clergy and churchwardens of the parish and is maintained by the Select Vestry in accordance with the Parish Graveyard Regulations.

1.2 All committals must be conducted by a member of the clergy who is authorised to do so.

2. REGULATIONS

2.1. Any requests for allocation of grave spaces, permission to bury, or the erection of headstones or grave surrounds must be directed to them [OR to *Name of graveyard registrar* who will respond on their behalf].

2.2. When the allocation of a new grave-space is approved by the clergy and churchwardens, this grave shall be deemed to be Registered to a named individual, on behalf of the family concerned. The name and contact details of the individual/family shall be recorded within a graveyard register (in accordance with GDPR); and grave registration papers shall be issued to the individual, and retained by them as proof of registration, for future reference.

2.3. When a death occurs, the holder of the grave registration papers (or in the case of their own death, their next of kin) should make application for burial to the clergy and churchwardens; these papers should be produced before a burial can take place.

Re-allocation of Graves/Transfer of Registration papers.

2.4 At the request of, or upon the death of, the holder of the grave registration papers, the grave may be re-allocated to another member of the same family as agreed between the family and clergy. It is recommended that such a transfer be completed and properly recorded within a reasonable time after the bereavement.

2.5 The re-allocation will not incur any re-registration fee but may incur a fee to cover the issue of new papers similar to that of duplicate papers.

2.6 As the Burial Ground is subject to natural decay, those holding grave papers should ensure that plots are at all times maintained in good order for the benefit of other graveyard users. No permanent memorial marks, other than those approved below, may be placed on graves. Any hazardous or dangerous memorial or surround or unauthorised memorials may be removed by instruction from the clergy and churchwardens at the expense of those holding the grave registration papers.

2.7 Plans and proposed designs for headstones and surrounds and for any treatment of the grave surface must be submitted to the clergy and churchwardens for approval.

2.8 Any proposed inscription must be approved by the clergy.

2.9 The charges outlined below are those approved by the Diocesan Council. Please note that burial spaces remain the property of the Church.

2.10 In addition, an annual fee will be charged for the upkeep of the grounds or where this has not been paid, a consolidated maintenance fee will be charged on the re-opening of a plot.

2.11 The charges itemised are payable in advance to

2.12 **PLEASE NOTE:** the allocation of a grave/interment space does not confer legal title.

3. GENERAL RULES

3.1. The clergy and churchwardens shall have the power to remove any bush, shrub or other form of growth which they consider to be detrimental to the burial ground or to any other graves.

3.2. Artificial wreaths or other adornments are not permitted in the churchyard.

3.3. The time of the burial must not be arranged without prior permission from the clergy and churchwardens and reasonable notice must be given.

3.4. No burial will take place [within 30 minutes of /during] Divine Service.

3.5. No coffin shall be laid in any grave nearer to the surface than 1 metre, measuring from the upper part of the coffin.

3.6. No coffin shall be buried within 12 ft/ 3.66 metres of the fabric of the Church.

3.7. Foundations of headstones must be a minimum of metres deep from ground level and have a minimum width of metres.

4. GENERAL RULES (optional/additional at discretion of parish).

4.1. No family may have an allocation of more than plot(s) unless in exceptional circumstances.

4.2. In the interest of graveyard maintenance, surrounds are not permitted

4.3. No grave plot shall be allocated until the necessity arises.

4.4. All floral and other tributes may be removed from the grave after the interment, by instruction of the clergy and churchwardens or graveyard registrar.

4.5. An Annual Fee of will be charged for the upkeep of the Church grounds

4.6. If an Annual Fee has not been paid for the upkeep of the grounds, a consolidated maintenance fee of per year since the last reopening will be charged at the time of the next interment.

5. ALLOCATION OF BURIAL SPACE

5.1. Size:

5.1.1. Burial Space 8ft x 4ft / 2.40 metres x 1.20 metres

5.2. Fee for allocation and registration of each new space:

5.2.1. *To be paid by a bona-fide Subscribing Parishioner: £100-£500

5.2.2. *To be paid by a Non-Parishioner and Non-Subscriber: £500-£1500

*See footnote at end of document

5.3. Re-Allocation:

5.3.1. Where an individual wishes to transfer the allocation of a grave space, an application must be made to the clergy and churchwardens who may, at their discretion, arrange such a reallocation.

5.4. Duplicate Papers and Re-allocation papers:

5.4.1. A fee of £20- £50 will be charged.

6. CHARGES FOR PERMISSION TO ERECT HEADSTONES AND GRAVE SURROUNDS:

6.1. Headstones only

6.1.1. *To be paid by Subscribing Parishioners. £50-£100

6.1.2. *To be paid by Non-Parishioners and Non-Subscribing Parishioners £100-£200

6.2. Surrounds (including headstones)

6.2.1. *To be paid by Subscribing Parishioners £100-£200

6.2.2. *To be paid by Non-Parishioners and Non-Subscribing Parishioners £200-£400

'The fees for duplicate/re-allocation papers and for headstones/surrounds (5.4,6.1,6.2) are intended as flat-rate fees; they should not be multiplied by the number of burial spaces within a grave.'

*See footnote at end of document

7. CHARGES FOR OPENING GRAVES

7.1. Not more than £50 -£100 To be paid by *Parishioners.

7.2. Not more than £100 - £250 To be paid by *Non-Parishioners and Non-Subscribers.

7.3. Where an allocation of a grave space precipitates its first opening, parishes may wish to waive this fee. (Optional).

7.4. In the event of the grave being opened by a full-time Sexton/Gravedigger, all these charges will be payable directly to the parish.

7.5. Actual payment to the gravedigger is in addition to the above and is arranged locally.

*See footnote at end of document

8. ALL GUIDELINES SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHAPTER 12 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND AND WITH THE DIOCESAN REGULATIONS.

8.1. Contact your local district/borough council offices for further information.

8.2. **Footnote:** **A subscribing parishioner, either resident or accustomed, must subscribe to the funds of the parish through the parish financial system, either through regular giving or as a one-off donation. It must be contributed in such a manner that a receipt could be demanded for it. General Sunday cash collections are not recordable and therefore are not considered as qualifying subscriptions.*

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE REGULATIONS AND CHARGES

PARISH OF

Name of parish

9. GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE RULES AND FEES

9.1. Interment of ashes may only take place with the permission of the clergy and churchwardens.

9.2. The committals must be conducted by a member of the clergy who is authorised to do so.

9.3. Include only one of the three options below – as decided by the Select Vestry

9.3.1. Interments will be carried out sequentially and in rotation, with the precise place position in the Garden of Remembrance being at the discretion of the clergy and churchwardens. It is anticipated that individual plots will be used and reused in perpetuity. No markings shall be made upon the Garden of Remembrance, which shall be allowed to resume its natural order in due course.

OR

9.3.2. Plots will be allocated in order as the need arises at the discretion of the clergy and churchwardens. A record of the site shall be maintained for subsequent use of the same ground by request. No markings shall be made within the Garden of Remembrance, which shall be allowed to resume its natural order in due course.

OR

9.3.3. Plots will be allocated in order as the need arises at the discretion of the clergy and churchwardens. The plot will be covered using stones provided by the parish. When an interment has taken place, a plaque shall be affixed to the covering stone, indicating the name of the deceased and the date of interment.

9.4. Information about interments is recorded in the Parochial Burial Register.

9.5. (The following may also be applicable if so decided by the Select Vestry – include any or all of the following three options if required)

9.6. A Book of Remembrance is maintained within the Church building. Entries include the full names, date of death and date of interment of the deceased. At the request of the next-of-kin the date of birth and a single verse of scripture may be added.

9.7. Any floral tributes used at the funeral may be placed at *e.g. memorial wall, paved area etc.* and will be disposed of by the Church officer after a suitable period or when withered. No artificial wreaths, any other memorials or adornments, inscriptions or flower containers may be placed in the Garden of Remembrance.

9.8. After a cremation, ashes must not be scattered but should be buried in a biodegradable container [or directly in the ground] at a depth of not less than 30 cm.

10. Burial of Cremated Remains.

10.1. Actual payment to the gravedigger is in addition to the fees below and will be arranged locally.

10.2. *Subscribing Parishioners. £25-£50

10.3. *Non-Parishioners and Non-Subscribing Parishioners. £50-£100

10.4. Any casket for burial of ashes should be made of wood or other rapidly biodegradable material which will ultimately disintegrate.

PLEASE NOTE: The allocation or registration of interment space does not confer legal title.

*See footnote at end of document

10.5. ALL GUIDELINES SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHAPTER 12 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND AND THE DIOCESAN REGULATIONS.

10.6. Contact your local district/borough council offices for further information.

10.7. **Footnote:** **A Subscribing Parishioner, either resident or accustomed, must subscribe to the funds of the parish through the parish financial system, either through regular giving or as a one-off donation. It must be contributed in such a manner that a receipt could be demanded for it. General Sunday cash collections are not recordable and therefore are not considered as qualifying subscriptions.*