



Swanage Town Council

Godlingston Meadowland Burial Ground Regulations

The Town Council has created a natural meadowland environment, where graves lay beneath a carpet of wild flowers adding to the natural beauty of the surrounding area. Natural burial is all about keeping things simple and beautiful – returning to nature in a way that will not harm the environment. The natural habitat will encourage a growth in the population of birds, mammals, insects and flowers and will be maintained to encourage this natural growth. The grass will be cut infrequently to encourage and protect wild flower species. The traditional ‘neat and tidy’ appearance of cemeteries will not apply to the Meadowland Burial Ground, but we hope it will give families of the deceased a sense of peace and tranquility in these natural surroundings.

1. Interment

- 1.1** Graves can only be purchased at the time of interment; they cannot be purchased in advance. The purchase of a neighbouring plot by a member of the immediate family of the deceased is permitted, as long as the plot requested is still available. The Town Clerk has delegated authority to determine whether the criteria for pre-purchase of a neighbouring plot have been met.
- 1.2** Following an interment the placing of floral tributes on a grave will be permitted for a period of 21 days only. After this period, all items will be removed from the grave. Please ensure that any item you wish to keep as a memento is removed from the grave before this time has elapsed.
- 1.3** After a period of time when the grave has settled, wild flower plugs will be planted by the Council’s maintenance department, to return the site to a natural habitat. If any family members wish to be present at this time, please contact the Town Hall and we will endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate your request.
- 1.4** Memorials are not permitted in the meadowland burial area. Any items placed on the grave, other than floral tributes following an interment, will be removed immediately, and stored at the Council’s Depot for a period of 14 days pending collection.
- 1.5** On request, an entry in memory of the deceased will be inserted into the Book of Remembrance which is located at the Council Offices.
- 1.6** No ornaments, greeting cards, balloons, lanterns, windmills, vases or other such items are permitted. This includes solar lights, stones, flowerpots or stakes, rope, ties or any other ‘garden items’.
- 1.7** There will be no long term visible markers on the graves but details of the deceased will be recorded using an epitrace identification system. This is a microchip which is inserted into the ground at the head of the grave. Each microchip will have a unique code and a handheld scanner is used to identify the details of the person interred.
- 1.8** No gardening or cultivation whatsoever is permitted. This includes scattering of bark or chippings.

1.9 The placing or attaching any item to trees, shrubs, fences etc. within the cemetery is not permitted and any such items will be removed and stored at the Council's Depot for a period of 14 days pending collection.

1.10 Visitors are requested to keep to the paths provided.

1.11 Opened graves will be reverted to wild flower meadow and maintained to appropriate levels.

2. Cremated Remains

2.1 Cremated remains may be strewn (scattered) on the designated 'ashes bank' in the meadowland burial ground. You will need the permission of the Council to scatter cremated remains. Please be aware that scattering can only be carried out by, or under supervision of our grounds staff.

2.2 An entry in memory of the deceased will be inserted into the Book of Remembrance which is located at the Council Offices.

2.3 No ornaments, greeting cards, balloons, lanterns, windmills, vases or other such items are permitted on the 'ashes bank'. This includes solar lights, stones, flowerpots or stakes, rope, ties or any other 'garden items'.

2.4 Memorials of any form are not permitted on the 'ashes bank'. Any items placed on the bank will be removed immediately, and stored at the Council's Depot for a period of 14 days pending collection.

2.5 It is possible for cremated remains to be interred in a casket in the meadowland burial ground. For this purpose, a grave space must be purchased.

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1st January 2023