Shildon Town Council

West Road Cemetery, Shildon

Information & Regulations



With effect from 1st April, 2012
Amended from October 2022
Updated – July 2026

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Cemetery was opened in 1922 with the Cemetery Extension opening for burials in July 2005.

Shildon Town Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of the cemetery and is keen to ensure that the needs of mourners and future visitors to the cemetery are catered for as sympathetically as possible.

Registers are kept in the cemetery office and may be referred to in the event of any difficulty in locating a grave. Please note that the cemetery office is not permanently staffed.

In the absence of staff at the cemetery, enquiries can be made at the Town Council Offices, Civic Hall Square, Shildon, Co. Durham during the following hours:

Monday to Thursday	8.30am – 4.30pm
Friday	8.30am – 4.00pm

Tel:	01388 772563
E-mail:	council@shildon.gov.uk

Cemetery Opening Hours are:

April - September		
Monday – Thursday	8.00am – 3.45pm	**Pedestrian access only after 3.45pm**
Friday	8.00am – 3.15pm	**No access after 3.15pm**
Saturday	9.00am - 7.00pm	**No access after 7pm**
Sunday	9.00am - 7.00pm	**No access after 7pm**

October - March		
Monday - Thursday	8.00am – 3.45pm	**No access after 3.45pm**
Friday	8.00am – 3.15pm	**No access after 3.15pm**
Saturday	9.00am - 4.00pm	**No access after 4.00pm**
Sunday	9.00am - 4.00pm	**No access after 4.00pm**

Dogs are permitted into the Cemetery grounds but must always remain on a lead.

Removal of Wreaths and Flowers
Deed holders are requested to remove any wreaths or flowers that were placed on a grave after the funeral as soon as they become wilted. Cemetery staff, at the direction of the Manager, may dispose of any obviously dead wreaths or flowers that have not been removed.

Unauthorised Memorials, Stones, Gravel, Artificial Grass etc
Unauthorised memorials, stones, gravel, glass, bricks, wire mesh, plastic fences, edging, artificial grass or similar such items will be removed from the grave without prior notice and kept for a period of 30 days. The items will then be disposed of by Shildon Town Council without further notice.

The personalisation area for a child's grave (up to the age of 16) is not subject to any limitation.

Turfing or Seeding of Graves
Cemetery Staff will turf/seed graves under instruction, according to the paperwork received from the Funeral Directors which states whether the family want the grave grassed or not after burial. Where grassing over is not requested, maintenance of the grave is the responsibility of the deed holder. If the grave subsequently becomes overgrown or in an unacceptable state that makes the cemetery untidy, notice of action will be tagged on the grave. No adornments or planting is allowed outside of the adornment area. (See Adornments section)

Turfing or seeding of graves will be carried out by cemetery staff following a period of settlement, usually after twelve weeks, during which time the grave will be topped up with soil as necessary. However, settling of some graves may take longer than twelve weeks, depending on the weather and ground conditions.

Any plants or items found on the area to be seeded will be carefully relocated to the designated adornment area at the head of the grave.

You are respectfully advised that it is the Council's intention to turf all graves for maintenance purposes. Once grass seed or turf have been sown or laid you are not permitted to dig over the grave.

Memorial Headstones

No memorial is to be erected until at least 12 weeks after a burial.

All new memorials are to include the grave number to the rear of the stone, no bigger than 5cm x 3cm in size.

Only the person named as the deed holder may request for a memorial to be erected.

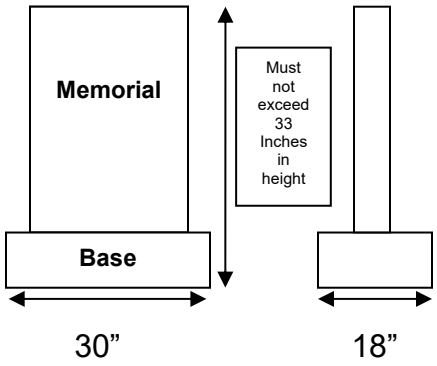
It is often difficult to make a decision in times of distress; you may wish to wait a while before organising a memorial. When the time is right it is advisable to contact two or three monumental masons and obtain written estimates, which should cover all of the costs involved.

Single Grave / Double Depth Grave

Each grave has an area of 30" inches (approx. 76cm) x 18" inches (approx. 46cm) to accommodate a memorial which should **not** exceed 33"inches (approx. 84cm) in height (including base). In most cases this area is left undisturbed by the excavation process.

Child's Grave (Under 16 years)

Each grave (children's section) has an area of 20" inches (approx. 51 cm) x 10" (approx. 25.5 cm) to accommodate a child's memorial which should not exceed 24" inches (approx. 61 cm) in height (including base).



Side by Side Grave

A memorial that is to be placed between two graves should not exceed 43" inches in width (approx. 109 cm) base. Other measurements as above.

Cremated Remains

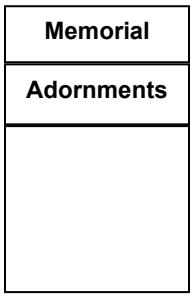
Each cremated remains grave space has an area of 18" inches (approx. 46cm) x 2 ft (approx. 61cm) (flat, sloped or upright) to accommodate a memorial. Upright memorials are not to exceed 19" inches (approx. 48 cm) in height including the base. No planting is allowed. Shared headstones between two ashes grave plots is a maximum width of 26" (66cm) and no higher than 19" (48cm).

Shildon Town Council is a member of the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM). All masons operating within the Council maintained cemetery must be registered with the scheme and supply certified fixers to supervise construction of memorial stones. All materials and fixing methods are controlled by the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Practice and masons must also comply with the Councils Rules and Standards for the Erection of Memorials. No mason may work within a cemetery without formal permission.

Adornment (Personal Effects)

Kerbside surrounds are not permitted.

Adornments are only permitted within a personalisation area of 30” Inches (76cm) x 18” (46cm) at the base of the memorial. This area will be the responsibility of the deed holder to maintain.



To maintain the sanctity of the cemetery items that:

- illuminate (e.g., solar lights)
- move (e.g., solar powered devices, windmills)
- and/or make a noise (e.g., wind chimes)

will **not** be permitted.

The Town Council reserves the right to clear any plants, trees or personal effects outside of the designated area which will be stored for 30 days.

No tools or equipment to be left behind memorials.

Maintenance of Memorials

The deed holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave space is responsible for ensuring that the memorial is kept in a good state of repair and shall also be responsible for removing the memorial to give access for re-opening of the grave should the need arise. If action must be taken to make safe any memorial due to lack of maintenance or inadequate installation, then the Council may take steps to recover any costs incurred from the deed holder.

Purchasing Grave Spaces
The exclusive right of burial deed is purchased for a period of 75 years.
Grave spaces can be purchased by contacting the Town Council, who will in return provide a grave number and issue an exclusive right of burial deed. Please note that the purchase of a grave space is for the purchase of the Exclusive Right of Burial in that grave and **NOT** for the purchase of the land. The land remains the property of Shildon Town Council.

Interments
We reserve the right of passage over all graves and to have any grave temporarily covered whilst carrying out excavations. Such covering may comprise of boxed platform, or similar, onto which excavated soil may be placed prior to a burial in an adjacent grave. We also reserve the right to request for a memorial mason (via a Funeral Director) to arrange removal of a memorial to allow access to a grave. The memorial will be returned to its original position and any disturbed neighbouring graves made tidy as soon as possible after the burial.

Exclusive Right of Burial Transfers (Transfer of grave deed)
In the event of the death of the original grave owner, the person claiming to be entitled to the ownership rights must obtain a formal transfer of ownership with the Council. A copy of the last will and testament identifying the Executor will be accepted as proof of intended ownership. If this information is not available, please contact the Town Council to ascertain what documentation will be required, as this will depend on who intends to have ownership moving forward.
The formal transfer must take place before funeral arrangements are made to inter within the intended grave space.
Appendix 1.

Grave Planting
Planting should be limited to annual bedding plants or bulbs at the head of the grave within the personalisation adornment area. The planting of trees, conifers, roses, bird tables, edging, fencing and high growing shrubs **is not** permitted. The Council will remove these items without notice and will be stored for 30 days.
Shildon Town Council reserves the right to clear such planted areas without notice should the grave become obviously neglected or weedy or where plants overgrow into adjacent graves.

Memorial Seats
At present the Council does not allow the erection of memorial seats in the cemetery.

Memorial Tree
Memorial leaves can be purchased by individuals for their loved one, the leaf will be purchased and installed onto the memorial tree structure by Shildon Town Council staff only for a maximum period of five years, with an option to renew.
If the memorial leaf is not renewed, the leaf will be removed from the structure and available to collect and kept by the purchaser.
To help protect and preserve this memorial, no tributes of any kind may be left at this location. This includes but is not limited to:

- Fresh or artificial flower, pots, bouquets etc;
- Wreaths;
- Balloons;
- Solar lights;
- Wind chimes and windmills.

Any items left at the memorial tree area will be removed by the Town Council and retained for collection from the cemetery office.

Scattering of ashes anywhere within West Road Cemetery, Shildon is NOT permitted.

Post Box to Heaven
Located within West Road Cemetery, the white 'letters to heaven' post box enables people to write letters, cards and messages to those they have lost, and 'post them'.

The post box is available to anyone who feels they may benefit from it.

Messages can be written on recycled biodegradable paper embedded with seeds, which is available from the Town Council offices and will eventually be shredded and planted in specific areas of the cemetery. Alternatively, letters may be shredded, mixed with organic material and composted. This will then be spread to help grow new life into the grounds.

Every letter or card put into the memorial post box will be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. They will be stored securely and never opened or read.

Adoption of Trees
At present the Council does not allow trees to be adopted as memorials.

Maintenance of Cemetery
Cemetery staff may not be able to cut/strim the grass around memorials or graves if items such as ornaments are placed on a grave in a manner that prevents maintenance, or which may lead to damage if access is restricted.

Security
The Town Council cannot accept responsibility for the security of, or damage to, any memorial, flowers or adornments placed in or on the grave.

Insurance
The cost of repairs to, or replacement of, memorials can be expensive; you may wish to consider taking out insurance to cover accidental damage, theft, or vandalism.

Additional Inscriptions
Additional inscriptions to memorials can be made by contacting a memorial mason, who will submit your application to the Council for approval. Please note that, only the deed holder named can request such amendment to an existing memorial.

Change of Address
It is very helpful when trying to contact the owner of memorials that current addresses are available to the Council. If you change address, please advise the Council immediately.

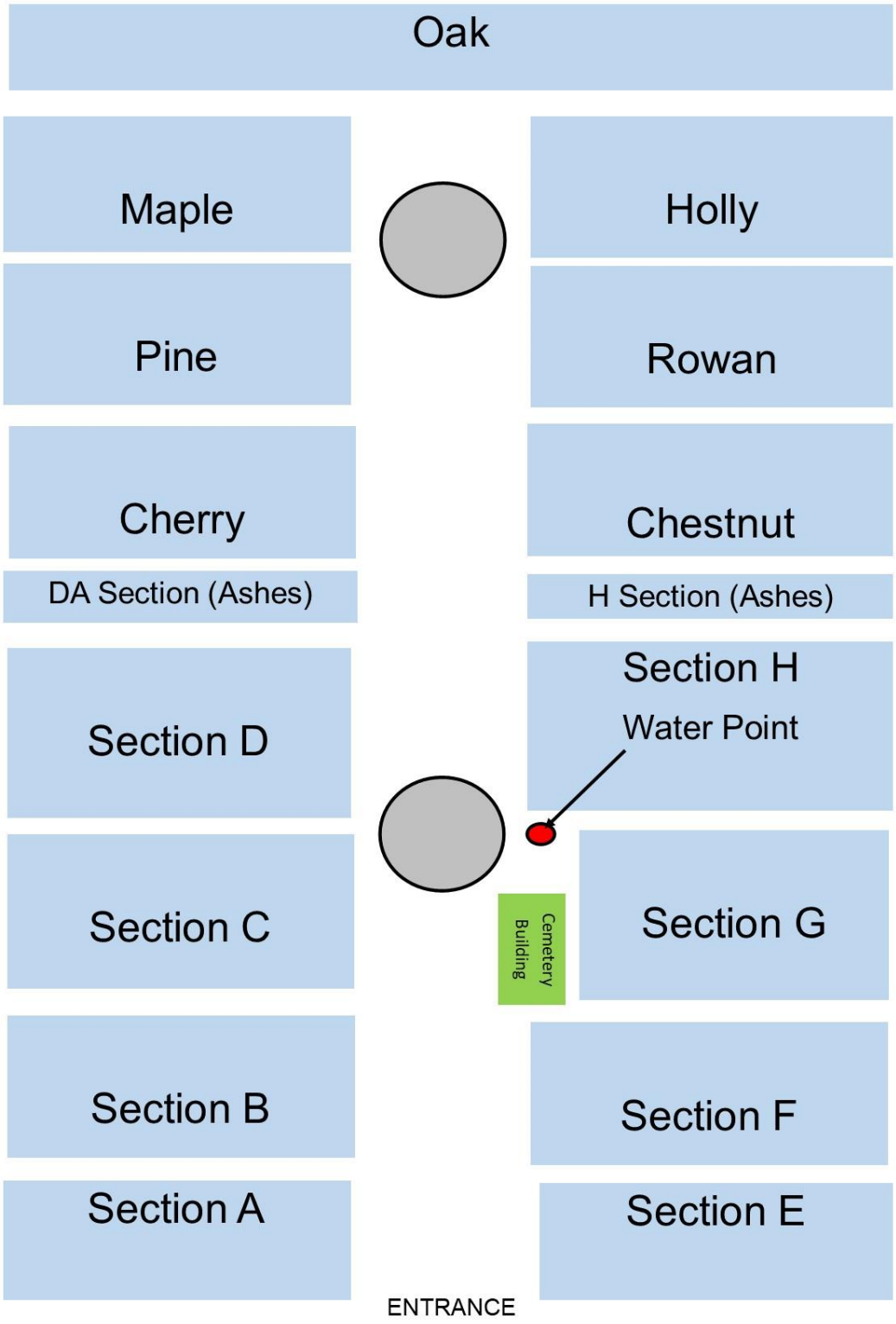
The Town Council will seek to inform the deedholder or family of an unsafe memorial.

Traffic
The road is not wide enough to allow 2 cars to pass. If you are able to do so, please leave your vehicle outside the Cemetery and walk in.

If you need to bring your vehicle in, please be considerate and park it where you do not prohibit another vehicle from passing. Parking on grass verges is prohibited.

Toilets
Toilets are accessible within the cemetery building during opening hours.

Waterpoints
A water supply is available to use by visitors and is located near the first roundabout section.


Oak
Maple
Holly
Pine
Rowan
Cherry
Chestnut
DA Section (Ashes)
H Section (Ashes)
Section D
Section H
Water Point
Section C
Cemetery Building
Section G
Section B
Section F
Section A
Section E
ENTRANCE