

AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

AYLESFORD CEMETERY

INFORMATION and REGULATIONS

Aylesford Parish Council welcomes visitors to Aylesford Cemetery. The Cemetery is a place for peace and reflection. Accordingly, we ask all users of the Cemetery to respect the needs of others and to follow these guidelines.

FOR VISITORS

The Cemetery is open to visitors every day of the year between the hours of

March to October	8.30am to 7.30pm
November to February	8.30am to 4.00pm.

Bicycles and vehicles are not normally permitted within the cemetery except as part of funeral cortege or, by prior arrangement with the Parish Office, to enable a person with severe mobility restriction to park close to a grave. All vehicles permitted should not exceed the speed limit of 5mph. Neither Aylesford Parish Council nor any of its employees can accept responsibility for the loss of or damage to any vehicle or its contents whilst within the Cemetery.

All visitors attending a grave are asked to keep to the paths and driveways, wherever possible, and to respect the Cemetery at all times. In particular, visitors are requested not to interfere with shrubs or flowers growing within the Cemetery or to interfere with any grave or memorial.

Dogs must be kept on a short leash at all times, and a visitor in control of a dog must remove any waste from the Cemetery.

So as to reflect the needs of others, visitors are asked not to wilfully create any disturbance in the Cemetery or behave in a way that may be a nuisance to others. In particular, the playing of games and sports is not permitted. The Parish Council reserves the right to exclude any person from the Cemetery.

Children under the age of 10 are not normally permitted in the Cemetery unless they are under the care of a responsible person.

PURCHASING GRAVES

Please contact the Parish Council for information relating to the purchase of graves in the Cemetery. Details of all Cemetery charges are available from the Parish Council though it should be noted that all fees are trebled for non-parishioners.

When a grave is “purchased” this refers to the purchase of the ‘Exclusive Rights of Burial’ in a grave space and not the purchase of the land itself. Sometimes these are purchased in advance; or at the time of need. A ‘Grant of Rights Deed’ is issued and includes the right to apply to erect a memorial, which is headstone and/or edging such as a kerbstone, for which a charge will be made. This deed may be purchased and owned by an individual and/or close relative, and is issued, currently, for 99 years.

Ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave can be transferred from a deceased owner via that owner's estate. If you need to transfer the grant of rights you must contact the Parish Council who will assist you with the transfer. If you do not undertake the transfer, it will cause significant problems for you when you wish to use the plot again.

LOOKING AFTER GRAVES

Grave spaces must be kept in a neat and tidy condition and any litter should be removed from the site. Any flower holders must be of non-breakable material and are left at the owners’ risk. In the interest of public safety, no glass, ceramic vases or other ornaments should be placed on any grave. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any articles from any grave which are considered dangerous or unsightly in any way or which are likely to cause risk of damage or injury. This could include the removal and disposal of dead flowers and flower frames one month after the burial has taken place.

Memorials can only be erected on grave spaces where the exclusive rights of burial have been purchased. The maintenance of memorials is the responsibility of the respective grant of rights holder. The Parish Council reserves the right to make safe any memorial that is found to be in an unstable condition. Any person causing damage by bringing in any materials or monuments will be required to make good. In all cases, dead flowers and other rubbish must be placed in the small litter bins provided. No stones, soil or large/heavy items must be placed in the small litter bins, as these are for light waste only. Anything large/heavy must be placed in the big bins near the main gates.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you need to contact the Parish Council, we are located in The Parish Office, 23 Forstal Road, Aylesford ME20 7AU which is open Mondays to Thursdays 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.30pm and closed to all visitors on Fridays. Messages left when closed will be picked up and anything deemed urgent will be dealt with by staff. (Tel: 01622 717084) or you can write to the above address or email admin@aylesfordparishcouncil.org.uk.

RULES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF AYLESFORD CEMETERY

Ownership of Graves

1. For an interment to take place in Aylesford cemetery a grant of rights deed, giving the owner of this deed an exclusive right of burial, must be purchased. This is not a deed of ownership but only a grant of exclusivity for burial.
2. Every interment shall take place in a grave for which a grant of rights deed must be issued.
3. People wishing to purchase a Grant of Rights Deed should contact the Parish Office. No burial can take place unless a Grant of Rights Deed has been purchased.
4. A grave will not be opened without the grant of rights deed holders' consent in writing
5. The owner of a grant of rights deed may transfer the deed to a different person, subject to consultation with the Parish Office.
6. Where no interment has taken place in a grave, the Parish Council may agree to re-purchase the grant of rights deed at the original purchase price.

Types of Graves

1. Exclusive rights of burial in a grave shall be leased for a period of 99 years. This includes the right to erect a headstone, kerb or monument memorial upon payment of the appropriate fee. Planting with annual bedding plants may take place.
2. The area of any adult plot is 7ft x 3ft and any headstone, memorial or kerbing must be erected within these dimensions. Each grave is at a double depth of 7ft. No object relating to the grave space or maintenance of the grave space can be kept outside of the confines of the plot. If any object is found outside of the plot area the Parish Council will have the right to remove the object from the cemetery.
3. The area of double (side by side) plots will be determined by the Parish Clerk and will be subject to many factors.
4. At a specific location within the cemetery there are a number of plots reserved for the burial of children under the age of 12 and the area of these plots are 5ft by 2ft with a depth of 5ft.
5. It may be possible to inter cremated remains in some graves provided the person making the request is the rightful owner of the grant deed. For further information contact the Parish Office.

Character of Coffins/Ashes Containers

1. Only bio-degradable coffins shall normally be used for interments in any grave.
2. In the case of a person dying from an infectious disease, the body must be enclosed in a properly waterproofed coffin and taken direct to the grave.
3. The Council supports environmentally sound practices including burials in cardboard coffins or shrouds.
4. Ashes can only be buried in the grave space either in an Urn or a bio-degradable container.

Regulations Regarding Interments

1. Written notice of any intended interment must be delivered to the Parish Office at least three working days in advance of the burial, together with the appropriate forms and payment which should be made by bank transfer also three working days before the burial.
2. A notice of interment must contain the following particulars as requested on the Council's Cemetery Application for Interment form: The forename(s) and surname, last place of residence, age, date and place of death of person to be interred. Grave plot number (as advised by Parish Office). The day and hour of the intended interment. The name of the Minister (if any) who is to officiate. Grant of rights certificate details and any information relating to the possible transfer of the grant of rights.
3. Fees and charges will be applied as agreed by the Parish Council. Please note that charges do not include digging of graves for burials or ashes burials which should be arranged through the funeral director.
4. Where the interment is to take place in a previously purchased grave, the Parish Office may require sight of the exclusive right of burial grant deed in advance and, if necessary, the written consent of the owner or owner's representative.
5. All telephone instructions should be followed up in writing by post or e-mail, otherwise the Parish Council cannot accept any responsibility for misinterpretation of information given over the phone.

Certificate for Burial

1. The certificate given by the Registrar of Births and Deaths (commonly known as the Green Form) or an order of the coroner (Form 101), certificate of stillbirth or certificate of non-liability to register MUST be delivered to the Parish Office with the interment form and the payment made before the burial will be allowed to take place.
2. In the case of cremated remains the crematorium will issue a certificate stating that the death has been registered and that all forms and certificates relating to the cremation are held at the crematorium. This certificate will need to be supplied to the Council together with its interment form and payment made to the Council.

Time of Funerals

Funerals will normally only be permitted Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 2.30pm.

Regulations regarding Memorials

1. Memorials, which can either be headstones or edging such as kerbstones, can only be erected on grave spaces where the exclusive rights of burial have been purchased and on payment of the appropriate fee. It is the grant of rights holder's responsibility to maintain a memorial upon a grave during the period of grave rights granted to them. All memorials must meet the Parish Council's regulations. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove anything that appears detrimental to the overall appearance of the cemetery.
2. Before any memorials can be installed or works undertaken to an existing memorial, an application from the memorial mason must be submitted for approval on the appropriate Parish Council form and submitted to the Parish Council with any appropriate fees. Written authority of the grant of rights holder is also required. Where the grant of rights holder is deceased a transfer of ownership will be required prior to any memorial works being carried out.
3. Any application from the memorial mason for a new memorial must be accompanied by the name and address of the applicant (normally the grant of rights holder), name and address of memorial mason, grave details (section, plot number), a drawing of the proposed memorial giving detailed dimensions of memorial, footings and bases to be used, and the inscription to be inserted on the memorial showing the arrangement and style of lettering to be used. All memorial work carried out must be in accordance with the relevant Code of Working Practice of The National Association of Memorial Masons/ BRAMM Blue Book and BS8415.
4. General grave headstone memorials should not exceed 2ft in width and 4ft in height. No kerb surround or edging will exceed 3ft in width and the overall length of the headstone memorial and kerb surround or edging shall not exceed 7ft (900mm x 2100mm). Any kerbstone should be made of the same type of material as the headstone. A kerb or edging should be no more than 6 inches in height.
5. Memorial sizes for double or family graves will be determined by the Parish Clerk, as many factors will need to be considered. However; the overall height will not exceed 4ft.
6. A tablet memorial (for interred ashes) should not exceed 12 x 12 x 2 inches.
7. Memorials should be sound and normally of natural stone.
8. No advertisement or trademark may appear on the memorial except the name of the memorial mason who supplied it which should only be on the side or on the reverse in lettering not more than 1inch high. The grave letter(s) and number must be positioned and in-scribed in this manner on each memorial including vases to be installed in the Cemetery. On kerbstones the grave letter(s) and numbers must be positioned on the right-hand side of the foot kerbstone.
9. All memorial inscriptions must have prior approval from the Parish Council.
10. Any amendments to any memorial require permission of the Parish Council.

11. All memorial masons should have full accreditation of the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) or equivalent and use BRAMM licensed memorial fixers before they are permitted to carry out work at the Cemetery.
12. The method of fixing on site, ground support fixing for memorials and construction and the quality of materials of every memorial should comply with the relevant Code of Working Practice of the National Association of Memorial Masons' minimum standards.
13. Memorials should be placed on the grave space with the memorial in line with the centre head position.
14. The Parish Council may remove any memorial where work has not been authorised. This may be at the owners' expense.
15. Memorial masons should satisfy themselves as to the stability of the soil or footings and its ability to support a memorial before the memorial is erected.
16. Any works to any memorial must include the removal of spare soil or other material to the designated area and leave the ground in good condition.
17. Any contractor working in the cemetery must maintain a policy of public liability insurance minimum of £5 million against all claims and actions.
18. All contractors must use the main paths in the cemetery and any damage which is caused must be repaired at the contractors' expense.
19. All memorials erected are the sole responsibility of the grant of rights holder and the Parish Council shall not be held responsible for any damage to or caused by the memorial.
20. All memorials are the responsibility of the grant of rights holder including damage by vandalism, theft of memorials or vases, cracking or subsidence of footings. The Parish Council reserves the right to repair or make safe any memorial which is allowed to fall into disrepair or become unsightly or dangerous and recover expenses from the grant of rights holder or the grant of rights holder's beneficiaries. Where there is no beneficiary and no money provided in the estate of a deceased person to maintain their grave and it becomes necessary to carry out repairs to their memorial, their next of kin (if known) would be asked to pay for the repairs. If no next of kin can be identified or is willing to accept responsibility then the Parish Council will decide whether to carry out any necessary repairs or if a memorial is in a dangerous condition to arrange for it to be made safe (memorials can only be removed at the end of the period of the grant of rights).
21. If any memorial becomes unsafe, the Parish Council may write to the grant of rights holder (or representative), advising that works are required. Subject to the condition of the memorial, the grant of rights holder will be given 6 months (maximum) to affect the necessary repairs. After this time the Parish Council may repair or make safe the memorial at the owner's expense. In case of immediate danger or risk arising from an unsafe memorial, the Parish Council may take remedial action at the owners' expense.
22. Subject to the agreement of the Parish Council a temporary wooden cross may be erected until ground conditions permit the erection of a permanent memorial.

23. Any temporary surround MUST comply with the permitted sizing above at point 4.

Care of Graves

1. Grave spaces must be kept in a neat and tidy condition and any litter should be removed from the site. Any person causing damage by bringing in of any materials or monuments will be required to meet the cost of any repairs.
2. Any flower holders must be of non-breakable material and are left at the owners' risk. The Parish Council may remove any articles from any grave if they are likely to cause risk, damage or offence to other visitors to the cemetery.
3. The Council reserves the right to remove and dispose of dead flowers and flower frames from a grave one month after the burial has taken place.
4. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any planting or other items from graves which may be dangerous or unsightly in any way.
5. Graves may contain a mixture of memorials such as headstones, full kerbs or monument memorials. The owner of the burial rights may plant annual bedding over the whole grave or it may be grassed over, but must not include tree planting. The ground maintenance is the responsibility of the grant of rights holder and the grave space is not therefore maintained by the Parish Council. The Parish Council maintains the paths between graves. On very old or neglected graves, the Parish Council will trim the grass on the grave.

Failure to Comply with the Regulations

Any failure to comply with the above regulations could result in the Parish Council rectifying the non-compliance and charging the grant of rights holder the cost of putting this non-compliance right.