



**Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council**  
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**BURIAL AUTHORITY FOR THE PARISH OF HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON UNDER THE  
BURIAL ACTS**

**Rules and Regulations for Theobalds Green Woodland and Traditional Burial  
Ground at**

**Theobalds Green, Heathfield TN21 8BT**

The Woodland Burial area is managed for the benefit of wildlife and will therefore not resemble a traditional cemetery. The area for Woodland Burials will not be mowed in the manner that the rest of the burial ground is and maintenance will be appropriate to the needs of the trees, shrubs and flowers as they develop. Horticultural chemicals will only be used in exceptional circumstances – for example to spot treat noxious weeds.

As a natural environment is being provided in order to encourage wildlife to thrive, memorials will not be permitted in this area. The flora and fauna will be a living memorial for everyone to enjoy.

**Rules of the Natural Burial Area**

1. Reservations are accepted from both Parishioner and Non-Parishioners for which application forms are available. Please note that the actual plots will only be allocated at the time of need to ensure that damage is not caused to maturing trees when the plot is dug.
2. Parishioner and Non-Parishioner Fees – Parishioner rates will apply to residents who have resided in the area that falls under Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council within five years of the date of interment.
3. Burial Fees – these are reviewed annually and any increases will be introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> January.
4. Gravedigger Fees – these are included in the fees charged by the Parish Council.
5. All graves will be excavated to a single depth – there will only be one burial allowed in each plot (excluding interred ashes).

Graves may be affected by burial in adjoining plots. On occasions a family grave may be covered by a board in order that soil from a newly excavated grave can be collected. This will be removed as soon as the burial has taken place.

When the grave is re-opened for the purpose of making another burial therein – no person shall disturb any human remains therein or remove from there any soil which is offensive.

6. Ashes Plot - All ashes plots will be dug to allow two caskets of ashes

7. An Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) will be issued after the first interment to the grave owner. If the owner of the plot has died the (EROB) has to be transferred to a new owner either through Probate or Statutory Declaration.

Any transfer of ownership of the EROB will be subject to the production of satisfactory evidence of title and the approval of the Council. Such transfer must be registered in the records of the Council and may be subject to a transfer fee.

Any change of address of the EROB owner must be conveyed to the Parish Council in order that up-to-date records are maintained and so that the grave owners can be contacted as and when required. No responsibility can be accepted for information which does not reach a grave owner if the Parish Council has not been informed about a change of address.

8. At an appropriate time after each funeral, when soil settlement has taken place and the grave has been levelled, the grave will be seeded with grass and wild flower seeds at the appropriate time of year. Note: the settlement of the grave may take six months.
9. The adjacent trees and shrubs are the living memorials and no other forms of memorial will be allowed. Whilst flowers and other tributes are permitted at the time of interment, in order to preserve the natural environment, please ensure these are removed after two weeks.
10. Only biodegradable coffins may be used; a list of permitted materials is available from the Parish Council.
11. Cremated remains will be allowed in woodland burial plots providing caskets are of natural materials – a list of permitted materials is available.
12. As stated in the introduction, the Woodland Burial area will not be maintained in the same way as the traditional burial ground. Graves must not be interfered with by cutting or mowing by anyone other than authorised personnel. During the course of its 'return to nature' the area will appear to be overgrown and unkempt and this is the intention.
13. The burial ground will be open daily from 0800 to 2000.
14. The Woodland Burial Ground is available to all faiths, religions or beliefs. The land is not consecrated but individual graves may be blessed if desired.
15. Because this is a green site, we request that the deceased are not embalmed, sometimes called "hygienic treatment". Please make this clear to your funeral director. An exception would be consideration for cases of repatriation or if deemed necessary for medical reasons.
16. All coffins must be chosen from the range of approved environmentally friendly materials as per the list provided by the Parish Council. Cremated remains must be interred in biodegradable caskets or boxes. All coffins and caskets must have appropriate identification. The nameplate (not made of metal or plastic) is required on every coffin and casket and the wording should match the Registrar's green burial/cremation certificate. The plastic urn provided by most crematoria is not biodegradable and therefore cannot be interred.
17. No artificial flowers or similar to be left, again to preserve the natural appearance of the area. No items are to be placed on graves or hung on trees, including flower pots, wind chimes, wooden crosses, pebbles, garden ornaments, ribbons, flower containers, photos or soft toys. Any that are left will be removed. Please consider the planting of appropriate wild flowers in memory of your loved one as cut flowers are only permitted at the time of interment and will be removed after two weeks.

Wreaths at Christmas may be placed on the grave plot and these will be removed by the Burial Authority by the first week of February. These conditions must be adhered to as families have chosen the woodland burial ground for its natural beauty.

18. Every plot owner will be allowed to plant approved bulbs and wildflowers on their specific area with prior approval from the Parish Council.
19. The Cart Barn building is available as a gathering place for your use. The Cart Barn is open sided and does not hold any seating. Unfortunately, there are no facilities for refreshments. A toilet is situated inside the barn to which there is wheelchair access. Please could all users of the barn ensure that it is left clean and tidy after use.
20. Cremated remains may only be strewn in the designated place.
21. Only human remains may be interred at the Site. The burial of pets and other animals is not permitted due to Licensing regulations. The scattering of pets' ashes is also not permitted.
22. Trees which have been planted in the Woodland Burial Ground will be purchased and maintained by the Parish Council. It is not possible for members of the public to plant memorial trees or shrubs. Only 5 Wooden memorial seats are allowed in the whole of the burial ground and once these are installed no others will be allowed
23. Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council will remove anything found onsite without its permission and which is deemed to be inappropriate to the ethos and aims of a woodland burial ground
24. All visitors must keep to the paths and tracks in order to avoid damaging the natural and emerging ground cover. All vehicles must be parked in the car park but are left at the owner's risk.
25. With the exception of Guide dogs - **no dogs** are allowed in the burial areas.
26. PAYMENT – the preferred method of payment for plots in the Woodland Burial Ground is by BACS. Please contact the office on **01435 865700** for details. If you wish to pay by cheque, payment should be made to Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council. In either case, payment must be cleared before the interment takes place.

**PLEASE NOTE THE BURIAL GROUND MAY BE SLIPPERY OR MUDDY AND APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR SHOULD BE WORN.**

### **Rules of the Traditional Burial Area**

1. Management of the Burial Grounds - An inspection of headstones and the Burial Ground is carried out every three months by the Parish Council and any headstone deemed to be extremely unstable will be laid flat to prevent the possibility of accidents. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any memorial which has become or is likely to become dangerous. Owners of the graves will be notified of any headstones that require maintenance.
2. Dogs must be kept on a lead and on the paths. Owners are required to clear up any dog fouling, there is no dog bin facility in the Burial Ground so please take this home to dispose of.
3. Burial fees are reviewed annually and any increases will be introduced on the 1st January.
4. Gravedigger Fees – Burial fees do not include fees charged by the gravedigger

5. Preparation of an Ashes Plot - The preparation of an ashes plot is carried out by a Funeral Director and these charges are not included in our fees.
6. Parishioner and Non-Parishioner Fees – Parishioner rates will apply to residents who have resided in the area that falls under Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council within two years of the date of interment.
7. Exclusive Rights of Burial - An Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) is required before any interment is made or any memorial is erected. If the owner of the plot has died the (EROB) has to be transferred to a new owner either through Probate or Statutory Declaration before a memorial can be erected.  
Any change of address of the EROB owner must be conveyed to the Parish Council in order that up-to-date records are maintained and so that the grave owners can be contacted as and when required. No responsibility can be accepted for information which does not reach a grave owner if the Parish Council has not been informed about a change of address.  
Any transfer of ownership of the EROB will be subject to the production of satisfactory evidence of title and the approval of the Council. Such transfer must be registered in the records of the Council and may be subject to a transfer fee.
  - a. A grave will be regarded as a common grave unless an Exclusive Right of Burial fee is paid.
  - b. Memorials may not be erected on common graves.
  - c. An Exclusive Right of Burial is granted for a period not exceeding 75 years. No interment shall take place and no memorial shall be placed in the Burial Grounds and no additional inscription be made on memorials without the prior consent of the Council and the signed agreement of all the owners of the EROB and all relevant fees being paid to the Parish Council.

The Exclusive Right of Burial may be extended by the Burial Authority at its discretion

8. Interment - All relevant fees must be paid 7 days prior to interment. Interments are in earthen plots not exceeding 48" x 48" for Ashes and 8' x 4' for Burial plots.
9. Memorials - All memorial installations must be constructed and installed with a current National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) or British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) recommendations. NAMM and BRAMM registered memorial masons have adopted the British Standard 8415 (BS8415) which sets out the minimum lengths of anchoring which are needed to ensure memorial safety so that there is no danger of the memorials toppling over.  
Memorials should be erected and fixed within the guidelines laid down by the Burial Authority and it reserves the right to recall stonemasons should there be any problems with memorials, and any resultant costs will be recharged to the owner. It should also be noted that the Parish Council are not responsible for any damage to headstones.  
Memorials may be erected where an Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted. Prior to installing a headstone all relevant fees and written approval from the Parish Council need to be obtained. When the installation of the headstone has been completed the Stonemasons are asked to sign and return the notification of memorial erection form.

It is the responsibility of the plot owner to ensure that any memorial is safe and secure and where necessary should undertake any repairs using NAMM or BRAMM registered stonemasons. Plot owners should contact the Parish Council to inform them that work is going to be carried out and to notify them of any removal of a headstone from the Burial Ground. If the Parish Council write to the plot owner requesting that work be undertaken as the memorial is unsafe, the plot owner should arrange for work to be done at their own cost and as soon as possible.

The types of memorials permitted are: -

A TRADITIONAL HEADSTONE in Light Nebresina, Yorkstone, Purbeck Portland stone or Black/Welsh slate. The headstone should be fitted into the ground (no bases allowed) not exceeding 15" wide x 3" deep and not exceeding 24" in height above ground with inscription thereon. Lettering should be cut, black or grey **not gilded or leaded**. **Any form of engraved decoration (uncoloured) and wording is to be approved by the Burial Authority** and the size of the engraving is to be no larger than **6" x 3"**.

AND/OR

A VASE of black plastic measuring no greater than 32cm in height with a diameter at the top of no more than 10.5cm with an inscription of "In loving memory" (Please see picture below). This should have a secure spike fitting at its base to hold it in the ground and should be sited in front of the headstone.

AND/OR

A PLANT CONTAINER in natural stone (Not Terracotta), plastic or metal (with a lifetime guarantee) – which must be frost-proof, having a circumference not exceeding 23 cm and not exceeding 10 cm in height (Please see picture below).



Suitable Vase



Suitable Plant Container

Other types of memorials are only permitted at the discretion of the Burial Authority.

Additional inscriptions on a memorial such as for a second interment (where allowed) are permitted for an additional fee. Any inscription referring to a person buried elsewhere should state the place of burial of that person.

No memorials may be erected within 3 months of interment for Ashes and 6 months of an interment for a Burial - including a subsequent interment. The Burial Authority reserves the right to alter this period should the need arise. The time and date for fitting of memorials must be arranged with the Burial Authority in order that the position for fitting may be marked.

The Parish Council have a health and safety duty to all users of the Burial Grounds to ensure that memorials are not dangerous and that headstones are inspected every three months. If any headstone is identified as unsafe, the owner of the plot will be contacted and asked to carry out the work using a NAMM or BRAMM registered stonemason within a specific timescale. The Parish Council are not responsible for repairing headstones if they become damaged or are vandalised (unless the damage is caused by somebody employed by the Council e.g. grass cutting).

An insurance policy can be taken out when purchasing a headstone to cover against damage and vandalism. Memorial masons should be able to advise on these.

**ANY BROKEN OR DAMAGED VASES OR PLANT CONTAINERS WILL BE REMOVED OR DISPOSED OF AS A SAFETY MEASURE - REPLACEMENTS TO BE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL.**

10. Childrens Graves - Small Toys can be placed on a child's grave (a person who was deceased before their 18th Birthday) ONLY at Christmas and Birthdays and must be removed within a month.
11. Photographs, Porcelain portraits, Kerbstones, Gravel/ Slate, Fencing, anything hung from trees, Plastic Windmills, Toys, Balloons, Ceramic/ Metal flowers, China, Glass, Lights and Candles – are not permitted by the Burial Authority in any part of the Burial Ground (apart from as laid out above for a Childs grave) and the Burial Authority reserves the right to remove these.
12. Flowers - are welcome but must be placed in vases or plant containers as set out in the Rules relating to Memorials. **ALL OTHER CONTAINERS WILL BE REMOVED.** Bulbs may be planted in the soil within the confines of a grave. Christmas Wreaths and small Christmas Trees (No larger than 30cm tall) are allowed during the Christmas period and should be removed by the owners in the first week of February. **NO** Christmas signage is to be erected. Artificial flowers, shrubs and bushes are not allowed and the Burial Authority reserves the right to remove these. Dead Flowers should be placed in the refuse containers supplied at the site. The Burial Authority reserves the right to remove any dead flowers it considers necessary to keep the Burial Ground in a tidy state.
13. Grave Markers - other than those erected by the Burial Authority are only permitted in the burial ground for a period of 12 months after the interment and will be removed after this time.
14. Graves may be affected by burial in adjoining plots. On occasions a family grave may be covered by a board in order that soil from a newly excavated grave can be collected. This will be removed as soon as the burial has taken place. Any flowers on the grave will be carefully placed to one side and replaced after the service.

When any grave is re-opened for the purpose of making another burial therein – no person shall disturb any human remains interred therein or remove from there any soil which is offensive.

15. Maintenance of Graves - It is the responsibility of the plot owner to maintain their plot. Any plot which is not maintained for a period of six months will be grassed over and all debris removed. Weedkiller should not be used as this can damage the memorials and make them unstable.
16. No Liability - The Parish Council will not be liable for objects that have been placed on graves that are then lost, misplaced or broken either by the elements, thieves or vandals.
17. Pet Remains - The Parish Council do not allow pet remains or ashes to be buried, or the ashes spread at the burial ground due to Licensing regulations. This includes not allowing them to be placed in someone's coffin or ashes container.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE REGULATIONS MAY MEAN ACTION BEING  
TAKEN TO REMOVE ANYTHING CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE.**

Theobalds Green – February 2024