

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL

CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM POLICY

Updated December 2020

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Introduction

We respect the rights and needs of the individual and have therefore prepared this Policy with a balance that will enable us to manage the Cemeteries and Crematoria effectively and maintain the highest possible standards without placing unnecessary restrictions on individual choices.

This Policy applies to the following locations:-

Woodlands Cemetery and Crematorium, Birmingham Road, Coleshill,
North Warwickshire B46 1DP

Widney Manor Cemetery, Widney Manor Road, Bentley Heath, Solihull
B93 3LX

Robin Hood Cemetery and Crematorium, Streetsbrook Road, Solihull
B90 3NL

We aim to provide the highest possible standards of care, choice and dignity to those who suffer bereavement and to create and maintain an environment where the bereaved can pay their respects and remember loved ones in the ways they feel most appropriate.

To assist with this we request that all visitors to our Cemeteries and Crematorium follow these regulations.

Please be aware that the Council reserves the right to change these regulations from time to time and that compliance with any changes is required.

Administration

The Cemeteries and Crematoria office is based at Block A, Central Depot Moat Lane, Solihull B91 2LW.

Telephone: 0121 709 7009

Email: robinhoodcemetery@solihull.gov.uk

The cemetery grounds are open to visitors as follows:-

October to March

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Weekdays and Saturdays | 9am to 4:15pm |
| Sundays and Bank Holidays | 10am to 4:15pm |

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Christmas Day and Boxing Day | 9.30am to 2:30pm |
|------------------------------|------------------|

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| February, March and October | |
| Weekdays and Saturdays | 9am to 5pm |
| Sundays and Bank Holidays | 10am to 5pm |

April to September

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Weekdays and Saturdays | 9am to 6pm |
| Sundays and Bank Holidays | 10am to 6pm |

General

Vehicles

For safety purposes the speed limit within the grounds of our Cemeteries and Crematoriums is 10 mph.

To maintain the appearance of our Cemeteries we request that you park in the designated parking areas and do not drive on grassed areas. Any damage caused by a vehicle within our grounds to either grassed areas, verges, plants or memorials, will be charged to the owner of that vehicle.

Children

For safety purposes children under 12 years of age are only allowed in the grounds of the Cemeteries when accompanied by a responsible adult.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not permitted in any of our Cemeteries or Crematoriums. Please do not bring alcohol in to the cemeteries and crematoriums or leave bottles cans etc. on any of the grave or scattering areas. Any alcohol left will be removed.

Dogs

Dogs are allowed within the grounds of the Cemeteries but must be kept on a lead and under control at all times. The owner of the dog will be responsible for clearing any mess made by the dog.

Dogs (except assistance dogs) or any other animal are not allowed in the Chapels, Book of Remembrance rooms or waiting rooms without the prior agreement of the Manager.

Please ensure an indemnity form is completed prior to the Funeral.

Gratuities

Please be aware that Council staff are not allowed to receive gratuities, tips or any other gifts.

Fees and Charges

The complete list of fees and charges are available on the internet at solihull.gov.uk. Please be aware that our charges change on the 1st April each year.

Cremation

Code of Practice

All cremations are carried out in accordance with the Code of Cremation Practice issued by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA).

Service Times

Cremation services are carried out Mondays to Fridays. At our Robin Hood Crematorium the first service begins at 9:30 am and are every half an hour after this up until 3:30 pm. At our Woodlands crematorium the first service takes place at 10.00 am and are every hour on the hour after this up until 2.00 pm.

The duration of each service is 30 minutes which includes time for entry/exit of the chapel. It is possible for an additional service time to be purchased if required. This must be specified at the time of booking and is subject to availability.

In order to avoid disruption to other funerals we request that you keep to these times. An additional charge, as outlined in our fees and charges, may be levied for corteges arriving late or services running over the allotted time.

Cremation Papers

To ensure that we have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for a cremation we request that correctly completed paperwork is delivered to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Office by 3.00 pm, 2 clear working days prior to the day of the service, an additional charge, as outlined in our fees and charges, may be levied for paperwork that is delivered late.

Before a cremation can take place all documents relating to that cremation are checked by a doctor appointed by the Home Office. This doctor is called a Medical Referee and gives the final permission for the cremation to take place. The Medical referee can refuse to allow a cremation to be carried out without having to state the reason. By requesting the paperwork a minimum of 2 clear days prior to the service allows us time to ensure the paperwork is signed off by the Medical Referee and any discrepancies resolved if possible.

Music

Music facilities at both of our Crematoria include an organ and our Wesley music system which allows us to download music to be played during the service.

Please note that to ensure the correct music is played during the service instructions for music will only be taken from the Funeral Director through our CrIBS booking system.

The music required is added to our booking system directly by the Funeral Director. Please ensure that the Funeral Director has your music requirements well in advance of the service to ensure that your requests are met as any tracks not within our music library will need to be ordered.

The Funeral Director is responsible for checking that the correct music has been selected on the Wesley Music system before the service begins.

In addition the Funeral Director can order a live webcast, with a keepsake DVD/USB at an additional cost, if required.

We do not have a resident organist and the Funeral Director will normally arrange one for you.

Bearers

The Funeral Director is responsible for arranging bearers to transport the coffin from the hearse to the catafalque (the platform where the coffin is placed during the service). We understand that family members and mourners often wish to assist with this and respect that decision. We do ask you to be aware however, that any mourners who do assist with the bearing of a coffin do so at their own risk. We are unable to supply additional bearers to assist and therefore sufficient bearers must be present upon arrival at the crematorium.

The Coffin

Please be aware that the coffin can be opened by the Funeral Director or the family once in the Chapel for religious reasons only and only with the prior approval of the Manager. In order to reduce pollution and potential damage to the cremators only FFMA approved types of coffin are allowed. Metal fittings for handles etc. should not be used. Should you be uncertain whether the coffin

you have chosen is approved please contact the Cemeteries and Crematoria office who will be happy to check for you.

In order that cremators may be operated in a safe manner, there is a limit to the size of the coffin which can be cremated. Details of maximum sizes are available from the Cemeteries and Crematoria office.

Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Crematorium has to operate in accordance with the requirements of this legislation. This means that we cannot allow any substance to be cremated that may cause pollution.

Please ensure that any hazardous implants such as pacemakers have been removed prior to the cremation. In addition items such as coat hangers, glass etc., should not be placed within the coffin as these can damage the cremators.

Cremation

Each coffin will be cremated separately and will be placed into the cremator exactly as it is received at the Crematorium.

If you wish, we can make arrangements for up to five people to view the coffin being placed into the cremator. Please ensure that this request is made at the time of booking and that an indemnity form is completed.

Leaving the chapel after a service

A number of services are held in our crematorium chapels every day. Each service is unique and is conducted in accordance with the bereaved families' wishes. To allow us to make the necessary preparations for each service we request that everyone attending a funeral service leaves the chapel immediately following the ceremony, allowing us time to ensure that the chapel is clean and presentable for the next service.

It is advisable for the Minister to make their way directly to the flower terrace rather than speak to families at the exit door as this can delay the mourners from exiting the chapel. The same is to be said of collection boxes. An additional charge, as outlined in our fees and charges, may be levied for exit from the chapel after the allotted time.

Disposal of cremated remains

You have the option of strewing, interring or removing the remains following a cremation. Please be aware that the cremated remains can be kept at the Crematorium for the period of one month whilst you make your decision. Following this a charge is made for each month or part month that the cremated remains are within our care. We have outlined below some additional information regarding each option to help you to reach your decision.

Strewing of Cremated Remains

We have designated scattering gardens in the grounds of each of our Cemeteries. These are the only areas where cremated remains may be strewn, other than on a purchased grave with the consent of its owner. You have the option to be in attendance when the strewing takes place and this should be indicated at the time of booking. Please be aware that you will need the permission of the council to strew cremated remains and that this can only be carried out by or under the supervision of our staff. Should you wish the cremated remains to be strewn in the same area as another loved one please let us know. We will be able to check our records and find the location that your previous loved one was scattered in.

Interring Cremated Remains

Cremated remains can be interred in any of the Council's Cemeteries or placed within above ground vaults and Sanctum 12 vaults. Please see our website <https://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/Memorials/> where you can find further details and application forms.

Please note that any decorations/ornaments must be placed on the slab at the head of the grave and not on the turfed area in front of the memorial slabs.

No fences, stone chippings of any kind will be permitted on or around any part of the memorial or grassed area of the grave as these can cause access issues for other users and also restricts the grounds maintenance activities.

'Shepherds Crooks' or items which pose a health and safety issue for other visitors to our cemeteries are not permitted. We also request that items of high

financial or sentimental value are not left as we cannot guarantee their security and are not responsible should they be removed from the graves.

If you are unsure whether an item you wish to place falls under the guidance above please contact the Cemeteries and Crematoria Office for further guidance before placing the item on the grave. This will reduce any further distress should the item be unsuitable and therefore needs to be removed.

Removing Cremated Remains

Please be aware that cremated remains can only be removed from the Crematorium by the Funeral Director who organised the services or by the person who applied for the cremation and signed the relevant documents.

If somebody is collecting the remains on behalf of the applicant then written authorisation will be needed from the original applicant for the cremation. Any person collecting cremated remains will need to bring at least one photographic form of identity.

Floral Tributes

Following the funeral service in the chapel flowers are placed on our flower terrace. Each day of the week has a separate area on the terrace. Flowers are removed and disposed of early in the morning seven days following the service to make way for the flowers from that day's service. For example a service held at 2pm on a Friday will have the flowers removed first thing on the following Friday so if you wish to have the flowers yourselves then they will need to be removed before the cemetery closes on the following Thursday.

Other floral tributes may be placed in the Crematorium grounds but please understand that any which become unsightly or which spoil the appearance of the area will be removed. Floral tributes should be placed in the flower containers provided. It is requested that you do not use glass containers, carry out any planting in the strewing areas or do anything which may interfere with someone else's memorial. Flowers which are past their best will be removed from the scattering areas on a Monday and Friday morning.

Please be aware that holly wreaths placed for Christmas will be removed in late January.

Any items other than flowers are not permitted within the Gardens of Remembrance and Scattering areas.

Cremation Memorial Options

Please be aware that as cremated remains are only strewn in certain areas of the Crematorium grounds it is not always possible for a memorial to be in the same place as the cremated remains.

There are assorted memorials across our three cemeteries including:-

Book of Remembrance at Robin Hood and Woodlands.

The Book of Remembrance is a permanent record and a different page is reserved for each day of the year. Entries are usually made to commemorate a significant date for the bereaved or their families. You can also view entries by accessing the electronic book of remembrance sited within the memorial book room at Robin Hood and Woodlands Cemeteries or via our web site [www.solihull.gov.uk /memorial store](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/memorialstore).

Boutonniere plaques

Boutonniere Plaques are situated on the wall of flower terrace at Robin Cemetery and along the fences in the gardens of remembrance at Woodlands Cemetery. These plaques can be inscribed with text of your choice to the memory of a loved one and can also include a motif from our standard range and/or photograph. A small posy vase sits to the side of the plaque into which a small floral tribute can be placed.

It is possible to have a suitably inscribed memorial plaque secured to either a communal or an individual bench. The memorial plaque is manufactured from cast bronze and can accommodate up to 60 letters and spaces on 3 separate lines of text.

This is just a small sample of the memorials that we offer there are further examples in our online memorial store, which can be found on our website at <https://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/Memorials/>.

Scattering Gardens

Interment

Interment times

Interments within all of the Cemeteries take place on Monday to Friday with the earliest being 10:15 and the latest at 13:45.

Please be aware that the time booked for the interment is the time that the cortege is due at the graveside. In order to avoid disruption to any other funerals we request that you keep to this time. A charge, as detailed in the fees and charges, may be levied for late arrival.

Charges

No interment will be allowed in any grave for which an unpaid charge is outstanding.

Interment Papers

To ensure that we have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for an interment we request that a correctly completed Interment Application Form is delivered to the Crematorium Office by 3pm at least 3 working days before the interment. Please note that no interment will be allowed to take place until all of the correct paperwork has been submitted. By allowing this amount of time allows us to check that all of the information is correct including grave number, grave ownership, if it is an existing grave or allocation of a new grave, coffin size etc.

Bearers

The Funeral Director is responsible for arranging sufficient bearers to carry and lower the coffin in a dignified manner. We understand that family members and friends often wish to assist with this and we respect that decision. We do ask you to be aware that any mourners who do assist with the bearing or lowering of the coffin do so at their own risk. We are unable to supply additional bearers so please ensure that there enough bearers prior to the interment.

Exclusive Right of Burial

Please be aware that when a grave in a Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Cemetery is purchased, what the purchaser is actually buying is the Exclusive Rights of Burial for a period of 75 years which may be extended for a further period on agreement with the Cemeteries and Crematoria Office.

The purchaser is not buying the Freehold of the Grave and will not own any land. The purchase is for the right to determine who may be buried in the grave and whose cremated remains may be strewn or interred in the grave.

Grave spaces are allocated by the cemetery and the selection of a particular grave is not permitted.

Please note that there are different charges for residents of the Borough and non-residents. The Grant is in the form of a written document known as grave deeds which is issued once the relevant fee has been paid. The period for which any rights apply is stated on the deeds.

The person registered with the Council as being the grave owner of the Grant has the sole right to decide who may be interred in the grave. At the end of the stated period, unless the deed holder has renewed the Grant, then all rights cease to exist.

Please be aware that a grave for which an Exclusive Right of Burial applies can only be opened with the written permission of the registered owner of the Exclusive Right unless the interment is for the owner themselves.

If the registered owner has died the Exclusive Right of Burial can be transferred to a new owner. There is a legal process for doing this and the office will be happy to assist you through this process.

However, if the interment is that of the registered owner then a transfer is not required because as owner of the grave they have a legal right to be interred within it.

It is important to keep the grave deeds in a safe place, as this is a legal document confirming the owner's entitlement to future interments. Please also ensure that the office is notified of any change of address.

Interment Fee

Please be aware that in addition to the fee charged for the Exclusive Right of Burial an Interment Fee for opening and closing of the grave is charged. The Interment Fee is charged every time the grave is opened for an interment and the amount charged is dependent upon residency of the deceased.

It should be noted that from time to time the soil excavated from one grave which is being prepared for an interment may be placed on an adjacent grave but we will try to ensure that this is for as short a time as possible.

Memorial Rights

The Exclusive Right of Burial includes the right to place a memorial (which must be approved by the Council), installed in the designated area on the grave.

Grant owners are required to apply for permission if they wish to have a memorial erected upon a grave. Normally, the application will be completed and submitted, on behalf of the Grant owner, by the Funeral Director or Memorial Stonemason contracted by the owner to carry out the work. Please note that all Memorial Masons working within our cemeteries must be BRAMM registered (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) to ensure the memorial and its fixings comply with current Health and Safety Legislation.

There are restrictions upon the size and design of a memorial, the material used in its construction and the method used for fixing. Considerations will also have to be given to the potential for causing offence to other cemetery visitors.

In all cases the Owner of the Grant will be required to give permission for any inscription, any additional inscription or any refurbishment works carried out to the memorial placed on the grave. Where the Owner of the Grant is the deceased a Statutory Declaration may be completed by the applicant for the interment for an additional inscription to be added to an existing memorial.

Please note:

Memorials placed on graves, which have not been authorised, do not comply with Memorial Regulations, or where a memorial is considered to be a danger to other visitors, will be removed by the Council. Wooden grave surrounds are not permitted at any of our cemeteries and will be removed. Please do not remove the grave mound. The mound is necessary as the ground settles and any additional soil will be removed by the Council.

Memorial Safety

Sometimes the foundations of a memorial can move due to settlement of the surrounding ground. The Council operates a rolling programme of safety testing all memorials across the cemeteries. Should any memorials be found to be unsafe the Council will place a warning notice on them and write to the grave owner to let them know that remedial works will need to be carried out. It may also be necessary to make the memorial safe on a temporary basis to avoid injury. This is usually done by placing a wooden post in the ground and placing a band around the post and the headstone. Should the grave owner fail to make a permanent repair to the memorial within the specified timeframe then the memorial will be part buried within the grave space.

Unpurchased Graves

An unpurchased grave (sometimes referred to as a common or public grave) is one where the Exclusive Right of Burial, is not sold and the rights to the grave remain with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

Cremated Remains Grave

This is a purchased grave which allows the interment of 2 sets of cremated remains, except for North CR1 at Robin Hood Cemetery which allows up to four sets of remains.

Child's Grave

In both our Woodlands and Widney Manor Cemeteries we have a section for the interment of children. These graves are only excavated to a depth which will allow one interment but cremated remains can also be interred in these graves.

Stillborn Babies' Graves

There are a number of graves which are owned by the Health Authority which are for the specific interment of stillborn babies/foetuses. These have a headstone with the names of the interred on them.

Grave Maintenance

For a number of years now all new burial areas within the cemeteries have been laid out in what is known as 'Lawn' style. Using this system, the Council is able to gain easy access to all graves within the burial section, which allows for more effective maintenance of grave surfaces and ensures access for the excavation of graves for future interments.

In order to ensure continual access and ease of maintenance of all grave areas, owners are permitted to place any memorials, artefacts, flower containers etc. only on the memorial foundation area at the head of the grave. Owners are encouraged to maintain this area themselves in order that the Contractor's staff do not have to disturb any flowers or articles present.

Flower containers should not be made of glass or porcelain, as these materials will often fall over or crack due to water freezing during periods of cold temperature. Similarly, plastic materials become brittle due to prolonged exposure to sunlight.

In the period following an interment the grave surface will be subject to settlement. The initial settlement lasts for 12 -18 months. Once this initial settlement has taken place, the surface will be grassed over. Over future years the grave will continue to settle and may require re-instating from time to time, which will be carried out periodically by the Council.

In the traditional areas of Robin Hood Cemetery, properly installed masonry surrounds may, with the approval of the Council, enclose grave surfaces. It is the responsibility of the Grant Owner to arrange for these enclosed grave surfaces to be maintained.

Please note:

For lawn graves planting, the locating of flower vases or artefacts within the grave area is not permitted once the Council has completed the laying of turf. All such items must be located on the memorial foundation area only. Any items placed which prevent or interfere with the maintenance of the grave, may be a health and safety hazard to staff or visitors or which in the opinion of the Council is dilapidated or unsightly the Council reserves the right to remove and dispose of such items at their discretion.

Muslim Section

At our Widney Manor section we have an area dedicated to Muslim burials and are composed of both Lawn graves and concrete chambers. In agreement with the Solihull Muslim Community Association the graves are only available to Solihull residents. At the time of interment it is possible for the spouse of the deceased to purchase the adjacent grave in reserve.