

**COMBS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**COMBS PARISH CEMETERY REGULATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF USE**  
(Applicable at April 2023)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Combs Parish Cemetery is a civil cemetery for the use of all residents of Combs civil parish, of whatever religion, denomination or none at all. Although it is primarily for the use of residents of the parish, the Parish Council will consider enquiries from anyone outside the parish having a connection with Combs.
- 1.2 Combs Parish Council ('the Parish Council' or 'the Council') is the statutory burial authority responsible for the management of the Cemetery and for these Regulations. It is a Condition of Use that anyone using this Cemetery agrees to be bound by these Regulations.
- 1.3 The Cemetery provides for the burial of coffins in appropriately-sized graves, and urns containing cremated remains in smaller graves. Part of the Cemetery has been set aside for environmentally friendly burials ('Green Burials').
- 1.4 The Cemetery is a place of peace and quiet reflection. It is also a place of work. Please respect the special nature of the site, the needs of other users, and safety factors. Dogs are not encouraged in the cemetery but may be allowed if they do not cause a nuisance and are kept on a lead at all times.
- 1.5 To arrange a burial, or for any general enquiries regarding the Cemetery, please contact the Parish Clerk:

Ms Suzanne Ottewell

Tel: 01449 678005

Email: [combsparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:combsparishcouncil@gmail.com)

**2 ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL**

- 2.1 The Parish Clerk keeps a Register of Burials and other records, and is the primary point of contact for the Parish Council in its capacity as the statutory burial authority.
- 2.2 Only a gravedigger approved by the Parish Council may dig any grave, or place anything in the ground anywhere in the Cemetery, whether coffins, urns, or any other remains or objects. This is because the gravedigger knows the statutory requirements for depth and other dimensions, and he understands and has experience of the soil conditions.
- 2.3 Burials may take place with or without a religious or other ceremony. The family is responsible for arranging for any officiating minister.
- 2.4 No animals or their cremated remains may be buried or have their ashes scattered in the Cemetery.

- 2.5 The Parish Council does not allow the reservation of grave plots in advance of need.
- 2.6 The Parish Council reserves the right from time to time to amend, or in its sole discretion waive, these Regulations and the Schedule of Fees and Charges.

### **3 BURIALS**

- 3.1 All graves in this Cemetery, whether for coffins or cremated remains, are made available by the Parish Council on the basis that they are 'private graves'. This means that the owner of the grave has the exclusive right to decide who is buried in that grave, and to erect a memorial stone on that grave. This right is called the Exclusive Right of Burial. Because this right is very important, further detail is given in Section 4 below.
- 3.2 A provisional booking for a burial should be made by telephone to the Parish Clerk.
- 3.3 The provisional booking should be followed up by the submission of a completed Notice of Burial, together with the appropriate fees, to the Parish Clerk at least 5 working days in advance of the intended date and time of the funeral. Receipt of the fully and correctly completed Notice of Burial will act as confirmation of the provisional booking.
- 3.4 No burial may take place without production to the Parish Clerk of a Certificate of Disposal or a Coroner's Order for Burial.
- 3.5 No burial may take place on Sunday, Christmas Day or Good Friday, other than in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.6 Burials may take place only between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm, except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.7 The Council will not reserve grave plots for future use. Siting of grave spaces shall be at the sole discretion of the Council.
- 3.8 Green Burials. An area of the Cemetery is maintained as a meadow and bounded by trees for the purpose of Green Burials. Coffins and urns for burial must be made from suitable bio-degradable materials such as wood, wicker, cane, bamboo, wool, cardboard etc. The Council also permits shroud burial.
- 3.9 No cremated remains (ashes) may be scattered in any part of the Cemetery.

### **4. EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

- 4.1 An Exclusive Right of Burial ('EROB') gives the owner the sole and exclusive right to decide who shall be buried in that grave. In the case of a new grave, the owner of the EROB will be the person who signed as the Purchaser on the Notice of Burial form. A legal document

called a 'Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial' will be issued to the owner of the EROB. (For convenience only in these Regulations, such person is referred to hereafter as the owner of the grave, or the grave owner.) The Parish Clerk keeps a record of each grave owner and his or her contact details. The owner of the grave should inform the Parish Clerk of any change of address, or if he/she transfers the ownership to another person.

- 4.2 A grave will be opened for a second or further burial only at the request of the registered grave owner or where the burial is that of the registered grave owner.
- 4.3 Ownership of a grave also carries the sole and exclusive right to erect a headstone or memorial stone on that grave (subject to these Regulations) and also to apply to have that headstone or memorial stone modified, for example by the addition of wording relating to the second burial.
- 4.4 In the case of a grave in which the registered owner is being buried, all remaining exclusive rights in that grave will automatically be transferred to the person signing the Notice of Burial. The Parish Clerk will, on receipt of the Notice of Burial, record that person as the new registered owner, and will accept applications only from that person for any modification of or addition to the headstone or other memorial on that grave.
- 4.5 All rights attached to the Exclusive Right of Burial are suspended while any fees, charges or recoveries are outstanding against that grave owner.
- 4.6 These rights are granted by the Parish Council only for the use of the grave, they do not confer any rights of ownership in the land. An Exclusive Right of Burial for a grave in this Cemetery lasts for 100 years from the date of the first burial. At the end of that time the EROB will expire and cease to exist.

## **5. MEMORIALS**

- 5.1 Headstones (over a coffin grave) and memorial stones (over a cremated remains grave) may be erected over a grave or removed from a grave only at the request of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial, and subject to the approval of the Parish Council.
- 5.2 They may be erected only if they comply with the requirements set out in these Regulations and are approved in advance by the Parish Council. It is strongly recommended therefore that the grave owner applies to the Parish Clerk for approval of the design of any headstone or memorial stone, and the inscriptions to be carved into them, before the memorial mason starts cutting stone. In practice, the mason supplying the memorial will usually provide you with the necessary application form and submit the application on your behalf.
- 5.3 All memorials and their installation and removal must conform to the BRAMM Blue Book and comply with BS8415. No person or company who is not registered with the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) or the National Association of Memorial

Masons (NAMM) will be permitted to erect a memorial or carry out other work in the Cemetery. Any team of installers must be supervised by a Licensed Fixer.

- 5.4 Headstones must not exceed 36 inches in height above ground level, and 34 inches in width. Memorial stones must not exceed 18 inches in height above ground level, and 18 inches in width. The stone must be of sufficient thickness (at least 3 inches) to support its height and to withstand any reasonable force exerted upon it, and to ensure its stability. The foundation must be sunk into the ground so that its top surface is flush with or below the adjoining ground level.
- 5.5 All headstones and memorial stones:
  - i) must be in keeping with the other memorials in the Cemetery. Inscriptions must also be in keeping, not contentious or partisan, and not likely to cause offence. The Parish Council shall be the sole arbiter of what is acceptable.
  - ii) must be submitted, in design, to the Parish Clerk for approval by the Parish Council, to ensure that they comply with these Regulations; the wording for all intended inscriptions, whether initial or subsequent, must also be submitted to the Parish Clerk for approval.
  - iii) must be made of homogeneous natural stone and not artificially coloured. Memorials made of reconstituted, aggregated or man-made materials are not permitted.
  - iv) must not have photographs, other images or fixtures attached to them. Engraved motifs may be acceptable provided they are small and do not dominate the overall appearance of the stonework. Subdued colouring of motifs will normally be approved.
- 5.6 The location reference of the grave should be engraved on the plinth of headstones and on memorial stones to assist in identifying the correct grave when they are first installed, and subsequently after being removed for further inscriptions to be added.
- 5.7 The ground must be allowed to settle before a headstone or memorial stone is erected. This will be at least six months after the last burial.
- 5.8 Where there is provision in the stonework, two vases up to 4 inches in diameter per grave will be permitted.
- 5.9 Graves in the area designated for Green Burials may be marked only with a simple, small wooden cross.
- 5.10 Only headstones and memorial stones are permitted. No kerbs, surrounds, railings, stone or other chippings, statues, sundials, bird baths, portraits, wind-chimes, windmills and the like, candles, trees, shrubs, photographs, holograms, laminated cards, seats, lights, toys, horizontal ledges or slabs, or any other thing not specifically permitted by these rules are permitted in the Cemetery. Anything placed or erected in the Cemetery which is not and has

not been permitted may be removed by the Parish Council and disposed of, and the cost recovered from the grave owner.

- 5.11 Notwithstanding the above, in the case of the burial of an infant or child the Parish Council may allow, in its sole discretion and for an agreed period, child-like mementoes such as soft toys, windmills and the like. The family should discuss this in advance with the Parish Clerk.

## **6. MAINTENANCE OF GRAVES AND MEMORIALS**

- 6.1 The grave owner is responsible for ensuring that the memorial is kept in a good and safe condition. The Parish Council will not be liable for repairing damaged or fallen memorials, nor for any damage to or loss of any memorial howsoever caused, whether from theft, vandalism, third party negligence or anything else beyond its reasonable control. Grave owners are strongly advised to obtain insurance for their memorials. If the Council decides that any memorial is unsafe or unsightly it will notify the grave owner requiring the defect to be rectified. If the repair is not carried out within 6 months the Council may carry out the repair itself and recover the cost from the grave owner.
- 6.2 The Council will remove anything which has been erected or placed on a grave without the prior approval of the Parish Council, and recover any associated costs from the grave owner.
- 6.3 A maximum of 4 Christmas wreaths per grave are allowed between 1st December and 31st January, after which time the Parish Council will remove them.
- 6.4 The Council reserves the right to remove and dispose of flowers, plants, floral tributes or wreaths which have deteriorated or become unsightly.

By Order of Combs Parish Council

13 February 2023

## Schedule of Burial Fees and Charges

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023

|  | Resident         | Non-Resident*   |                   |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Burial</b>                                    |                  | Combs<br>Ford** | Outside<br>Parish |
| <i>Exclusive Right of Burial for 100 years</i>   | Included in fees |                 |                   |
|  |                  |                 |                   |
| Burial of anyone under 12 years of age           | £0               | £0              | £0                |
| Burial of coffin: over 12 years of age           | £265             | £650            | £1,000            |
| Burial of cremated remains: over 12 years of age | £185             | £500            | £900              |
| Green burial: over 12 years of age               | £200             | £400            | £800              |
|  |                  |                 |                   |
| <b>Memorials and Inscriptions</b>                |                  |                 |                   |
| Headstone (full-size grave)                      | £125             | £250            | £500              |
| Memorial stone (cremated remains grave)          | £50              | £250            | £500              |
| Second or further inscription                    | £45              | £80             | £90               |
|  |                  |                 |                   |
| <b>Additional Fees</b>                           |                  |                 |                   |
| Double depth grave                               | Included in fees |                 |                   |
| Re-opening of grave (full-size or cremation)     | £200             | £200            | £500              |

\* Non-Resident rates apply to persons whose normal place of residence at their time of death was not within the civil parish of Combs within the last 5 years immediately before their death.

\*\* Combs Ford, for these purposes, includes the ecclesiastical parish of St Mary's, Combs, that is outside the civil parish.

**Please Note:**

- i) The family/undertaker is responsible for the gravedigger's fees.
- ii) No plot reservations are allowed.

The Parish Council will review these fees and charges annually. Please check with the Parish Clerk to ensure that you have the latest schedule of fees and charges.