



Cemetery Regulations

March 2025

1. Definitions and interpretation

- 1.1. **WTC, Town Council, Council** – Witney Town Council, the local burial authority which has the power to manage and provide burial grounds.
- 1.2. **EROB** – Exclusive Right of Burial
- 1.3. **Spent** – An EROB is considered spent if all usable grave space has been used.
- 1.4. **Full Interment** – the burial of a non-cremated body.
- 1.5. **Ashes Interment** – the burial of cremated remains.
- 1.6. **Green Form/Registrar Certificate** - The certificate to authorise a burial or ashes interment.
- 1.7. **Statutory Declaration** - A formal, written and legally binding statement of fact, signed in the presence of a solicitor/Commissioner of Oaths.

2. Law and Jurisdiction

- 2.1. These regulations shall be governed by the laws of England and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

3. Variations

- 3.1. These Cemetery Regulations supersede and replace any prior regulations, terms, or conditions previously in effect. We reserve the right to modify, amend, or update these Cemetery Regulations at any time without prior notice. Any such changes will be effective immediately upon the date stated on the document.

4. General cemetery Information

4.1. Windrush Cemetery Access

- 4.1.1. Windrush cemetery is permanently open to members of the public with parking available near the entrance to the cemetery. The road around the grave sections is only designed as an access road for works vehicles and funeral cortège.
- 4.1.2 The cemetery is not open for vehicles during ceremonies.
 - 4.1.2.1 A sign will be placed on the entrance and car parking controlled by cemetery operatives.
 - 4.1.2.2 No notice will be issued of closure for a ceremony.

4.2. Tower Hill Cemetery Access

- 4.2.1 Tower Hill Cemetery is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 09:00 – 16:00. The gates are unlocked and locked by Town Council staff and contractors. On request, the bollards gaining access around sections 6, 7 and 8 can be removed for vehicles. Please make this request at least 24 hours prior to your visit by calling the Council offices.
- 4.2.2 During weekends, the gates are unlocked between 7:00 – 11:00 and the bollards are removed for access around sections 6,7 and 8.
 - 4.2.2.1 For ceremonies, the main vehicle gates and the north pedestrian gate will be locked.

4.2.2.2 No notice will be issued of a closure for a ceremony.

4.3. Cemetery Rules

The following general rules are applicable across both cemeteries and are considered an offence within the cemetery grounds.

4.3.1. General Rules

4.3.1.1. Dogs are permitted in the cemetery but must always be on leads and all waste must be cleared up.

4.3.1.2. No parking in any areas of the cemeteries that are not designated parking spaces.

4.3.1.3. Bicycles must not be ridden within the cemetery.

4.3.1.4. All rubbish must be cleared away.

4.3.1.5. The amplifying of any music or disturbing sound

4.3.2. Offences within the cemetery

4.3.2.1. wilfully create any disturbance in a cemetery

4.3.2.2. commit any nuisance in a cemetery.

4.3.2.3. wilfully interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery

4.3.2.4. wilfully interfere with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, or any flowers or plants on any such matter

4.3.2.5. play any game or sport in a cemetery.

5. Burial plots and interment options

5.1. Lawn Burials

Lawn burials are the standard burial plot offered at both Windrush and Tower Hill Cemetery. They can accommodate one or two full interments depending on the cemetery. All lawn burials can have a memorial installed along with a small garden area, subject to the purchase of EROB.

5.1.1 At Windrush Cemetery, all lawn burials are at double depth to accommodate two full interments.

5.1.1.1. Only once two full interments have been completed can the remaining grave space be used for ashes interments.

5.1.1.2. No ashes interments are permitted until the plot space has been fully buried, at Windrush this is two full interments and one single interment at Tower Hill.

5.1.1.3. If an applicant wishes to spread ashes on a grave this can be accommodated by peeling back the turf layer and spreading the ashes over the surface of the soil.

5.1.1.4. The charge for this will be the same as an ashes interment.

5.1.1.5. To perform a future burial this layer of soil will have to be disturbed, and the cremated remains will be moved from the resting place.

5.1.2. Tower Hill lawn burials are at a single depth.

5.1.3. All bodies must be interred within a coffin.

5.1.3.1. The coffin must have a nameplate for the interred.

5.1.3.2. Due to burying at double depth, it is required that cemetery staff can correctly identify an interment at the first level before interring the second body.

5.2. Muslim burials

Muslim burial plots are provided; these are correctly orientated in accordance with religious beliefs. All Muslim plots are single-depth burials.

- 5.2.1. Burials are permitted in either a coffin or wrapped in a shroud.
- 5.2.2. In the case where a burial shroud is used the funeral organisers must backfill the grave so that the body is no longer visible to council staff who will complete the backfill.
- 5.2.3. When wrapped in a shroud a suitable container must be used to transport the deceased to the graveside.
- 5.2.4. The funeral organiser can line the base of the grave with brushwood or softwood boards to a depth no greater than 30mm.
- 5.2.5. On the expiry of exclusive rights of burial, any headstone may be removed by the council, but no further interments will take place in any available plot space.

5.3. Meadow burials

A wildflower meadow is in place at Windrush Cemetery for interments. The overall concept of this area is to grow and maintain a flowering meadow. The meadow can have up to three cuts each year these are in the spring, summer and autumn with the main summer cut being a collection. Further cuts for winter maintenance may be used to help maintain weeds and supplementary seeding in March and April. Once the ground has recompacted in the meadow section a wildflower mix will be sown on the grave.

- 5.3.1. Rules differing from standard burials for meadow burials are as follows:
 - 5.3.1.1. Exclusive rights of burial cannot be purchased.
 - 5.3.1.2. Plots cannot be reserved.
 - 5.3.1.3. No embalmed bodies
 - 5.3.1.4. No form of grave marker can be installed.
- 5.3.1 Identification
 - 5.3.1.1 As no grave maker can be placed the record of burial will be the standard council process but additionally, a grave marker peg will be buried in the ground.
 - 5.3.1.2 The plots will be identified if needed in future through a grave maker peg that contains an electronic readable tag (RFID tag).
 - 5.3.1.3 This RFID tag will be recorded across the burial book and cemetery management software.

5.4 Woodland Burials

5.4.1 Woodland burials are interred at the bottom section of Windrush cemetery. These offer an environmentally friendly burial option but are also a cheaper burial option. The option has been designed to have the lowest carbon footprint option across both Witney cemeteries.

- 5.4.1 Only single-depth interments
- 5.4.2 Exclusive rights of burial cannot be purchased.
- 5.4.3 Plots cannot be reserved.
- 5.4.4 No embalmed bodies
- 5.4.5 No form of grave marker can be installed.
 - 5.4.5.1 This includes immediately after an interment; all flowers will be removed directly following the interment by town council staff.
 - 5.4.5.2 The intended purpose of the area is to be as environmentally conscious as possible, so it is encouraged that flowers are not organised for a funeral.

- 5.4.6 All burials must take place in an eco-friendly coffin or burial shroud.
- 5.4.6.1 Bamboo, banana leaf, willow, cardboard
- 5.4.7 In the case where a burial shroud is used the funeral organisers must backfill the grave so that the body is no longer visible to council staff who will complete the backfill.
- 5.4.8 Oversized coffins are not permitted.
- 5.4.9 The plots will be identified if needed in future through a grave maker peg that contains an RFID tag.
- 5.4.10 Once a predefined section has reached capacity trees and wildflower perennial bulbs will be planted to create small woodland areas.

5.5 Children's and Baby Plots

- 5.5.1 Separate smaller children's and baby plots are offered at Windrush Cemetery which are used for the children's funeral fund. They have been designed to inter at a later date the ashes of the parents/guardians.
 - 5.5.1.1 Baby: 0.9m length x 0.66m width
 - 5.5.1.2 Children's: 1.5m length 0.99m width
 - 5.5.1.3 Children's and babies' plots EROB are sold at 90 years.
- 5.5.2 Once a full interment has taken place the interment of two sets of ashes can be completed on top.
- 5.5.3 Memorials are a smaller size which is listed on the separate memorial sizes document.

5.6 Ashes Path

Windrush Cemetery has a paved ashes path for the interment of ashes caskets.

- 5.6.1 Each ashes plot can accommodate two caskets.
- 5.6.2 The EROB must be purchased.
- 5.6.3 Only a sloping desk tablet can be installed.

5.7 Family Ashes Plots

Tower Hill Cemetery has family ashes plots for the interment of ashes, each plot can accommodate up to eight ashes caskets.

- 5.7.1 Only a standard lawned grave memorial can be installed here.

5.8 Scattering of Ashes

Ashes may be scattered at cemeteries with permission from Witney Town Council. There are designated ashes scattering beds at both cemeteries.

- 5.8.1 Written permission must be obtained from Witney Town Council, this can be in the form of an email.
- 5.8.2 A date and time must be agreed with the council offices.
 - 5.8.2.1 Witney Town council staff regularly conduct maintenance in the cemeteries and if they have not been made aware they will stop the scattering of any ashes.
- 5.8.3 The scattering of ashes onto grave plots is not permitted even if the EROB is purchased for that plot.
 - 5.8.3.1 The scattering of ashes is not accurate, and the ashes can easily be distributed onto neighbouring plots by the weather or inaccuracy in the process. This can be seen as offensive by those interred into other plots.

5.9 Memorial plaques and stones

- 5.9.1 Memorial plaques can be installed on the memorial wall at Tower Hill Cemetery or the Memorial monolith at Windrush Cemetery.
- 5.9.2 Memorial stones can be installed in the stone pond in the children's memorial garden at Windrush Cemetery.
- 5.9.3 The interment for those named on a memorial plaque does not have to have taken place in the cemetery.
- 5.9.4 An application form must be completed for the installation of a memorial plaque.
 - 5.9.4.1 The size, material and inlay colour of the memorial plaques are determined by cemetery officers to ensure all plaques are uniform.

6 Schedule of Interment

The Town Council will follow the below process for all interments in its cemeteries. The interment process will be managed in cooperation with the undertaker and/or funeral organiser.

- 6.1 A completed interment form must be submitted to the council as the notice of interment.
 - 6.1.1 This must be complete with the grave plot number and date and time of interment.
 - 6.1.1.1 If the grave plot to be used is not owned by the deceased, the EROB owner must provide written permission for its use.
 - 6.1.1.2 This must be submitted along with the interment form.
 - 6.2 The date and time of the interment will be arranged with the Town Council.
 - 6.3 All efforts will be made to offer the time and date requested.
 - 6.4 However, as the burial authority, dates and times of interment are entirely at the discretion of the Town Council.
 - 6.5 A burial time should first be organised with the Town Council before any other party.
 - 6.6 Times and dates are managed based on the multiple factors such as:
 - 6.6.1 Other interment bookings
 - 6.6.2 Staffing
 - 6.6.3 Equipment availability
 - 6.6.4 Grave location
 - 6.6.5 Proximity to open graves
 - 6.6.6 Excavation time
 - 6.6.7 Public holidays
 - 6.7 After a completed interment form has been received cemetery operatives will then begin the process of excavating and preparing the grave space.
 - 6.8 All paperwork must then be submitted 24 hours prior to the time of the interment.
 - 6.9 Once the interment has been completed the burial will be recorded by cemeteries operatives in the relevant cemeteries burial register.
 - 6.9.1 This must be signed off by the undertaker/funeral organiser.

7 Graveside preparation and backfilling

- 7.1 All graves are prepared for interment to avoid the sight of excavated soil.
 - 7.1.1 All excavated soil will be covered temporarily.
 - 7.1.2 The graveside will be dressed with artificial grass, this includes the ashes interments in the ashes path at Windrush Cemetery.
 - 7.1.3 The excavated soil is placed on the neighbouring grave.

- 7.1.3.1 If the funeral organisers wish for the excavated soil to be located away from the interred grave this must be requested at the first notice of the burial and confirmed by Witney Town Council.
- 7.1.3.1.1 An additional charge will be charged for this service.

8 Cancellations and additional charges

8.1 Cancellations

- 8.1.1 If an interment has to be cancelled by Witney Town Council due to any paperwork not being submitted the full burial charge will be charged to the undertaker/funeral organiser.
- 8.1.2 The final submission for any paperwork is 24 hours before the time of interment and by this time the burial plot would have been prepared and in some circumstances require to be backfilled.
- 8.1.3 It is the responsibility of the undertaker/funeral organiser to ensure the arrival of the procession arrives on the times detailed on the interment form.
- 8.1.4 Certain considerations will be made if the cancellation is a result of exceptional circumstances, but this will be at the discretion of the Town Council.

8.2 Late Arrival and departures

- 8.2.1 The undertaker/funeral organiser is responsible for the timekeeping of the ceremony.
- 8.2.2 Additional fees will be charged for late arrivals and departures.
- 8.2.3 These fees will be charged in increments of 15 minutes.
- 8.2.4 The fee is listed on the burial charges as the late fee.
- 8.2.5 The time allocated for a ceremony is 45 minutes.

8.3 Existing Memorial

- 8.3.1 If the interment is the second interment into a lawn or ashes plot the undertaker/funeral organiser must pay any associated charges for the removal of a memorial.
- 8.3.2 This should be identified at the first notice of interment.
- 8.3.3 This is exclusive for memorials in situ on the grave plot of interment.

8.4 Changing interment dates

- 8.4.1 Any amendment to a final submitted date will be charged at the fee listed on the burial charges list.
 - 8.4.1.1 The date submitted on the interment form is the final submitted date.
 - 8.4.1.2 A funeral director/funeral organiser by booking a date is removing availability to others.
 - 8.4.1.3 Reasonable changes to funeral times will not be charged.

8.5 Oversized burials

- 8.5.1 Oversized burials will be charged an additional fee above the maximum casket sizes stated below.
 - 8.5.1.1 Maximum length (feet to Head) 213cm/84 inches
 - 8.5.1.2 Maximum width (Commonly the shoulders of the coffin) 71cm/28 inches
 - 8.5.1.3 Maximum depth 58cm/23 inches
- 8.5.2 The oversized burial fee is listed on the burial charges lists as oversized burials.

8.6 Weekend Burials

- 8.6.1 Will be charged at the hours worked by three cemetery operatives at a weekend rate plus the standard burial fee and all other associated charges.

9 Burial Times

- 9.1 Burials are available in both cemeteries Monday – Friday excluding public holidays. Available burial times change throughout the year based on daylight saving.
- 9.1.1 **November to March:** Monday- Friday 11:00 – 14:00
- 9.1.2 **April to October:** Monday – Thursday 11:00 – 15:00, Friday 11:00 – 14:00
- 9.2 The times listed above are not inclusive of the entire ceremony time a booking can be accepted at the latest time listed.
- 9.3 In exceptional circumstances, burials can be arranged for a weekend, but this will be at the Town council's discretion and will normally be based on the availability of staff.
- 9.4 There are no assurances that a weekend burial can be arranged and would entirely be based on staff availability.

10 Burial Notice

A minimum of three working days' notice is required prior to any burial, not including the date of burial. This time is required to complete the administration, excavation and preparation of a grave space including ashes plots.

- 10.1 Witney Town Council cannot ensure that every interment can be accepted with 3 days' notice, some factors will affect this time frame.
- 10.1.1 If a headstone needs to be removed the funeral organisers will be responsible for its removal and only once removed can cemetery operatives complete the excavation and preparation of the grave space.
- 10.2 The certificate for burial or cremation commonly known as the 'green form' or ' registrar's certificate' must be delivered to the Town Council office no later than 24 hours before the date of interment.
- 10.3 This can be emailed, sent via post or delivered in person.
- 10.4 Witney Town Council accepts no responsibility for lost certificates for burial in the post.
- 10.5 It is an offence of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 if the certificate of burial has been lost, failed to be delivered or forged.
- 10.6 No burial will take place if the certificate for burial has not been supplied 24 hours before the time of interment.

11 Exclusive rights of Burial

- 11.1 The exclusive rights of burial permit the grantee the right of burial within a grave plot and to anyone they give permission. It also gives the grantee permission to erect a headstone.
- 11.2 The exclusive right of burial grant will list the burial authority (this will always be WTC for council cemeteries), cost of the grant, grave space, section, cemetery, date of EROB, term of EROB and personal details including email address. The grant will be issued to the grantee and a copy retained by Witney Town Council which will also be stored digitally.

12 Limitations

- 12.1 The EROB does not give the grantee a right to the land but only the exclusive right to say who can be buried and erect a headstone. All other rules and regulations must be followed.

13 Term of Exclusive Rights of Burial

- 13.1 The length of the EROB will run for a set period from the date of purchase that will be stated on the grant. Currently, this length of time is 30 years for Windrush Cemetery and 30 years for Tower Hill Cemetery. WTC may make amendments to the EROB period this would only affect the sale of new EROB and the renewal of any EROB.
- 13.2 As a burial authority, the council cannot issue or extend the rights of burial in perpetuity or for a period beyond one hundred years. Witney Town Council would not extend the EROB period beyond the terms aforementioned for each cemetery.
- 13.2.1 The exception is for Commonwealth War Graves of which EROB in perpetuity will be granted or assumed.

14 Transfer of the Exclusive Right of Burial Back to the Burial Authority

- 14.1 At any time, a grantee of the EROB can transfer back the grant to the council. The council will purchase the rights back at the cost of the original purchase. This will be the cost listed on the grant of the EROB.
- 14.2 The council will only purchase back the EROB if there is unused grave space, for example, plots are in a re-usable condition as below.
- 14.2.1 Windrush, only a single burial has taken place at double depth.
- 14.2.2 Tower Hill, a minimum of four or more remaining ashes plots within one grave space.

15 Transfer of the Exclusive Right of Burial

- 15.1 All EROB transfers will be administered by the burial authority.
- 15.2 WTC will charge a fee for the transfer that is listed in the burial charges.
- 15.3 The remaining term of the EROB will not be renewed on transfer.
- 15.4 A new grant will be issued to the new grantee and a copy retained by WTC and stored digitally.
- 15.5 Living Grantee
 - 15.5.1 An EROB owner can at any time transfer an owned EROB to a new grantee.
 - 15.5.2 The original EROB document will need to be provided along with the following documentation.
 - 15.5.2.1 Proof of identity of the current EROB owner and new grantee.
 - 15.5.2.2 Proof of residency of the new EROB owner.
 - 15.5.2.2.1 If the residency status of section 21 cannot be met by the new grantee, then an additional EROB fee will be charged to fall in line with the rate for non-residents.
 - 15.5.2.2.1.1 This fee will be an additional fee of the original EROB sale price to compensate for the non-residency status.
 - 15.5.2.2.1.2 This fee will only be charged if there is remaining grave space for a full interment or additional ashes interment in ashes plots only.
 - 15.5.2.2.2 Written signed confirmation from the original grantee transferring the EROB to the new the new named grantee.
- 15.6 Deceased Grantee
- 15.7 If the EROB grantee is the deceased being interred into the EROB's stated plot, then an EROB transfer is not required.
- 15.8 If the EROB has not been spent (A memorial stone is still to be erected or further interments can still take place) the transfer of the EROB to a new grantee should be arranged.
- 15.8.1 There is no requirement to transfer an EROB on the death of the original owner. This only needs to take place if a beneficiary wishes to utilize an EROB that has not been spent.

- 15.8.2 To transfer the EROB of a deceased grantee the following documents must be provided.
 - 15.8.2.1 The Original EROB
 - 15.8.2.2 The deceased's will, if there is one.
 - 15.8.2.3 An original grant of probate or letting of administration where there is no will.
 - 15.8.2.4 Proof of identity of the new grantee.
- 15.8.3 In circumstances where the current owner has died without specifically giving the exclusive right to a named beneficiary, the burial authority may transfer the right via a statutory declaration to a family member with a valid claim.
 - 15.8.3.1 In these circumstances is the legal responsibility of the burial authority to conduct due diligence investigation at the applicant's cost.
 - 15.8.3.2 In circumstances where other family members have competing claims, all must renounce their claims for a statutory declaration to be completed.
 - 15.8.3.2.1 In circumstances where other family members cannot be contacted to renounce their claims, the EROB cannot be transferred.
 - 15.8.3.2.1.1 At the burial authorities' discretion permission may be granted to the grantee to erect a headstone, without an EROB with the disclaimer that it must be removed at the grantee's cost should a competing claimant come forward.

16 Renewal of Exclusive Rights of Burial

- 16.1 A grantee of EROB can renew the EROB once at the expiry date or for a period of up to 30 days prior to the expiry. The renewal fee and term of EROB will be the current cost and term set by WTC.
- 16.2 WTC will attempt to contact grantees of EROB where their period of exclusive rights is due to end. Attempts to make contact for renewal will only be made if there is usable grave space within a plot where the intent by WTC is to reutilise this space. This process will only happen in such a place that previous burials will not be disturbed and as aforementioned, there is unused grave space.
- 16.3 Contact will be made through all forms listed on the EROB and any updated contact details held by WTC. If a period of 30 days has passed since the first contact was attempted, then no further contact will be attempted.
- 16.4 This will include standard forms of contact over the phone, post and email but may also involve attaching a letter to the headstone of the plot.
- 16.5 If all reasonable contact has been attempted and a period of 30 days has passed, then the council will start the process of reutilising the plot for further burials.

17 Re-use of Grave space

- 17.1 The Town Council will reclaim and resell unused grave spaces once the EROB has expired.
- 17.2 This is providing that any future burials in a plot do not interfere with a burial that has previously taken place.
- 17.3 This will be done as detailed in 12.3.
- 17.4 It is also within the power of the council to raise the level of the ground above a single interment to accommodate further burials. This would only be done where the EROB has expired.

18 Commonwealth war graves

- 18.1 As the burial authority, the Town Council may grant the right to the Commonwealth War graves Commission to provide a memorial on an identified Commonwealth War grave.

- 18.2 The exclusive right of burial on these graves will be in perpetuity.
- 18.3 The Town Council's power to remove memorials cannot be exercised without the consent of the commission.

19 Public graves

- 19.1 Public graves, also known as common graves or paupers' graves are grave spaces of which no EROB or memorial rights exist.
- 19.2 Public graves will be used when no other arrangements have been made for the deceased.
- 19.3 There is no private right for anyone to place a tombstone or other memorial on the surface of the grave.

20 Record Keeping

- 20.1 All interments will be recorded on the date of interment in the cemeteries' burial register.
 - 20.1.1 This must be signed by the undertaker/funeral organiser.
- 20.2 Interments will then be recorded separately in the register of burials by a council officer, with details to include.
 - 20.2.1 Surname
 - 20.2.2 Forenames
 - 20.2.3 Address
 - 20.2.4 Profession
 - 20.2.5 Age
 - 20.2.6 Date of death
 - 20.2.7 Place of death
 - 20.2.8 Date of burial
 - 20.2.9 Section and grave number
 - 20.2.10 Woodland and meadow burials will have the RFID number stored in the burials book and digital system.
- 20.3 Full details of the interment will also be stored on the councils' digital burials system.
- 20.4 Cemetery mapping
 - 20.4.1 Plans of all graves are stored digitally and physically at Town council offices. Details include.
 - 20.4.1.1 Plot numbers
 - 20.4.1.2 Grave numbers
 - 20.4.1.3 Number of burials
 - 20.4.1.4 Location of ashes

21 Residency

- 21.1 A resident of Witney is defined as someone who:
 - 21.1.1 Currently lives within the Witney town boundary.
 - 21.1.2 Lived in Witney in the last 5 years or been a resident of Witney for a 30-year cumulated period.
 - 21.1.2.1 Acceptable evidence of residency in Witney for the past 5 years or a cumulated period will need to be provided.
 - 21.1.3 For non-residents, double rates are charged for EROBs and interments.
 - 21.1.3.1 The rate will be double that listed on the burial charges list.
- 21.2 When reserving a grave space, the EROB must be purchased, the charge for the EROB will be based on the residency of the purchaser.
- 21.3 The burial charge will be based on the residency of the deceased and not the EROB holder if not already the deceased.

- 21.4 Proof of identity and residency will need to be provided for the purchase of an EROB.
- 21.4.1.1 Proof of identity coupled with proof of residency will have to be provided via a driver's license or passport along with a utility bill or bank statement no more than 3 months old.
- 21.4.2 If the certificate for burial or cremation lists an address not within the Witney town boundary then then proof of identity and residency will have to be supplied with the interment form.

22 Reserving grave spaces

- 22.1 Grave spaces can only be reserved for the following burial plots.
 - 22.1.1 Lawn Burials
 - 22.1.2 Ashes plots
 - 22.1.3 Family Ashes Plots
- 22.2 A section of the cemetery is held for grave reservation while a separate section is designated for immediate burials.
 - 22.2.1 If an applicant wishes to reserve a grave space out of that rotation an additional fee will be charged
- 22.3 When reserving a grave space, the EROB must be purchased.
- 22.4 No one person can reserve more than two burial plots.

23 Children's Funeral Fund

- 23.1 The Children's Funeral Fund for England can help to pay for some of the costs of a funeral for a child under eighteen or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.
- 23.2 The children's funeral fund can help pay for the following:
 - 23.2.1 Burial fees
 - 23.2.2 Cremation fees, including the cost of a doctor's certificate.
 - 23.2.3 Coffin (up to the cost of £300)
- 23.3 Responsibilities to make a claim.
 - 23.3.1 A claim for the burial through the scheme is made by the council as the burial provider.
 - 23.3.2 A claim for a coffin will be made by the funeral director or if not using a funeral director the funeral organiser must make this.
 - 23.3.3 Cremation claims needed to be made by the cremation provider.

23.4 Limitations

- 23.4.1 The children's funeral fund will cover the cost of an appropriately sized grave to the size of the body. Full interments are currently only possible in Windrush cemetery which offers adult, child and baby-sized plots.
- 23.4.2 Witney Town Council will only use the fund to cover an appropriately sized plot for burial.
- 23.4.3 In the instant, a full double-depth adult plot has been requested the difference in cost will have to be paid to the council.
- 23.4.4 If a required child or baby plot is unavailable a full adult plot will be offered.

24 Cemeteries Maintenance

- 24.1 Grave Mounds
 - 24.1.1 From the date of interment for 1 year a mound of soil will be maintained at 20cm above ground level.
 - 24.1.1.1 This is necessary as the backfilled excavated soil recompacts over a period of one year.
 - 24.1.1.2 The area cannot be planted in

24.1.1.3 Flowers and wreaths may be laid but these will be moved to the head of the grave when the soil is topped up.

24.2 Levelling

24.2.1 After 1 year has elapsed from the date of interment the grave will be levelled during the next Spring or Autumn.

24.2.2 The grave will be levelled to the ground with topsoil free of large stones and then grass-seeded.

24.2.3 Periodically, graves of those who have been interred for over 1 year may require a re-levelling to level the surface of the ground for maintenance purposes.

24.2.3.1 This is typically done in sections, and notice will be issued via staked signs.

24.3 Grounds Maintenance

24.3.1 Both Tower Hill and Windrush Cemetery are maintained as lawned cemeteries and are cut short.

24.3.2 The historic central section of Tower Hill and the meadow and woodland at Windrush are maintained on wildflower regimes.

24.4 Memorial Testing

24.4.1 From the date of installation, all memorials undergo a safety inspection every 5 years.

24.4.1.1 This process is completed by Witney Town Council as the burial authority through the use of contractors or employees.

24.4.2 The testing uses non-intrusive methods to assess the stability and safety of a memorial against N.A.M.M standards.

24.4.3 All testing is conducted by staff trained in S.I.A.M (Safety Inspection and Assessment of Memorials Safety)

24.4.4 Prior notification to testing will be in the form of staked signs in the relevant cemetery.

24.4.5 Any memorials that require remedial action from testing will be the responsibility of the EROB grant owner.

24.4.5.1 The Town Council will contact the EROB owner with the required remedial works to be carried out.

24.4.5.2 If an adequate amount of time has passed from the initial contact the town council will make the memorial safe through the most economic means.

24.4.5.2.1 Laying the memorial flat on the ground.

24.4.5.2.2 Fencing the grave area for safety.

24.5 Damage to Memorials

24.5.1 The Town Council accepts no liability for damage to memorials that is caused by any means other than gross negligence of cemetery operatives.

24.5.1.1 For example, the council will not be held responsible for minor damages caused by mowing activities.

24.5.1.1.1 In the event of damage caused by gross negligence by a cemetery operative, such as plant equipment hitting and fracturing a memorial, the council will cover the cost of repairs.

24.5.1.1.2 The incident would have to be documented for the Town Council to accept liability, an incident report or photographic evidence of the incident would be required.

24.5.1.2 It is recommended that EROB owners take out an insurance policy on memorials against damage including public liability.

24.6 Excavation process

- 24.6.1 In the process of excavating a grave for an interment, the excavated soil will be placed on the nearest neighbouring grave.
- 24.6.2 The excavated soil will be in situ from the date of excavation until the completion of the interment, this time frame is kept as short as possible.
- 24.6.3 Grave space reservation and interments are also managed to ensure no one area received excessive damage from excavation machinery, or that excavated soil is placed on a recently buried grave.
- 24.6.4 Any damage will be repaired but may be restricted by seasonal conditions.
- 24.6.5 Removing headstones to gain access to reserved plots
 - 24.6.5.1 To gain access to certain reserved grave spaces, it may be required to remove headstones.
 - 24.6.5.2 Notice will be issued to the EROB owner listed on the grant.
 - 24.6.5.3 An EROB owner cannot refuse the removal.
 - 24.6.5.4 The Town Council will cover the costs of any removal and offer to have the memorial cleaned.
- 24.6.6 Removing the headstone for the second interment into a double-depth grave
 - 24.6.6.1 It is the responsibility of the funeral manager to arrange the removal of an existing headstone prior to the second interment into a double-depth grave.
 - 24.6.6.2 This must be done prior to issuing Witney Town Council with interment forms.
- 24.7 Holiday items clearance
 - 24.7.1 Periodically throughout the year, more thorough item clearance will be carried out, typically these are 1 month following Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day.
- 24.8 Tree works.
 - 24.8.1 Any damage caused to a memorial by falling tree limbs is classed as an act of God and the town council accepts no liability.

25 Stone Masons

- 25.1.1 Stone masons working in Witney Town Council cemeteries must be registered with the Town Council, and the following documentation must be provided yearly.
 - 25.1.1.1 Public Liability insurance of £5million
 - 25.1.1.2 Risk assessment for working in a burial ground covering all activities.
- 25.1.2 Stone Mason must be registered with the NAMM registration scheme RQMF (register of qualified memorial fixers) and follow the NAMM code of working practice.

26 Memorials

- 26.1 Process
 - 26.1.1 The EROB must be purchased to install a memorial at both cemeteries and rights granted by the EROB owner.
 - 26.1.1.1 For memorials spanning two plots, the EROB must be owned for both plots.
 - 26.1.2 Full details on measurement for memorials can be found in the separate Memorial Sizes Document.
 - 26.1.3 Memorials can be installed on all lawned plots 12 months after the date of interment. This leaves time for the ground to recompact and grass seed to germinate and grow.
 - 26.1.4 During this 12-month period, a small plaque or wooden cross can be staked in the ground to identify the plot.
 - 26.1.5 This will be removed on the date of grass seeding and stored in the relevant cemetery depot.

- 26.1.5.1 The wooden crosses must be no bigger than 10cm wide and 25cm high.
- 26.1.6 Before the installation of any memorial, a completed memorial application form must be submitted for approval.
 - 26.1.6.1 Only once a 12-month period has passed and approval has been granted can a memorial be installed.
 - 26.1.6.2 The submitted approved memorial application form will be checked against the physical memorial before installation at the relevant cemetery by a cemetery operative.
 - 26.1.6.2.1 If any details of the memorial do not match that of the approved document, installation may be refused.
 - 26.1.6.3 Any memorial found to be installed without approval will be removed and the cost recovered from the person who ordered the tombstone.
- 26.2 Approval
 - 26.2.1 Memorials with the exception of wooden crosses must be manufactured from stone.
 - 26.2.2 Memorials must be within the sizes listed on the memorial sizes document.
 - 26.2.3 A memorial must not cause offence, Witney Town Council will review the drawing and text of all memorials and withhold the right to refuse any memorial that may cause offence. Some examples could include,
 - 26.2.3.1 Football club logos.
 - 26.2.3.2 Political messages
 - 26.2.3.3 Offensive symbols
 - 26.2.4 Inscriptions should be simple, dignified and reverent.
 - 26.2.5 The memorial must have the section number or letter and plot number in 15mm engraved writing on the rear of the base stone.
- 26.3 Headstones
 - 26.3.1 All headstones in Town council cemeteries must be made up of a foundation slab, base stone, and headstone.
 - 26.3.2 The top surface of the foundation slab must be level with the ground.
- 26.4 Monoliths
 - 26.4.1 Monoliths that do not have a foundation or a shoe must be installed with at least a third of the total stone height below ground.
 - 26.4.2 Monoliths that are installed into a shoe must have a least a third of their total weight including the foundation below ground.
 - 26.4.3 The max height of a monolith is 111cm with an additional 37cm sitting below ground level.
- 26.5 Wooden Crosses
 - 26.5.1 Wooden crosses are permitted in the cemeteries but must be constructed in a skilful manner.
 - 26.5.2 An application for a memorial still must be made with a detailed picture, listing measurements of each separate piece of the cross.
 - 26.5.2.1 The following conditions must be met for approval.
 - 26.5.2.2 Within the maximum sizes of memorials
 - 26.5.2.3 An additional one-third of the total height is staked below ground level.
 - 26.5.2.4 Manufactured from a hardwood.
 - 26.5.2.5 No ornate details
 - 26.5.2.6 Must have a plaque or be engraved with the name of the interred.
 - 26.5.2.7 Section and grave number on the reverse
 - 26.5.3 Wooden crosses will be inspected on a yearly basis for their condition.
 - 26.5.3.1 If a wooden cross has deteriorated contact will be made with the EROB owner for its restoration or removal.

26.5.3.2 Once a period of 6 weeks has passed from the first notification, cemetery operatives will remove the cross and store it in the cemetery depot.

26.6 Babies & Children's

26.6.1 Due to a smaller grave size, there are reflected smaller memorial sizes of a maximum height of 75cm.

26.7 Memorial Tablets

26.7.1 Memorial tablets are only permitted in the ashes path of Windrush cemetery.

26.7.2 These are restricted to just slopping desk tablets.

26.7.3 Size details can be found on the memorial sizes document.

27 Placement of items on graves and gardens

27.1 Graves can only be adorned with flowers and small items made of non-hazardous unbreakable materials such as wood, ceramic, or plastic.

27.1.1 All adorning items should be placed in the garden area or the area of the foundation slab of the memorial.

27.2 Any other items will be removed by Town Council staff and stored safely in the cemetery depot for collection if requested.

27.2.1 This will be done without notification and Witney Town Council takes no responsibility for damaged or lost items.

27.3 The following items are not permitted, this is not an exhaustive list but contains items that have been commonly found in the cemeteries.

27.3.1 Glass objects including items containing glass such as candle holders and photo frames.

27.3.2 Any shrubs or trees

27.3.2.1 These will be removed at the earliest convenience without notification and stored for collection if requested.

27.3.3 Electrical items such as solar lights

27.3.4 Balloons and large flower displays

27.3.4.1 On the date of internment, these may be left and will be cleared away by the Town Council 7 days following the internment if not done so already.

27.3.5 Any form of fencing/kerbing signifying the burial area

27.3.6 Large items such as statues

27.4 Witney Town Council will communicate with EROB where large items must be removed from graves.

27.4.1 The notification will first give the chance for the EROB owner to remove the items.

27.4.2 Once a period of 6 weeks has passed from the first notification, cemetery operatives will remove the items and store them in the cemetery depot.

27.5 Garden area

27.5.1 All lawned graves have a designated garden area in which the EROB grant owner can plant and place items.

27.5.2 The permitted garden area is the width of the foundation slab and has a depth of 45cm starting at the base of the foundation slab.

27.5.3 If the EROB owner does not wish to install a memorial and only wishes for a garden area the area can encompass the location of the headstone increasing, it to a 90cm square.

27.5.3.1 The EROB must still be purchased for a garden area.

27.5.4 No form of fencing/kerbing can be installed marking the area of the garden.

27.5.5 Shrubs and trees are not allowed to be planted.

28 Vaults

- 28.1 The construction and reopening of vaults will be managed by Witney Town Council.
- 28.2 Applications can be made to construct brick or concrete block vaults and concrete chambers or vault liners in both Tower Hill and Windrush Cemeteries.
 - 28.2.1 Applications will be assessed against multiple criteria and may be rejected if the installation of a vault is not possible. Contributing factors that could affect an application are listed below.
 - 28.2.1.1 Ground conditions
 - 28.2.1.2 Plot size available in a burial area.
 - 28.2.1.3 Neighbouring oversized plots
 - 28.2.1.4 Achievable excavation depth
 - 28.2.2 Vault should be installed simultaneously with grave reservations.
 - 28.2.2.1 The time frame for an interment requesting a vault at the same time will be at the discretion of Witney Town Council
 - 28.2.3 Vault constructions will be charged at the incurred contractor cost received by Witney Town Council plus an additional admin fee for management.
 - 28.2.4 Vault interments will be charged at a single-depth burial charge.
- 28.3 Reopening of vaults
 - 28.3.1 Notice from the burial manager to reopen an existing vault must be issued to Witney Town Council prior to any interment booking being made.
 - 28.3.1.1 This is so Witney Town Council staff can open and inspect the condition of a vault and measure the vault for maximum coffin size.

These regulations will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee every 12 months, or in response to changes in legislation.

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 31/05/2025. Minute Number: F86
Proposed Date for Review : March 2026