



Amersham Town Council

A GUIDE TO THE CEMETERIES OF AMERSHAM

January 2009

Contents

This guide is intended to provide the reader of this guide with a straightforward insight into the services available at Stanley Hill, St Mary's and the Platt Cemeteries in Amersham.

The contents of this guide are as follows:

Introduction – location, opening and closing times and basic rules

Administration

Register of Burials/Public Common Graves

Exclusive Right of Burial

Interments

Interment of Cremated Remains

Memorials

Lawn Cemetery Rules

Introduction

The cemeteries are owned and managed by Amersham Town Council for and on behalf of the residents of Amersham.

Stanley Hill Cemetery is located off the A404 Stanley Hill, close to the Amersham School.

St Mary's Cemetery is located behind St Mary's Church and the Memorial Gardens in Amersham Old Town.

The Platt Cemetery is located at the end of The Platt behind the Kings Church in Amersham High Street.

Access to the cemeteries is available daily without restrictions.

Everyone is welcome to visit the cemeteries. We ask that all visitors treat them with respect by:

- Conducting themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner
- Respecting any burial taking place
- Respecting with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, kerbstones, flowers or plants
- Keeping vehicles on the roadway and speed to 10 mph maximum
- Not dropping litter
- Taking no alcohol or illegal substances into the cemeteries
- Playing no games or sports
- No dogs except on lead and under control of their owner
- Complying with all rules in force at the time

Administration

Administration of the Cemeteries is dealt with at Amersham Town Council offices.

Address:

**Amersham Town Council
The Court House
King George V Road
Amersham
Bucks HP6 5ST**

e-mail address: townclerk@amersham-tc.gov.uk

Web-site: www.amersham-tc.gov.uk

The Town Council offices are in the Magistrates Court House adjacent to the Police Station and Chiltern District Council offices off Chiltern Avenue.

The reception desk and telephones are open:

10.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday - Friday

Telephone (01494) 586892

Staff will be happy to help you with all matters relating to the Cemetery.

Register of Burials

A Register of Burials is kept by Amersham Town Council. Searches in the Register, which contains information regarding the name and age of the person buried, the grave number and the date of burial, may be made during office hours. There is a small fee for this service.

Public (Common) Graves

A public (common) grave is a grave in which no Exclusive Right of Burial has been purchased, and in which the depth of grave and whether unrelated persons are interred, will be determined by the Town Council.

The allocation of grave spaces will be determined by the Town Council and every effort will be made to accommodate any wishes.

Note: The fees for interments include the costs of returning the grave space to grass whether by turf or seed after a period of time has elapsed to allow for settlement of the soil.

Exclusive Right of Burial

The Exclusive Right of Burial entitles the deed holder to determine who is buried in the grave and whether a memorial can be erected on the grave (subject to the Town Council's specifications regarding memorials (pages 7 to 9)).

The Exclusive Right of Burial of a grave space for a period of 75 years may be purchased when applying for an interment or for future use. Grave spaces may be purchased by residents and non-residents of the town of Amersham.

Residents of the town of Amersham Town Council area are entitled to a 50% reduction from the standard rate (see table of fees which are reviewed annually)

At the expiration of the 75 year period of the Exclusive Right of Burial, the owners, or his/her heirs, shall have the choice of renewing that right subject to the rules and regulations in force at that time.

The transfer of the ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial requires the approval of the Town Council, and will require the production of evidence as to the ownership of the Right and full details of the proposed new owner. Any such transfer of ownership must be recorded by the Town Council.

Please Note:

While every effort will be made to accommodate the purchasers' wishes, the allocation of grave spaces will be determined by the Town Council.

Interments

Notice of interment must be submitted on the prescribed form allowing at least three clear working days notice before the date of the interment. The application for interment must contain:

- Full details of the deceased
- The proposed interment details
- The section of the cemetery and the grave space to be used
- The signature of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial (if applicable)

The Certificate for Burial or Cremation, issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths must be delivered to the Council Offices prior to the interment.

It is the responsibility of the person or persons arranging the interment to engage the services of an Undertaker and Minister (if desired) and to pay all fees.

Any form of religious service is allowed, but any other ceremony is subject to the approval of the Town Council. Alternatively the coffin may be committed without a service.

All preparations of the graves are carried out by those authorised by the Town Council only.

Every body brought to the cemetery for interment shall be contained within a suitable coffin. Adequate particulars of the deceased person therein shall be clearly marked on the coffin.

Interments shall take place between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm Monday – Friday, interments are not permitted on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances and by prior arrangement.

No coffin shall be buried less than 900 mm (3') from ground level.

No coffin shall be buried without a minimum of 150 mm (6") of earth between any other coffin within the same grave.

All fees due to the Town Council must be paid prior to the interment.

Interment of Cremated Remains**Stanley Hill New Ashes Section**

Parts of the cemetery are set aside of the interment of cremated remains, a certificate for burial purposes issued by the Cremation Authority will be required prior to the interment.

There is a designated area for the interment of cremated remains in the Garden of Remembrance, this area is unconsecrated. The grave may be blessed by a Minister and this would need to be arranged by the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial. Following interment, a concrete base slab measuring 2' x 2' (61cm x 61 cm) is laid by the Town Council.

The allocation of grave spaces within these sections are by strict rotation and shall be determined by the Town Council.

The Platt and Stanley Hill Cemeteries (existing Ashes Section)

There are also other designated areas for the interment of cremated remains within The Platt and Stanley Hill Cemeteries.

All fees due to the Town Council must be paid prior to the interment.

It is the responsibility of the person or persons arranging the interment to pay all fees due for the services of a Minister, Undertaker and Monumental Mason if so engaged.

General

In some circumstances it may be permitted for the interment of ashes in conventional grave spaces. Please ask the Town Clerk for clarification if this is to be considered.

Memorials

Headstones and tablets are permitted to be erected or placed on a grave or vault subject to application to, and permission being granted by Amersham Town Council and upon payment of the appropriate fees.

Memorials for which non-renewable Permits have been issued may be removed by the Town Council without further reference if they are deemed to be unsafe or unstable.

In the new extension of Stanley Hill Cemetery memorials are permitted for a 10 year period only. This permit will be renewed at the request of the Deed Holder subject to the memorial being in a safe condition.

Applications for the approval to erect or place a new memorial, to replace, add to or remove from the cemetery any memorial, to add to or alter any inscription on any such memorial, **must** be submitted to the Town Council on the appropriate form along with all fees due at least **two weeks** prior to any such installation or alteration. It is necessary to allow a settlement time of six months before approval can be given for erection of a headstone.

Details on the application form must include:

- The grave number and cemetery
- The full name of the deceased
- In the case of a new or replacement memorial, a drawing of the memorial showing the specifications (see below) and including the material (stone) to be used along with the colour and finish.
- The text of any inscription (or alteration to any existing inscription) and including the type, colour and finish.
- The name, address, and signature of the person making the application (who should be the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial).

Specification:

Please ask for a copy of the Cemetery Rules and Memorial Specifications, available at Amersham Town Council offices.

The inscriptions should be ‘simple and reverent’. All memorials shall be inscribed with the grave number.

No installation or alteration to any memorial can take place without prior written approval of the Town Council.

All monumental work must be carried out by an experienced monumental mason and in accordance with the National Association of Monumental Masons (NAMM) Code of Practice 1998 and all subsequent amendments. Amersham Town Council reserve the right to order the removal or improvement of any memorial considered to be unsafe or to be in breach of the specifications originally approved, and at the expense of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

The removal and replacement of a memorial to facilitate the reopening of a purchased grave shall be at the expense of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

The Platt and Stanley Hill Cemeteries are now mostly a lawn style, particularly the newer Sections, in order to facilitate maintenance and grass cutting and to maintain a uniform appearance.

Kerbstones may be permitted in certain Sections at the discretion of the Town Council and existing kerbs may be replaced by permission of the Town Council and upon payment of the appropriate fee.

LAWN CEMETERY RULES

Applicable to:-

Stanley Hill Cemetery, Sections 4 & 5 and 6, The Platt Cemetery, St Mary's Cemetery

The above cemeteries are designated 'lawn cemeteries' which means that all graves have flat turfed surfaces and only headstone type memorials are permitted. No flower vases may be placed on or around the grave other than in any receptacle approved by the Council as part of a permanent memorial. **SHRUBS, TREES, BUSHES ETC. MAY NOT BE PLANTED ON THE GRAVE AND FLOWERS SHOULD BE PLACED ONLY IN RECEPTACLES WHICH FORM PART OF THE MEMORIAL ITSELF.**

The following guidelines relating to memorials are to be observed: -

No burial shall take place, no cremated remains shall be scattered and no memorial shall be placed in the cemetery without permission of the Town Council.

Burials

Permanent memorials may be placed only on graves to which the burial rights have been purchased. For a temporary period not exceeding 6 months a wooden marker or cross (the cross not to exceed 30" x 24" overall) showing the name, age and date of death of the deceased may be permitted, subject to the Town Council's approval. Such a marker shall be removed by the Town Council on the expiry of the six month period. The Town Council reserves the right to remove permanent memorials erected where the burial rights have not been purchased.

Memorials on full size graves are to be of the headstone type, not more than 3 feet high by 2 feet wide by 4 inches deep, in a shoe, and placed at the head of the grave in line with existing headstones. A plinth not exceeding 6 inches front to rear (see attached diagram), may be placed at the foot of the headstone. **Please note total measurements including plinth not to exceed 3 feet x 2 feet x 9 inches.**

All memorials (including replacements) erected in the cemeteries will be installed in accordance with the standards laid down by National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) as in existence at the time of installation.

Ashes

Horizontal tablets, not more than 18 inches by 18 inches may be placed on cremated remains burial plots.

Alternatively a headstone not more than 2 feet high x 2 feet wide x 4 inches deep may be placed at the head of the grave in line with existing headstone.

General

No memorial may be erected until six months after the burial (excluding ashes plots), and the Council's approval of the memorial must be obtained in writing before any arrangements are made. The right to place a memorial carries with it an obligation to maintain said memorial.

A sketch of any proposed memorial, with full details of dimensions, materials and inscription must be submitted to the Town Council for approval before any arrangements are made. If approval is granted for a permanent headstone a fee will be payable. The Town Council reserves the right to remove headstones erected without written approval

The small brass plaque that is placed on the grave by the funeral directors is considered to be a temporary headstone and should be removed when a permanent memorial is in place.

Stanley Hill Extension

Health & Safety Regulations require the Town Council to ensure memorials are maintained in a safe condition. Whilst the maintenance is the responsibility of the Title Deed Holder in perpetuity approval has led to difficulties particularly after a long period of years has elapsed.

Memorials and monuments will therefore be granted Approval Permits for a 10 year period which may be renewed on application only by the Title Deed Holder. Where memorial permits are not renewed the responsibility for maintenance will automatically transfer to the Town Council who may remove or repair at its absolute discretion any memorial deemed to be unsafe.

Generally

It is essential that those responsible for the erection of headstones or other memorials arrange for their placement in exactly the right positions after consultation with the burial authority. In any circumstances where these memorials have been located incorrectly, the Town Council reserves the right

to arrange for their replacement into the correct position and for the costs thereof to be recovered from the persons originally responsible.

Kerbs, fences, ornaments, stone vases (memorial or not), or the planting of any flowers, shrubs or plants along the grave space are not permitted and the Town Council will reserve the right to remove any such items in order properly to undertake their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of these cemeteries. Any unauthorised objects, dead flowers or unsuitable artificial flowers may be removed at any time by the Town Council.

The grave will be levelled and grassed over by the Town Council some time after settlement (normally six months).

Dogs will only be permitted into the cemetery if kept on a lead and under the control of the owner.

THE TOWN COUNCIL HAS ADOPTED THESE RULES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE LONG TERM MAINTENANCE OF THE CEMETERY CAN BE PROPERLY AND EFFICIENTLY UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE FEELING OF SERENITY AND DIGNITY AS BEFITS CEMETERIES OF THIS TYPE. SUCH RULES ALLOW FOR THE LONG TERM CARE OF ALL GRAVE SPACES, PERHAPS FOR LONG AFTER THOSE WHO INITIALLY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH CARE ARE ABLE TO CONTINUE THAT OBLIGATION.