

Memorial Masons Guidance in the use of Gainsborough Town Council Cemeteries

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Document History

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1. Introduction

1.1 **'Memorial Mason'** or **'Mason'** means any person carrying on the business or trade of a stonemason or stone cutter and includes any person for the time being engaged in the Cemetery in the erection, removal, maintenance or inspection of a memorial.

2. General

2.1 All Memorial Masons must have Public Liability Insurance to a value of £5,000,000. A copy certificate to be sent to the Town Clerk before their first installation and then on insurance renewal each year.

2.2 All Memorial Masons must work in accordance with the Council's rules and regulations. The Council are a registered member of the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) and the Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers (RQMF) and as such all memorial installations and fixings must conform to BS8415-2018, or the latest version in force.

2.3 Holders of an 'Exclusive Right of Memorial' or 'Burial' may not erect a permanent memorial themselves.

2.4 Holders of an Exclusive Right of 'Memorial' or 'Burial' should discuss with their Funeral Director and / or Memorial Mason regarding the types of memorials available and permissible in the Council's Cemetery.

2.5 Applications must be made to Gainsborough Town Council by the living registered grave owner before an Exclusive Right of Memorial can be granted.

2.6 The application to be fully completed by the grave owner with their chosen Memorial Mason. Application forms are available from the Council office and website.

2.7 It is advised that memorials shall not be erected / installed on any plot until at least six (6) months after the date of interment to allow for settlement of the ground within and around the grave plot. This period should, in most cases, ensure the stability of the ground. However, the Council accepts no part or liability in the timing after six (6) months as this is at the discretion / advice of the applicant's Memorial Mason.

2.8 When a second or further interment / burial is to be placed within a grave plot it is the responsibility of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial to have any memorial, kerb set, and any other items removed from the grave plot to allow for grave digging to be carried out safely. All items must be removed at least five (5) clear working days before the day of interment / Funeral. Any costs incurred shall be met by the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial.

2.9 On receipt of a fully completed application, appropriate fee, and compliance with the Council's memorial rules, an 'Exclusive Right of Memorial' will be issued to the grave owner. It is suggested that this is kept safely with the Exclusive Right of Burial.

2.10 The Exclusive Right of Memorial is subject to a thirty (30) year lease with a five yearly inspection to be undertaken, including any necessary safety or remedial works being undertaken at the cost of the owner of the 'Exclusive Right of Memorial'. Upon formal application this right could be extended for a further period determined by the Council after the thirty (30) year period, subject to the memorial being inspected and being found safe.

2.11 Fees for Exclusive Right of Memorial can be found in the Cemetery Fees and Charges Schedule on the Council website.

2.12 The Council strongly recommends the owner of the 'Exclusive Right of Memorial' take out an insurance policy for the memorial. This policy should cover any works required if the memorial is damaged or becomes unsafe.

NOTE: Grounds Maintenance Operatives, Grave Diggers and external contractors (such as Memorial Masons and Funeral Directors) working within the Cemetery always take care to minimise risk. The Council cannot be held responsible for any accidental damage caused by any person(s).

2.13 An informal written application (a letter will suffice) may be made to the Council regarding the installation / erection of a temporary wood memorial. No materials other than wood may be employed for temporary memorials. This may be a wooden cross that must be sourced and erected / installed by a Funeral Director or Memorial Mason. Temporary memorials deteriorate quickly and so after six (6) months the Council reserves the right to remove any temporary memorials without prior notice or right of appeal if it becomes unstable or unsafe.

2.14 All memorials shall be inspected, as a minimum, once every five years, or as required, and any subsequent repairs identified from the inspection are to be carried out at the expense of the holder of the Exclusive Right of Memorial or Exclusive Right of Burial.

2.15 The Council undertakes regular inspections across the Cemetery including trees, grave plots, and memorials. When formal inspections or works are to be undertaken the appropriate notices will be displayed in the Cemetery notice boards.

3. Memorial Rules

3.1 Any inscription on a memorial should be simple and any epitaph appropriate. Inscriptions should be on the front of the memorial only. The Town Clerk shall determine what is decent and appropriate and in this matter the Council have determined that the Town Clerk's decision is final.

3.2 All memorials must have the name of the registered Memorial Mason together with the grave number inscribed on the reverse of the headstone with no other inscription.

3.3 All memorial materials must be natural stone (e.g. granite, marble, Portland). Reconstituted stone, resin, plastic materials, or wood are not permitted.

3.4 No memorial or kerb-set installation will be allowed unless the appropriate rights and approvals have been given in writing. The application form can be found on the Council website or through the Council Office. Applications will only be accepted from Memorial Masons that are registered with BRAMM or NAMM, this includes installation, inspection, and remedial works.

3.5 Memorial installation appointments and work details must be made and confirmed at least five (5) clear working days prior to the proposed installation with the Council. When making the appointment an estimate of the installation process duration shall be given.

3.6 Only Memorial Masons with a valid BRAMM registration document, a NAMM/ RQMF registration document or who is accompanied and supervised by someone holding these will be allowed to install or work in the Cemetery. Documents must relate to those onsite erecting / installation works to a memorial, not the company owner, or another company employee.

3.7 Full burial for adults and older children all grave spaces, as standard, are seven (7) feet long by three (3) feet wide (84" x 36"). The standard size of a memorial shall be no more than three (3) feet (36") in height measured from the ground, three (3) feet (36") in width and four (4) inches (4") thick. Any kerbs must be level and be contained within the grave plot. Kerbs must not be lower than the ground surrounding the grave plot. Kerbs must be cut into sloping ground.

3.8 Full burial for a small child or baby all grave spaces, as standard, are four (4) feet long by two (2) feet wide (48" x 24"). The standard size of a memorial shall be no more than two and a half (2.5) feet (30") in height measured from the ground, two and a half (2.5) feet (30") in width

and four (4) inches (4") thick. Any kerbs must be level and be contained within the grave plot. Kerbs must not be lower than the ground surrounding the grave plot. Kerbs must be cut into sloping ground.

3.9 All cremated remains grave spaces, as standard, are two (2) feet long by two (2) feet wide (24" x 24"). The standard size of a memorial shall be no more than two (2) feet (24") in height measured from the ground, three (3) feet (36") in width and four (4) inches (4") thick. Any kerbs must be level and be contained within the grave plot. Kerbs must not be lower than the ground surrounding the grave plot. Kerbs must be cut into sloping ground.

3.10 Flat plaques will also be allowed on cremated remains grave spaces but should be a maximum of eighteen (18) inches square (18"), no more than two (2) inches thick (2") and not exceed six (6) inches (6") at its highest part.

3.11 Holders of an Exclusive Right of Burial who wish to install a low-level basic kerb or dressing (less than 4") to a grave plot must seek formal approval from the Council before undertaking any works. An example may include slate chippings held within a low concrete paving edging. This form can be found on the Council website or through the Council Office.

3.12 Any person carrying out memorial safety inspections, be it the Council or a Memorial Mason, shall, as a minimum, be trained by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and obtain certificates of competence.

3.13 Following an approved application, subject to the written consent of the Council, and payment of the prescribed fee a memorial may be placed on a grave as per the conditions contained in the Exclusive Right of Memorial. The relevant fee may be found in the Cemetery Fees and Charges Schedule.

3.14 After the expiration date of the period of the Grant of the Exclusive Right of Memorial, if not extended by the Council upon receipt of an application, the Council may move memorials elsewhere in the Cemetery or remove them entirely.

3.15 The holder of an Exclusive Right of Memorial is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of the memorial and must ensure it is in a safe condition. They should also ensure there is insurance to cover damage by vandalism etc. This can be obtained from most Memorial Masons.

3.16 All memorials shall be inspected, as a minimum, once every five years, or as required. Any subsequent repairs identified from the inspection are to be carried out at the holder of the Exclusive Right of Memorial's expense. All repairs are to be carried out by a Memorial Mason that is registered with BRAMM or NAMM. If the required repairs are not undertaken in a suitable timescale the Council will take the appropriate course of action.

NOTE: Should a memorial be found to be in a dangerous or unstable condition the Council have the right to take appropriate action that ensures the safety of visitors to the Cemetery. The Council has a legal duty of care to all members of the public, employees and contractors that visit the Cemetery under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The Council will try to contact the holder of the Exclusive Right of Memorial before any remedial works take place. However, dangerous memorials will require immediate action, and the Council will try to contact the holder of the Exclusive Right of Memorial after the memorial is made safe.

3.17 The holder of an Exclusive Right of Memorial agrees to the Council undertaking a rolling programme of inspections across the Cemetery which will include grave plots, tributes, and memorials. Informal visual inspections will also be carried out by Council employees during their normal work activities i.e., locally to where graves are being dug and grass cutting

operations are taking place; should any memorials fail these random visual tests the employee will report their findings to the Council who will take the appropriate action.

4. Choice

4.1 Considering the above requirements the holder of an Exclusive Right of Memorial may apply to have any design of memorial. The Council will consider each memorial on its own merits and will generally approve a monument as long as it is not likely to offend or in bad taste and is sufficiently well constructed to be safe for at least the period of the Rights. If the Council refuses permission an explanation will be given.

5. PROCESS FOR STONE MASONS WHEN INSTALLING IN ANY SECTION

5.1 No installation will be permitted unless the appropriate rights and approvals have been given in writing.

5.2 Installation appointments and details must be made and confirmed at least 5 clear working days prior to the proposed installation with the Council.

5.3 The Council will only allow installation if the installer can produce a valid BRAMM registration document, a NAMM/RQMF registration document or is accompanied and supervised by someone holding these. Documents must relate to those on site erecting the memorial not the company owner or another company employee.

5.4 Following installation, the Memorial Mason must issue a copy of the certificate of installation and compliance that confirms that the memorial has been installed in accordance with the BRAMM Blue Book or NAMM Code of Practice and adhering to BS 8415, together with a copy of the guarantee that applies to the memorial (minimum 10 years).