



## **DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL**

Ditchling Village Hall 18 Lewes Road Ditchling East Sussex BN6 8TT

Tel: 01273 844733 Email: [parishoffice@ditchling-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parishoffice@ditchling-pc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk](http://www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk)

### **Ditchling Parish Council Burial Ground Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Ditchling Parish Council recognise the requirement to manage Ditchling Burial Ground to ensure that the area is well maintained and provides a peaceful and tranquil area within the rural environment, set in the South Downs National Park.

They also recognise environmental and health and safety considerations whilst putting together this policy. The policy has also been put in place due to issues arising with items that have been placed on graves as memorial tributes and has been introduced to ensure that it is clear to grave owners and users of the burial ground what items are acceptable on graves as memorial tributes. It has been drawn up bearing in mind the rural landscape surrounding the burial ground.

#### **Access**

The main gate is unlocked 24 hours a day for visitors to the burial ground and funeral access. Interments may take place Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) between the hours of 09:30 and 15.30 hrs by arrangement with the Parish Clerk.

The gate should remain closed at all times and visitors should not park on the grass verges. Additional parking is available in the adjacent recreation ground should it be required.

#### **Visitors**

Families with children and dogs are most welcome to visit the burial ground. It is the responsibility of all visitors and contractors attending the grounds to take reasonable care of both their own and other people's safety. Children and dogs should be kept under supervision at all times.

Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times and owners are required to clear up any of their dog's mess and place it in the bins provided. (Located adjacent to the turning circle or to the front and rear of the recreation ground)

Visitors to the cemetery should not:

- Ride bicycles, skateboards, or motorcycles;
- Allow dogs to foul within the cemetery grounds (if this happens unavoidably owners MUST pick up – see above);
- Obstruct or cause nuisance to any officer of or person employed by the Parish Council;
- Cause damage to any grave, memorial, plant, bulbs, tree or shrub;
- Use a radio or similar device without headphones in the cemetery.

### **Rubbish**

A bin is situated adjacent to the turning circle and should be used to dispose of all rubbish.

### **Memorials and the Planting of Graves**

The headstone may incorporate a vase or urn and vases or urns may also be placed on the grave space. Due to health and safety considerations, such containers must not be of a breakable<sup>1</sup> nature. The Parish Council will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to items left at the burial ground; this is particularly relevant during mowing and strimming periods. Free-standing stone vases are permitted but must be located within the planted area in front of the headstone. A maximum of one free standing vase is permitted.

### Floral and other tributes

Visitors are requested not to leave any wrapping around fresh flowers, and to ensure that any wreaths or flowers placed on a grave are removed as soon as they become wilted. In the event this does not happen, wreaths and floral tributes will be removed by Parish Council staff or grounds staff. Please note artificial flowers are not allowed.

The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any neglected, unsightly, broken, dilapidated, dangerous or unsafe articles or materials from any grave, or any other article or material considered by the Parish Council to be a nuisance or detrimental to the grounds without notice. This includes, but is not limited to: solar lights, lights, candles, candle holders, bunting, flags, artificial flowers, statues, ornaments, windchimes, pinwheels, lighters, matches, alcohol and any other items the Council deems detrimental to the cemetery.

Grounds staff will remove wreaths and floral tributes from recent funerals, and at Christmas time, when they have deteriorated, unless specifically requested to be retained for a longer period. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you have a request relating to wreaths/floral tributes.

### Planting of graves

The planting of small annual bedding plants, bulbs and low growing shrubs (not exceeding 20cms in height) on graves and on ashes plots is permitted within the designated area.

Graves: in front of a headstone, to a maximum area of 60cm wide x 30 cm deep. If a headstone has a base, this will take up the majority of the designated planted area in front of a headstone, so grave owners need to be aware of this.

Please note planting to the rear or sides of the headstone or tablet is not permitted due to the impact on other burial areas. The maintenance of the planting is the responsibility of the grave owner. If planting becomes overgrown it will be removed by a representative of the Council. The Parish Council will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to plants or flowers on plots, this is particularly relevant during the mowing and strimming period.

Anything attributed to the deceased, including fresh floral arrangements, left within the cemetery is done so at a risk. Any articles that stray from graves will be disposed of.

The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any, or all, shrubs, plants, flowers, receptacles, or other items at any time if, in the opinion of the Parish Council, the grave has become unsightly or overgrown.

#### General

Under no circumstances should chippings and edging/fencing be used. These restrictions have been introduced to facilitate ease of maintenance. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove all instances of unauthorised planting, kerbstones or other unauthorised fixtures without further reference to the owner of the grave.

Newly dug graves will be filled in and re-turfed where necessary once they have settled which is usually after a period of six to nine months after the date of burial. It is advisable that no memorial be placed on a new grave until it has settled and been re-turfed if required.

#### **Additional Information**

The scattering of ashes on already purchased graves is strictly forbidden, or anywhere else in the burial ground or surrounding recreation ground.

This document will be made available to view on the Ditchling Parish Council website [www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk](http://www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk) and all grave owners will be provided with a copy when they purchase a deed of grant, with effect from the date this policy is approved by the Parish Council.

<sup>1</sup> breakable – including but not limited to: glass, ceramic, china. Due to health and safety considerations, when assessing the fragility of the item, the Council will always take a more cautious approach.