

BLUNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Burial Guidance Notes

Procedures

During our lives the period immediately following the death of a loved one is probably the most distressing; it is also the time when families become closer, in making decisions regarding the funeral, etc. To assist at this time, the following information should provide an outline of procedures to be adopted for the burial, together with details of facilities and memorials that are available and allowed in Blunham Cemetery.

Primarily, the information is for the professional Funeral Director, who deals directly with the Clerk to the Parish Council, but those families who choose to make funeral arrangements themselves must follow the procedures and rules laid out in this document. The operation and management of Blunham Cemetery conform to the requirements of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and Local Government Act 1972. These documents set out the powers and duties of Blunham Parish Council and provide the framework upon which the procedures and rules are based.

Funeral Bookings

As soon as the death has been certified by an attending doctor and registered with the local Registrar, the family should consider if they require a Minister or Priest to attend the funeral service.

All Interments must take place between 10 a.m. and 4.p.m. Monday to Friday.

Bookings can be made to the Clerk of Blunham Parish Council

The following information will be required:-

1. Funeral date and time
2. Name and address of the deceased
3. Grave Numbers - where the family has an existing grave, the Clerk to Blunham Parish Council must be provided with information to enable confirmation of the grave numbers i.e. the exclusive right of burial document if available.
4. Sufficient space for further interment in an existing grave must be confirmed at the cemetery by the Clerk.
5. If a new grave is required, it will be necessary to stipulate that the Clerk will only confirm a maximum of two interments.
6. The name and telephone number of the Funeral Director or person arranging the funeral - this person will be invoiced for the costs incurred.
7. At least 2 full days notice is required prior to any funeral.

This information is the minimum necessary for a provisional booking. This will be sufficient to enable the Clerk to identify an existing grave or allocate a new one.

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Purchase of Exclusive right to a Grave

The exclusive right of burial must be purchased; the exclusive right is issued for a period of 100 years from the date of purchase. Exclusive right of burial will be recorded in the Register of Purchased Graves; a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will be prepared and given to the grave purchaser.

Exclusive right to a grave - the owner has the right to commission a monumental mason to erect a memorial on the grave after six months from the interment or if the ground has not subsided such longer period as may be necessary, to the standard within Blunham Parish Council's Rules; or the family may, after six months, place a monument of their own design, which again must comply with the Council's Rules. The Council will have the right to remove the monument if it is not of a good standard or is dangerous in any way. Bedding plants etc. planted by family or grave attendees, will not be maintained by any cemetery staff. The family should be mindful, when bedding plants are planted, that other members of the family may request to be interred in that grave at a later date.

No further burial within a grave can proceed without the written permission of the owner of the exclusive right. In the case of the death of an owner of the exclusive right, and if the grave is not bequeathed by a Will a transfer of deed form will need to be completed.

The exclusive right of burial does not divest the Parish Council of any of its rights and responsibilities as owners of the land. It should be noted, however, that the Parish Council retains control over the surface of the grave, where there is no full memorial set, and can select to maintain the surface itself or pass responsibility to the owner of the exclusive right.

Certification

Submission of the Interment Notice is required by the Council a minimum of two clear working days prior to the date of the funeral. The Interment Notice is regarded as a binding contract for the work and cost involved.

The Registrar's Certification or Coroner's Order for Burial, held by the Funeral Director or family member, must be given to the Clerk prior to the funeral. The funeral cannot proceed until an Order or Certificate is given to the Council's representative (Clerk).

Where a burial of cremated remains is to be undertaken, a Certificate of Cremation will be required by the Authority, together with an Application for Burial. A religious or nondenominational secular service can be arranged at a burial of cremated remains, if required. The spreading of cremated remains over a family grave must have the permission of the owner of the exclusive right.

Burial Operations

Interment in an existing grave - when the provisional booking is made, the exclusive right of burial to the grave should be provided. The Burial Register is checked to identify the grave reference number and the family should visit the grave to check the correct grave number is given. At this stage, ownership of the exclusive right of burial must be established.

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Cemetery Regulations

In these Regulations the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:

- “The Council” means Blunham Parish Council.
- “The Graveyard” means any burial ground or graveyard for the time being owned, provided or maintained by the Council.
- “Purchased grave” means a grave in respect of which a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted.

Burials

1. All Interments must take place between 10 a.m. and 4.p.m. Monday to Friday.
2. Interments may take place with or without the services of a clergyman or minister of religion.
3. Notice of Interment must be given to the Clerk to the Council at least two clear days before the funeral.
4. All forms, notices or other documents required to be produced or signed, must be produced or signed before burial can take place.
5. The documents required to be produced in accordance with Regulation 4 above are the Certificate of Disposal issued by a registrar or coroner (which will be retained by the Council), the Certificate of Exclusive Right of Burial or satisfactory evidence thereof in respect of burials in purchased graves, the notice to the Registrar and any other document which may be required by the Council in specific instances.
6. The Council will not undertake any responsibility for the delivery of any of the notices referred to in Regulation 4 above.
7. All graves shall be excavated and opened only by workmen approved by the Council.
8. Any damage to any boundary, headstones or other structure, or any other damage whatsoever, caused during the construction of any grave, or during the erection, removal or replacement of any structure whatsoever, shall be repaired by and at the expense of the person causing the same.
9. The Council is not responsible for arranging or undertaking grave digging.
10. All excess soil must be removed from the Graveyard by the person undertaking the grave digging after interment has taken place.
11. Insurance cover for contractors undertaking grave digging is the responsibility of the said contractors, and the Council will accept no liability.
12. No bodies will be received for interment except in properly made and secured biodegradable coffins.
13. No cremated remains will be received for interment except in properly made and secured biodegradable caskets.
14. Underground brick or stonework or metallic coffins will not be permitted.

Exclusive right of Burial

15. The Council may, with the agreement of the persons arranging Interment, permit the re-use of a grave in respect of which a grant of exclusive right of burial has not been made, or having been made has expired, even where the person being interred is not connected in any way with the person previously interred in the grave.
16. The Council will grant the exclusive right of burial in individual grave spaces for a period of one hundred years from the date of grant.
17. A grant of exclusive right of burial will not be issued in the name of an undertaker or firm of undertakers or a partner in such firm unless evidence satisfactory to the

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Council is submitted that the grave is required for use by the applicant as a private individual and not for the purposes of his business or for the use of another person. No person will be allowed to hold at any one time the exclusive right of burial in more than two graves except with the special consent of the Council.

18. Details of any transfer or assignment of the exclusive right of burial must be submitted to the Council for approval. The approval of the Council shall not unreasonable be withheld in the case of a transfer or assignment of the exclusive right of burial from one inhabitant or parishioner within the parish of Blunham to another inhabitant or parishioner of the said parish. In other cases the Council reserves the right to refuse approval or to give special consent to the transfer.
19. The Council may refuse to recognise any transfer or assignment of the exclusive right of burial that has not been reported to and approved by the Council.
20. The purchaser may apply to the council for approval to release the plot back to the council. If agreed by the Council the amount of the purchase fee must be returned by the Council to the applicant.

Grave Space

21. Every ordinary grave for adults must be at least six feet (1830mm) deep and person contemplating the burial of more than one body in the same grave, must go to the additional depth of two feet (610mm) at least for each additional body and a layer of at least one foot (305mm) of earth must be left between each coffin.
22. The grave spaces will, where practicable, be turfed flat and mown by the Council.

Memorials or Headstones

23. A period of six months is to be allowed for settlement of the ground following interment before a headstone can be put in place.
24. Headstones or vases may be placed only at the head of purchased graves, and subject to these Rules and Regulations and Form BGM2 being completed by all applicants.
25. Before any headstone or vase is placed in the Graveyard, a Memorial Application Form available from the Clerk must be completed and returned to the Council for approval and the prescribed fee paid. Any headstone or vase must be in keeping with the rural location of the Graveyard, & must be firmly place & robust enough not to blow away.
26. Only headstones or vases specified in Blunham Cemetery Fees shall be permitted in the Graveyard, and shall be erected upon concrete plinths that shall not exceed 900mm in length, 750mm in width and 450mm in thickness. Nothing should be placed on or in the ground.
27. Only one additional memorial shall be permitted to a grave whereby there is no available space for additional inscriptions on the existing headstone. The additional memorial shall be a flat tablet which will be laid flush into the ground and up against the headstone. The size of additional tablet shall not exceed 400mm by 300mm.
28. Should a headstone need removing, it shall be removed by and at the expense of the person requiring such removal, in good and sufficient time for the grave to be opened, and replaced by and at the expense of that person as soon as practicable after the interment.
29. The only memorials which shall be permitted in the Graveyard shall be natural or quarried stone and shall be:
 - a) Engraved headstones (without kerbs) not exceeding 900mm in height, 750mm in width and 450mm in depth, or:
 - b) Flower vases not exceeding 250mm in height. These must be robust enough not to blow away & must be firmly placed on a plinth. Nothing should be placed on the ground.

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30. The Council reserves the right by notice to require any person who places any headstone, vase, or other item in the Graveyard without prior permission, or in other than the prescribed place, or of a size which exceeds any of the dimensions referred to in the preceding Regulations, to remove the same from the Graveyard.
31. No footstones or curbing will be allowed.
32. The Council will not be responsible for any accident to monuments, headstones or other structures occasioned by storm, wind, lightning, subsidence or any other cause whatsoever.
33. All headstones, vases and places of burial, must be kept in a good state of repair by the owner.
34. The Council reserves the right, by notice, to require the owner of any headstone or vase which in their opinion has become unsafe or dilapidated, or which, in their opinion, is not kept in proper repair, to remove it. If after failure by any person to remove the same within 28 days after such notice, the Council may themselves, carry out the work without incurring any liability for damage thereto arising out of the removal and may claim the costs incidental thereto from such person.
35. If, after reasonable enquiries, the name and address of the owner cannot be ascertained the notice referred to in the preceding Regulations shall be deemed to be sufficiently given if placed or affixed upon the headstone or vase for a period of 28 days.
36. No additional containers, decorative items, or ornaments of any type will be permitted in the Graveyard (other than the single vase detailed in preceding regulations above). All cut flowers/wreaths should be removed when they appear to be withered. All rubbish and other unsightly disfigurements should be removed from the graves.
37. The Parish Council retains the right to remove any additional objects other than the headstone or memorial stone, after a period of 28 days of the interment.

Miscellaneous

38. Certificates of burial will be issued by the Council on application to the Clerk and payment of the prescribed fee.
39. The Council reserves the right to make from time to time any alterations in the foregoing Rules and Regulations.

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Notice of Interment

Blunham Parish Council
7 Manor Close
Clifton
Sheffield
SG17 5EJ

Note: All interments must take place between 10am and 4pm. Monday to Friday.
At least 2 full days notice is required prior to any funeral.

1.	Surname of Deceased (in the case of a still born child the parents name)	
2.	Forename(s)	
3.	Age of Deceased	
4.	Address of Deceased	
5.	Resident of Blunham	Yes ☐ No ☐
6.	Profession	
7.	Address where death occurred	
8.	Date of Death	
9.	Grave Space Number	Plot
10.	Date and Time of Burial	
11.	Dimensions of Casket	
12.	Name of Minister to Officiate	
13.	Where Exclusive right of Burial in Perpetuity is purchased - Name and address of purchaser	
14.	Fee paid direct to bank account: 20 74 81, 30236144 or by cheque.	
15.	Name, Address and Telephone Number of Funeral Directors	
16.	Signed	
17.	Date	

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Scale of Fees (reviewed November 2025)

The fees, payments and sums set out below apply where the person to be interred or, in respect of whom the right is granted is, or immediately before death, was an inhabitant or parishioner of the Parish of Blunham or, in the case of a still-born child, where the parents (or one of them) are, or at the time of interment were, such inhabitants or parishioners or was such inhabitant prior to the date of their death, subject to their removal from Blunham for the purpose of hospitalisation, nursing or recuperative care. **In all other cases the fees, payments and sums will be trebled.**

Please note that it was agreed at the Blunham Parish Council meeting on 28th May 2023 that the pre-purchase of plots would be paused, this decision was made permanent following a review in July 2024.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL IN EARTHEN GRAVES			
	For the exclusive right of burial in an earthen grave 8 feet by 4 feet. (2400mm by 1200mm).	£310.00	£930.00
	For the exclusive right of burial of cremated remains in an earthen grave 2 feet by 2 feet. (600mm by 600mm).	£125.00	£375.00
	The fees include Deed of Grant for a period not exceeding 100 years		
INTERMENT			
	For the interment of:		
	The body of a still born child, or of a child whose age at the time of death did not exceed 1 month.	£40.00	£120.00
	The body of a child whose age at the time of death exceeded 1 month but did not exceed 18 years.	£75.00	£225.00
	The body of a person whose age at the time of death exceeded 18 years.	£240.00	£720.00
	The cremated remains.	£105.00	£315.00
MONUMENTS, GRAVESTONES, TABLETS AND INSCRIPTIONS			
	The Parish Council retains the right to remove any additional objects other than the headstone or memorial stone.		
	For the right to erect or place on a grave a headstone with a base not exceeding 2½ feet in width 3 feet in height and 1½ feet in depth. (W 750mm by H 900mm by D 450mm)	£75.00	£225.00
	For the right to place horizontally on a grave space for the interment of cremated remains a memorial stone (tablet) 15 inches by 12 inches. (400mm by 300mm)	£75.00	£225.00
	For the right to place an engraved memorial vase not exceeding 10 inches in height. (250mm)	£75.00	£225.00
	All to incorporate if required base and vase. The above fees include the first inscription. For each subsequent inscription the fee is:	£35.00	£105.00
	Transfer of Deed	£30.00	£30.00

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Memorial Application Form

Blunham Parish Council has delegated the Clerk to the Council the power to authorise permission for memorials that conform to the rules and regulations as laid down by Blunham Parish Council.

Completed forms should be submitted to Blunham Parish Council, c/o The Clerk, 7 Manor Close, Clifton, Shefford, SG17 5EJ. Payment should be enclosed or paid direct to our bank account: 20 74 81, 30236144.

Proposed Design and Inscription for Memorial

To be Completed by the Monumental Mason

Plot Number:					
Memorial Size Details				Monumental Masons Details	
	Headstone Memorial	Base	Vase	Company Name	
Height				Company Address	
Length					
Width					
Thickness				Tel. No.	
				Account No:	

Memorial Details

Inscription	Design of Memorial

State material to be used:

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To be Completed by the Registered Grave Owner

I hereby apply for the right to erect and place a memorial, as defined by and subject to Blunham Parish Council Cemetery Regulations.

I have read the rules and regulations relating to Blunham Cemetery.

I claim that under the terms of such Rules and Regulations, the Clerk to the Council has the power to permit the introduction into the graveyard of the monument described herein.

I undertake that if permission is granted by the Clerk to the Council, the monument will be erected in exact conformity with its description in this application.

Grave Owners Name in Full	
Grave Owner's Address in Full	
Grave Owner's Signature	
Date	

For Official Use Only
Permit to Erect Said Memorial

On behalf of Blunham Parish Council I give permission for the memorial detailed above to be introduced into Blunham Cemetery.

Approved on by
Clerk to Blunham Parish Council