

HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs H Boden
The Parish Council Office, Hartley Library, Ash Road
Hartley, Longfield, Kent DA3 8EL
Tel: 01474 709441
E mail: enquiries@hartleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Burial Grounds

Rules and Regulations

The Rules and Regulations for the management and control of the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance made by Hartley Parish Council [HPC] under powers conferred by the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

The Burial Grounds and the Gardens of Remembrance in Hartley are in the care and ownership of HPC. The Council is conscious of the need to preserve the area as a place of quietness, dignity, and beauty and is active in carrying out this policy.

Any matters or queries concerning the Burial Grounds and the Gardens of Remembrance Rules and Regulations should be addressed to the Clerk to the Council at the address given above, and not to Churches, Undertakers, Memorial Masons, or any other body.

A gardener tends the flower beds and cuts the grass on a regular basis.

All dogs entering the Burial Grounds and the Gardens of Remembrance must be kept on a lead and in order.

At present there is no exclusive right of space allocated for any burial or interment of ashes, which shall be restricted to residents of the Parish. All other requests to be considered by the Parish Council.

Full sized graves are not available for the interment of ashes.

A Book of Remembrance can be found in the chancel inside All Saints' Church. Flowers in memory of loved ones will always be welcomed there.

Hartley Parish Council reserves the right to amend these Rules and Regulations at any time if considered necessary.

Burial Grounds

1. One part on of the Ground is consecrated for burial according to the rites of the Church of England. All burials are to be conducted in a decent and orderly manner.

Burial Grounds Rules and Regulations
Approved by the Council on 8th September 2025

2. Notice of intended interments shall be given to the Clerk to the Council. If the interment is to be in an earth grave, at least three clear working days notice shall be given [exclusive of Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Bank and Public Holidays].
3. All interments shall take place between the hours of 09.30 hrs and 16.00 hrs on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 09.30 hrs and 14.30 hrs on Saturdays. The exact hour in all cases shall be subject to arrangement with the officiating Minister by the person giving notice of interment.
4. The Certificate for Disposal [usually referred to as The Green Certificate] of the person to be buried, or the Coroner's Certificate where an inquest has been held, must be given to the Clerk to the Council before the interment takes place.
5. A plan of the Burial Grounds has been made upon which every grave space has been marked, and each grave space has been sufficiently designated on the ground to correspond with each grave space on the plan.
6. The selection of the grave space shall be made by HPC.
7. The depth of every grave shall be recorded in the Register of Graves.
8. Where the exclusive right of burial in a grave space has been purchased and expired, HPC has itself the right to re-open at any time that grave for the interment of the body of any other person, or persons.
9. All HPC fees and charges are to be paid to the Clerk to the Council on giving notice of interment and before the work is begun in respect of which they are payable; and the receipt for all interment fees shall if required, be produced to the HPC's representative prior to the funeral procession entering the Burial Grounds.
10. A Register of Burials will be kept by the Clerk to the Council who will at all reasonable times make searches and supply certified extracts from the Register.
11. Each grave shall be dug in the middle of its grave space.
12. Grave digging will be arranged by HPC. No coffin shall be buried in any grave the top of which shall lie less than 4 feet below the level of the surrounding ground.
13. A person shall not, in the Burial Grounds, cause a body to be buried in a grave unless the coffin is effectively separated from any other coffin already in the grave by means of a layer of earth not less than six inches in thickness.
14. Where in the Burial Grounds, any grave is re-opened for the purpose of making another interment therein; a person shall not disturb any human remains interred therein, or remove therefrom any soil which is offensive.
15. Only coffins of wood, or other approved material, shall be used in earth graves.

Burial Grounds Rules and Regulations
Approved by the Council on 8th September 2025

16. Grave spaces can be marked with an engraved headstone only and may incorporate a memorial vase. All headstones, which should be of naturally quarried or carved stone, should not exceed 900 mm [3 feet] in height, or exceed 750 mm [2 feet 6 inches] in width. The design of all new memorials erected in the Burial Grounds shall be of a monolith design and shall be installed strictly in accordance with the recommended Code of Working Practice published by the National Association of Memorial Masons. No hewing or dressing of stones is permitted within the Burial Grounds or in its approaches; and all rubbish, refuse, stones, etc. remaining after the work is completed shall be removed by the person erecting the monument.
17. The design and inscription on the headstone should be submitted to HPC for approval.
18. The fitting of photo plaques to memorial headstones is not permitted.
19. A reference number to every grave shall be at the back of the monument, memorial or stone and shall not be removable by the owner.
20. All memorials removed from the Burial Grounds for additional inscriptions shall be reinstated strictly in accordance with the recommended Code of Working Practice published by the National Association of Memorial Masons.
21. All gravestones, monuments and memorials shall be kept neat and clean and in good order by the owners thereof at their own expense, and in default thereof, such gravestones, monuments and memorials shall be forfeited to HPC, who shall be entitled to take possession thereof and remove or repair them as they may think fit.
22. It is HPC's policy that, after sufficient time has elapsed for natural subsidence of the earth, all graves in the Burial Grounds shall be turfed. This may take between 6 to 12 months after burial; the appropriate time for turfing to take place will be determined by HPC.

Care of Graves

1. HPC recognises that the bereaved may take some comfort from tending gardens on the graves of their loved ones and therefore will allow gardens to be maintained on graves provided they comply with the following rules and until such time as HPC consider it appropriate for the grave to be turfed:
 - (a) The extent of the garden and any planting shall not exceed the grave space.
 - (b) No fencing, edging, or kerbing around the graves shall be permitted as they may cause a trip hazard for visitors, contractors, and HPC employees.
 - (c) Bulbs, bedding plants, and perennial plants with a maximum height of 45 mm [18 inches] may be planted in the garden of the graves. Where graves have been turfed, bulbs may be planted under the turfed area of the grave. Shrubs shall not be permitted.
 - (d) No chippings, decorative stones, slabs, or pebbles shall be spread on the surface of the grave as they can be spread onto the surrounding grass and may damage cutting

Burial Grounds Rules and Regulations
Approved by the Council on 8th September 2025

equipment and cause a hazard to visitors, contractors, and HPC employees. Bark chippings shall be permitted on the surface of the grave.

- (e) The surface of the garden and all grass borders around the grave shall be kept neat, tidy, and weed free.
- (f) All dead flowers, prunings, cuttings, litter, etc. shall either be removed from the Burial Ground, or disposed of in the bins provided.
- (g) Glass containers, vases, or ornaments shall not be placed on the grave as broken glass can cause a hazard to visitors, contractors, and HPC employees.
- (h) Memorial vases may be placed on the garden area of the grave, but may not be placed on the grass as they cause damage to the grass and impede the grass cutting equipment. Total height and spread of the container and plant shall not exceed 18 inches.
- (i) Artificial flowers, plastic wrappers, or any other ornaments and adornments shall not be laid on the grave or placed on the memorial, as in windy conditions they can litter the burial ground and their disposal may not be environmentally friendly.
- (j) Any Christmas wreathes or other such festive tributes laid on the grave must be placed within the grave space and shall be removed by the 31st of January, after which time if the items have not been removed HPC will make arrangements for them to be removed and disposed of.
- (k) If a garden becomes neglected, or contravenes the above rules 2(a) to 2(j) inclusive, every effort will be made to contact the grave owner and a reasonable period of time allowed for the grave owner to rectify the defects. If the garden is not restored to the satisfaction of HPC, arrangements will be made for the garden to be removed and the surface of the grave to be turfed.
- (l) HPC shall not accept any responsibility for the loss or damage of any items or plants placed in the garden or on the grave.