



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

OUR CEMETERY SERVICES



Introduction

Hertford Town Council aims to provide a professional and caring service through our sympathetic, competent and trained staff. The Council's priority is to ensure that all funerals are carried out in a dignified and orderly manner. A meaningful funeral is an important part of the grieving process and it is recognised that each person's needs are different. The staff endeavours to ensure that every funeral is as personal and unhurried as possible.

Hertford Cemetery is a peaceful space of great historical interest, which offers a natural environment for all types of wildlife and as a result an important nature conservation resource. Hertford Town Council is working to achieve a Green Flag award for the Cemetery which is a national award designed to recognise well managed parks and open spaces for all to enjoy.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) produced the Charter For The Bereaved specifically to improve cemeteries and funerals. A copy of the Charter is available from the Cemeteries Office upon request. The Charter sets a national clearly defined rights, standards and expectations. Hertford Town Council adopted the Charter in June 2009

The Council has a statutory obligation to provide, regulate, maintain and repair the Cemetery and the register of burials under the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. The Cemetery is managed and maintained by the Council

Information

Hertford Cemetery is located in North Road, Hertford, with the main entrance situated in Bramfield Road.



All enquiries should be addressed to:-
Cemetery Office, Hertford Town Council, The Castle, Hertford, Herts SG14 1HR.
E-mail town. pat@hertford.gov.uk
Website: www.hertford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01992 552885.
The Town Council Office is open as follows: -
Monday to Thursday 09.00am and 17.00pm
Friday 09.00am and 16.30pm
The Town Council is closed on public holidays and other days as notified.

Cemetery Opening Times

The Cemetery shall be open to the public from 08.00am until sunset daily or as later notified by the Town Council. There is a *Cemetery Friends Group* which locks and unlocks the vehicle gates at weekends, when these times may vary.

Admission of Vehicles

Vehicles are permitted in the Cemetery, at the discretion of the Town Council, to allow occupants to visit a grave or graves. Any time restrictions for vehicle access will be displayed on the Cemetery notice board. A 5mph speed limit is in operation

History of the Cemetery

At the turn of the last century, burial space within the various churchyards in Hertford was becoming full and at that time the Council looked towards the provision of a cemetery to serve the whole community. The Council faced fierce opposition, particularly from the Vestry of St Andrew's Parish Church who had already provided additional burial land sufficient for another fifty years for its parishioners at a site in North Road and was therefore not prepared to contribute an additional tax levy towards the cost of a corporation cemetery. The Council however continued in its quest and eventually a new cemetery adjacent to the St Andrew's burial ground in North Road was formally opened by the Mayor of Hertford and consecrated by the Bishop of St Albans in 1907.

In 1945 the two cemeteries of the Town and St Andrew's amalgamated when the Council assumed control of the maintenance of the St Andrew's section.

Interesting memorials at the site include one to the so called Jewson's skeletons. These are the remains of 300 medieval men, women and children which were discovered following the development of Jewson's Yard in Hertford in 1990. The skeletons were excavated by the Archaeological Trust and reinterred in the North Road Cemetery.

Our Services

Hertford Town Council offers a full range of services at the Cemetery, including Cemetery management, liaison with funeral directors and administration of deeds and records. Cemetery records are available for public inspection during office hours.

The cemetery service includes:

- Advice
- A choice of memorials
- The option of a bricked grave
- The option to pre-purchase plots in certain areas
- Graves for cremated remains
- Triple depth graves
- A water supply and watering cans for visitors to the cemetery
- Liaison with funeral directors
- Administration of Deeds and Burials

The staff is available to meet customers at the Cemetery to assist with plot selection and pre purchase arrangements. Please telephone the Office on 01992 552885 or email pat@hertford.gov.uk for an appointment.

All land at the Cemetery is consecrated. Consecrated land has been blessed by a Bishop in the Church of England, however there is no restriction on who may be buried in consecrated land. There is also a dedicated Roman Catholic block in the Cemetery.

Pre-purchase of Plots

You may wish to plan ahead for yourself or your family and plots are available for pre-purchase. Deeds granting you exclusive right of burial may be purchased for a period of 10 years, and may be renewed after each ten year period. These may also be transferred in the event of the death of the owner of the deed. The purchase of an exclusive right of burial does not give any right of ownership of the land, which remains solely with the Council

Plot selection

Plots are normally allocated by the Council, but the option to choose specific plots in certain areas may be considered, subject to availability and your requirements. It is advisable to meet with the Cemetery Supervisor to discuss your requirements.

Interment and Memorial Options

Hertford Town Council is committed to providing an excellent cemetery service and is able to offer a range of interment and memorial options at the Hertford Cemetery.

Burial plots can be dug to single, double or triple depth and there is also an option for brick graves and a separate section for the burial of cremated remains. Arrangements can also be made for the burial of foetal remains, if required.

Brick Graves

Brick graves are constructed to a maximum of nine feet long and four feet wide, with a standard sized memorial at ground level. Extra fees are payable for the right to construct brick graves.

Cremated Remains

A special area has been set aside as a Garden of Rest for the burial of cremated remains, however, should a family member wish to be buried and others cremated, the ashes can be buried in a full grave with further space available for up to three full burial interments.

Lawn Memorials

These graves consist of a grassy plot with a headstone at one end. Spring bulbs may be planted under the grass and will be cut down four to six weeks after flowering has finished.

Full Kerbed Memorials

Full kerbed memorials are permitted, however the ground should be left to settle for about a year.

Future Plans

The burial area which is currently in use includes a mixture of lawn and full kerbed memorials, however when this area is full it is intended that the Council will offer two separate areas, one section which will only include lawn graves and one for full kerbed memorials.

Re-opening of adjacent graves

It should be noted that on occasions it may be that access to a grave is restricted during the re-opening of an adjacent plot.

Grave Maintenance

The grass in the Cemetery is cut by the Council's grounds staff who also cut the grass on lawn graves. Kerb and brick graves are maintained by family or friends. Please note that memorials are not maintained by the Council.

Exhumation

The remains of deceased people are protected by law from disturbance, and cannot be removed from their place of burial without authority. A faculty is required from St Albans Diocese. Where it is proposed to exhume remains in Hertford Cemetery, please contact Hertford Town Council on 01992 552885.

How to Arrange a Funeral

There are certain legal requirements which must be fulfilled before a burial can take place. The death must be registered within five days – however this period may be extended in certain circumstances, for example, when a Coroner has been consulted. Further information can be obtained from the Hertford and Ware Registrars Office 01992 555590.

You may wish to consult a Funeral Director to discuss what arrangements you would like and you are entitled to request a free quotation. However, you are under no obligation to use a Funeral Director and may wish to undertake the arrangements yourself. There are certain aspects you may find distressing, so any decision must be carefully considered. Should you not wish to arrange everything yourself there are sympathetic funeral directors who will allow you to carry out as much of the funeral as you feel comfortable with.

Funeral costs may include:

Removal of the Deceased

*Preparation of the Deceased
Coffin*

Limousine/hearse

Church and Minister Fees

Cemetery Fees

Notices in local papers

Flowers

Reception Arrangements

Memorials

You may be able to apply to the Department of Work and Pensions for help in meeting the costs of a funeral. A helpful leaflet is available from DWP entitled 'What To Do After a Death' A cost of a funeral is usually met from the assets of the person who has died, but if there are no assets, the cost may be the responsibility of the person making the funeral arrangements.

After the Burial

After a burial has taken place in a new grave, a wooden cross or marker can be placed on the grave. A mound of earth is left over the grave to allow for the initial settlement of the ground. If there are any floral tributes they are carefully placed upon the grave and these will only be removed by Council staff once the flowers have deteriorated.

The graves are topped up as often as necessary in the months following a burial and staff will ensure as far as possible that the graves are kept reasonably level. To assist with this it is advisable not to plant directly onto the soil in the first 12 months after burial but place flowers and plants in pots which can be removed and replaced easily. When the grave has settled, topsoil and grass seed are placed on the grave at the appropriate time of year.

Pre- Planning a Funeral

You may pre-plan your own funeral. This means that when you die, those arranging your funeral will know your wishes. Some people never discuss death, and for those making arrangements it can be hard to make such important decisions at such a difficult time. Pre-planning a funeral may also help to alleviate expenses. Most funeral directors are able to offer pre-plan funeral schemes.

Coffins and Alternatives

Information regarding the purchase of biodegradable coffins can be obtained by contacting any funeral director or the Cemetery Office. The use of a re-useable coffin is also available for use when a shroud burial is preferred.

Memorials

It is recommended that a period of 9-12 months has elapsed from the date of the burial before any memorial is placed upon the grave. This allows for the natural settlement of the grave and will aid in the stability and safety of the memorial. Before any memorial is fixed, a permit must be applied for (usually by the memorial mason on behalf of the grave owner) and the appropriate permit fee paid. It is recommended that insurance is taken out to cover any accidental damage or vandalism to the memorial. *Hertford Town Council encourages the use of innovative and personal memorials*

Memorial Safety

All memorials erected in Hertford Cemetery must be and remain safe, sound and in a stable condition. Memorials remain the property of the grave owner, but the Council, as land owner is responsible for ensuring that the grounds are safe for both visitors and staff. In the event of any memorial falling and injuring (or killing) anyone, both the grave owner and the Council would be liable to prosecution.

For the above reasons, all memorials are tested for safety every five years using a device called a topple tester, which pushes against the memorial with a force of 35kg. In the event of failure of the test the memorial will be made temporarily safe and the owner advised that the memorial must be repaired.

To ensure that all memorials are installed properly in the first place, Hertford Town Council is subscribing to the scheme managed by the Nations Association of Monumental Masons (NAMM). Masons must pass strict practical tests and apply vigorous business practices and insurances to become accredited memorial masons (BRAMM). From January 2009 only BRAMM registered memorial masons will be permitted to install or perform structural works to both existing and new memorials within the Hertford Cemetery.

If you are not the registered owner of the grave (as the owner has died and a transfer of ownership has not been made) or if you have changed your address, please let the Cemetery Office know. It is important that the Council has up to date contact details.

Grievance Procedure

If you have a complaint about any issue concerning the Cemetery, please contact the Cemetery Office at The Castle, Hertford in the first instance. Should the issue not be resolved to your satisfaction you will be forwarded a copy of the Grievance Procedure for you to follow.

Leaflets available on Request

Charter Grievance Procedure
Charter for the Bereaved – Guiding Principles
Cemetery Regulations
Exclusive Right of Burial
Burial Fees

Questionnaire

Hertford Town Council is committed to a rolling programme of maintenance within the cemetery and aims to provide a caring, quality service to meet the expectations of its clients. The Council is working towards Green Flag, Cemetery of the Year and ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) standards.

In order to help us improve our service the Council would be grateful if you would take the time to complete this questionnaire. The information will be treated as confidential and will enable the Council to assess the level of service provided within the cemetery and whether there are any measures which could be taken to improve the service.

Date of Visit

Maintenance and Facilities

In your dealing with staff, how would you rate the following:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| a) | Quality of information provided | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |
| b) | General attitude of staff | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |

How would you rate the following conditions within the Cemetery:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| a) | Standard of Grass cutting | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |
| b) | Access roads and footpaths | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |
| c) | Water stations and waste bins | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |

d) Flower beds/planting Excellent Good Average Poor

Do you have any suggestions to improve services in the Cemetery?

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Thank you for your co-operation

Please return to: Hertford Town Council, Hertford Castle, Hertford, SG14 1HR