

COMBER RIDGE

BURIAL GROUND AND GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

RULES AND REGULATIONS



2023

KINVER PARISH COUNCIL

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Thank you for choosing our beautiful hillside setting of Comber Ridge as the final resting place for your loved one.

As you might know, the Comber Ridge Burial Ground is owned, managed and maintained by the Parish Council for the sole benefit of the residents, and past residents, of the Parish of Kinver and their immediate families. We are non-profit making and our costs are met partly from the interment fees we charge but, in large, part from the Council Tax payments of parish residents.

Local Councillors take a keen interest in the Burial Ground. We look on it as a part of our local community and try our very best to keep it in good condition. As the years pass, we hope that you also will come to regard it as a very special place.

Few of us like Rules and Regulations. However, if we are to keep the Burial Ground in good order these are very necessary and I attach a copy for you to keep. I realise that now might not be the best time to ask you to read them. However, when you feel able to do so, it would be helpful if you could study these Rules and Regulations so as to understand what we are trying to achieve at Comber Ridge. In doing so, it will help us to maintain this unique Burial Ground for the benefit of us all and for future generations.

Fees can be made by BACS our account details are below, please advise when you make payments by this method so we can check our statements.

Co-operative Bank Kinver Parish Council Sort code 08-90-08 A/C No. 61015319

NOTE: Kinver Parish Council will retain personal details of the Grantee/Applicant for the purpose of administration and/or improving these services in respect of this plot, purchase of a plot is taken as approval for this.

Thank you.

J Hall

**Julian Hall
Chairman
Kinver Parish Council**

Kinver Parish Council – Comber Ridge data protection fair processing notice

Data Controller

Your information is 'controlled' by Kinver Parish Council. We can be contacted at 95 High Street, Kinver DY7 6HD. Our telephone number is 01384 873878. Our Data Protection Officer is Miss Jenny Cree. They can be contacted using the same contact information.

Purpose and Lawful Basis of Processing

We collect and use your information so as to 1) enable us to progress applications for interment in the burial ground and to re-open graves where requested, 2) as a record of deed holders for each individual plot, 3) to process your information where a grant of right of burial has been lost or mislaid, 4) to carry out works in respect of a headstone etc. and, 5) in respect of requests to scatter ashes at the burial ground. We undertake all of this in the exercise of our official authority.

Retention

We keep your records for 75 years after allocation of a plot.

Your rights

You have the right to submit a request for access to your information; to have incorrect information rectified; to have your information erased and to have our use of your information restricted.

Information Commissioner

If you are unhappy about the way we have processed your information please speak to the Data Protection Officer in the first instance. However, notwithstanding this you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. They can be contacted at the:

Information Commissioner's Office,

Wycliffe House

Water Lane, Wilmslow

Cheshire, SK9 5AF

www.ico.org.uk

General

The provision of information by you to us is a statutory requirement. If you decline to provide information we may not be able to progress your application or indeed offer an interment plot to you.

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMBER RIDGE BURIAL GROUND

Welcome to Comber Ridge. Thank you for choosing or thinking of choosing this lovely place for your loved ones.

Kinver Parish Council, in managing the Burial Ground seeks to achieve a sense of peace and tranquillity, so greatly valued by those who have loved ones interred here.

To achieve this we must apply some rules and regulations whilst remembering that Comber Ridge is not a city cemetery; nor is it a busy urban churchyard. It is a consecrated, grass covered, rural hillside burial ground. There is also an area not consecrated, for those who prefer that. Those who visit there enjoy that sense of peace, order and tranquillity that these Rules and Regulations are designed to maintain.

We ask you, therefore, to remember that –

To help with maintenance, we like to keep grave areas tidy and uncluttered. What one person might find to be as acceptable, grave adornments, can prove to others a distressing distraction – especially at times of recent bereavements.

Additionally, if we are to maintain the burial ground to a good standard, there needs to be some restriction both on the sizes of headstones and tablets used and as to what may be placed on graves and cremation plots. Details of these restrictions are given in the following Rules and Regulations. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove from grave spaces any items that do not comply with these Rules and Regulations or are otherwise unsuitable in its view.

As in life, even so in death, only consideration for the needs of others will ensure that we achieve the result that best serves our community overall. We ask you, therefore, to read and observe these Rules and Regulations in that spirit. In doing so, you will assist us in maintaining the ambiance of Comber Ridge.

COMBER RIDGE BURIAL GROUND RULES AND REGULATIONS

Unless stated otherwise below, the terms “grave and “interment” apply equally to coffin burials and to the burial of cremated remains (ashes). They do not apply to the scattering of cremated remains, which is covered by a separate section in these regulations.

The Right to be interred at Comber Ridge

The fees charged for interments meet only a portion of the cost of running and maintaining the burial ground. A significant amount of the cost is met by the council tax paid by residents of the Parish of Kinver.

Accordingly, the *right to interment* applies strictly only to those who were residents, or one-time residents, of the Parish of Kinver. You, or the family or next of kin of the deceased will be required to provide proof of the deceased’s residence in Kinver prior to interment for the person claiming the initial right to be interred at Comber Ridge Burial Ground.

Provided always that sufficient space remains within the plot in question, the right extends also to the immediate family of such a person, the immediate family comprising strictly the wife,

husband or long-time partner, sons and daughters of the person establishing the *initial right to interment* Only one interment per deceased person is permitted within the burial ground, the deceased's remains must be interred in the same plot e.g. ashes shouldn't be divided into more than one plot.

Note: For the avoidance of doubt, the right to interment does not extend to the mother or father of the person establishing the right to interment.

Allocation of Individual Interment Plots (Sequential Burial)

Sequential Burials

Comber Ridge Burial Ground was designed to be of a natural but orderly appearance so as to complement the great natural beauty of the surrounding countryside. In order to achieve this objective a policy was adopted to have open plan grassed burial areas throughout. So as to maintain these grassed areas in good condition at a reasonable cost and to maintain the overall appearance of the Burial Ground, a policy of "Sequential Interments" has been adopted both for coffin graves and for graves containing caskets of cremated remains.

The term "Sequential Interments" means that grave spaces are allocated in sequence as requests to inter are received. In this way rows fill up progressively and the Burial Ground develops in a progressive and orderly manner – rather than piecemeal with individual graves dispersed over wide areas. Unfortunately, this means that it is not permitted for plots to be reserved in advance and individual purchasers of the exclusive rights to inter, cannot be given a choice as to the precise location of the grave space allocated. It is appreciated that families might wish ideally to be allocated plots adjacent one to the other. Unfortunately, this policy prevents that being achievable. However, the policy is set having regard to the best interests of the Burial Ground and its clients overall.

In the case of any one deceased person, the deceased's remains must be interred in the same plot.

Capacity of Grave Spaces

A maximum of three interments is permitted in any coffin grave. Practical considerations make it prohibitive for such graves to be dug to any greater depth. Clearly, the depth to which a grave is dug for the first coffin dictates whether it will be possible for the family to use the grave space again for one or two further interments in the future. For that reason, it is very important that bereaved families make their intentions for future interments in the grave space clear to their Funeral Director in the period prior to the first interment. The application form, submitted at the time of the initial purchase of the exclusive right to inter, contains a specific question on this matter and it is important that it is completed clearly. This is the responsibility of the bereaved family and their Funeral Director and errors made in the depth of the first interment cannot be rectified once that interment has taken place.

The same principles as set out immediately above apply also to interments of caskets of cremated remains. However, in these cases, the maximum permitted number of caskets in any individual grave space is two. Again, bereaved families must make their intentions for future interment in the grave space clear to their Funeral Director in the period prior to the first interment – and again there is a specific question on this matter on the application, which they must ensure is completed clearly.

For the avoidance of any doubt in the future, it is important that the deed to each interment plot (whether for coffin or casket interments) is endorsed with information as to the depth of the original interment and, therefore, the capacity for further interments within that individual grave space.

Conditions relating to the Specially Designated Area for the Interment of the Remains of Children

The Burial Authority has set aside a special area for the interment of the remains of children. The special fee structure for the Interment of “Infants and Young Children” as set out in the table of fees and the following conditions apply to interments in this specially designated area –

The special area of interment for children be defined as providing single capacity graves available for the interment of stillbirths and children up to and including the age of 12 years

Irrespective of whether an individual grave within this special area contains a cremated remains casket or coffin interment, the only approved form of memorial shall be a headstone of a kind and dimensions as defined in the Burial Ground Rules and Regulations

There shall be no compulsion on any family to use the special area for the interment of the remains of children and those wishing to inter such remains in traditional coffin or cremation casket areas shall be free to do so upon payment of the full charge appropriate to those other areas

The qualification (in relation to family residency etc) for interment within the children’s area shall remain that defined in the Burial Ground Rules and Regulations for interment within the Burial Ground in general.

Maintenance of Interment Plots

Following an interment and once the ground has settled, the Parish Council will arrange for the area of the grave to be restored to provide a level surface and for it to be seeded with grass. This seeding must be allowed to establish so as to provide a grassed area over the surface of the grave space and the surface level must not be disturbed. The perimeter of the grave space must not be marked out in any way. No artefacts or flowers etc. may be placed on the grassed areas of the grave space and any floral tributes/plants must conform to the provisions of these Rules and Regulations.

The above shall not preclude the placing of the floral tributes on the grave surface immediately following the interment and prior to the seeding of the area. The Parish Council will leave these initial floral tributes in the care of the relatives of the deceased for a period of 4 weeks, after which tidying of the area will take place in preparation for the grass seeding to be carried out. This process might involve the removal of floral tributes from plots.

The purchasers of the exclusive right to bury are asked to keep their plots in general good order – but they are neither required nor permitted to cut the grass on or around their individual plots.

It is a key element of the overall design plan for the burial ground that grave spaces shall be grassed and the Parish Council arranges for the grassed areas to be mowed regularly throughout the growing season. In order that the burial ground can be maintained effectively, it is essential that the following Regulations be followed relating to what is permitted on grave surfaces.

Dimensions, Materials and Inscriptions for Headstones to Coffin Graves in section H

In order to facilitate maintenance of the grassed areas, there is a limit on the dimensions of headstones and plinths in respect of coffin grave spaces. Such headstones must be 750 mm (2ft 6ins) high and between 600mm (2ft) and 450mm (1ft 6ins) wide. Headstones must be between 150mm (6ins) and 75mm (3ins) thick. Each headstone must be mounted on a plinth which must not project more than 180mm (7ins) in front of nor 100mm (4ins) behind the headstone. The overall height from the ground of the combined plinth and headstone must be no more than 850mm (2ft 10ins).

Headstones/plinths must be mounted on a foundation slab, which must be set flush into the ground. Such foundation slabs may not exceed surface dimensions of 900mm (3ft) by 450mm (1ft 6ins) and have a minimum thickness of 65mm(2½ ins).

All headstones laid within the burial ground shall incorporate a "Ground Anchor" system complying with "Best Industry Practice".

Within each plinth may be a recess to take only one single flower vase or pot. Any flowers/plants to be placed on the grave must be accommodated in that recess. Any additional vases / pots / trinkets placed on the grave will be removed by the grounds staff.

Headstones must not carry photographs, holograms or other such similar devices. The surfaces of headstones must be of a matt nature and must not be of a polished, specular, reflective or honed nature. This is particularly important and is to avoid the headstones becoming sources of glare when viewed from Kinver Edge.

Whilst the Parish Council does not wish to prescribe the inscriptions on individual headstones, such inscriptions should contain only the name(s) of those interred, relevant dates and a simple tasteful message such as "Rest in Peace" or "Always in our Thoughts" etc, together with any approved graphics.

Inscriptions shall be understood to cover anything displayed on the headstone including all graphics (for example, Badges, symbols religious or otherwise, scenes, or other depictions). Any such graphics proposed must be shown on the application and approved specifically in advance by the Burial Ground Superintendent. Graphics so approved may not be highlighted or coloured in any way but must remain in their natural engraved state.

The wording on headstones to include the name(s) of those interred, relevant dates and a simple tasteful message such as "Rest in Peace" or "Always in our Thoughts" etc may be left in their natural engraved state or highlighted in gold or black, but may not be highlighted in any other colour (including white)

Any proposed wording on headstones going beyond the simple nature of the kind described in the preceding paragraph may be used only if approved specifically by the Burial Ground Committee.

All headstones and plinths, in addition to meeting the above specifications, must be approved in advance by the Parish Council and must be of one of the following materials –

Limestone

Fine grained Sandstones

Slates

Granites

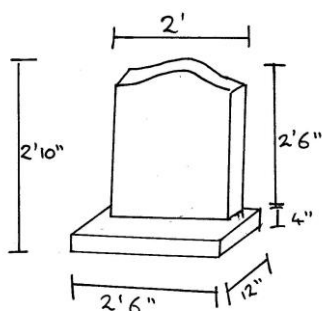
If it is not desired to have a headstone, one single flower vase only may be left at the head of the grave to receive floral tributes. In such circumstances, no floral tributes, other than those that can be contained within this vase, may be left at the graveside. The single flower vase must not be made of glass / ceramics or china.

No kerbstones, railings, markers or any similar device may be erected around the grave space.

If purchasers of the exclusive rights to bury have any doubts as to the acceptability of the stone which, they wish to use – or doubts upon any other matters; they should ask their Stone Mason/Funeral Director to seek advice from the Parish Council's Burial Ground Superintendent. It is important that this is done to avoid abortive expense to themselves at a later date should, for example, the Council not be able to accept their first choice of stone or any aspect of the inscription planned thereon.

Dimensions, Materials and Inscriptions for Headstones to Coffin Graves in section J only

In order to facilitate maintenance of the grassed areas, there is a limit on the dimensions of headstones and plinths in respect of coffin grave spaces. Such headstones must be a maximum height of up to 750 mm (2ft 6ins) and between 600mm (2ft) and 450mm (1ft 6ins) wide. Headstones must be between 150mm (6ins) and 75mm (3ins) thick. Each headstone must be mounted on a plinth which must not project more than 180mm (7ins) in front of nor 100mm (4ins) behind the headstone. The overall height from the ground of the combined plinth and Traditional style headstone must be no more than 850mm (2ft 10ins).



Maximum dimensions shown (not to scale)

Headstones/plinths must be mounted on a foundation slab, which must be set flush into the ground. Such foundation slabs may not exceed surface dimensions of 900mm (3ft) by 450mm (1ft 6ins) and have a minimum thickness of 65mm (2½ ins).

All headstones laid within the burial ground shall incorporate a "Ground Anchor" system complying with "Best Industry Practice".

Within each plinth may be 2 recesses to take flower vases or pots. Any flowers/plants to be placed on the grave must be accommodated in those recesses. Any additional vases / pots / trinkets placed on the grave will be removed by the ground staff.

Headstones must not carry photographs, holograms or other such similar devices.

Our interpretation for 'other such similar devices' – we do NOT allow any items whether loose or cemented onto the headstone or base; in addition recesses are bore holes into the stone for flower vases or pots.

Whilst the Parish Council does not wish to prescribe the inscriptions on individual headstones, such inscriptions should contain only the name(s) of those interred, relevant dates and a simple tasteful message such as "Rest in Peace" or "Always in our Thoughts" etc, together with any approved graphic.

Inscriptions shall be understood to cover anything displayed on the headstone including any graphic (for example, Badges, symbols religious or otherwise, scenes, or other depictions). Any such graphic proposed must be shown on the application and approved specifically in advance by the Burial Ground Superintendent.

The wording on headstones to include the name(s) of those interred, relevant dates and a simple tasteful message such as "Rest in Peace" or "Always in our Thoughts" etc may be left in their natural engraved state or highlighted in gold / black / silver / brown, but may not be highlighted in any other colour (including white)

Any proposed wording on headstones going beyond the simple nature of the kind described in the preceding paragraph may be used only if approved specifically by the Burial Ground Committee.

All headstones and plinths, in addition to meeting the above specifications, must be approved in advance by the Parish Council and must be of one of the following materials –

Limestone

Fine grained Sandstones

Slates

Granites

If it is not desired to have a headstone, one single flower vase only may be left at the head of the grave to receive floral tributes. In such circumstances, no floral tributes, other than those that can be contained within this vase, may be left at the graveside. The single flower vase must not be made of glass / ceramics or china.

No kerbstones, railings, markers or any similar device may be erected around the grave space.

If purchasers of the exclusive rights to bury have any doubts as to the acceptability of the stone which, they wish to use – or doubts upon any other matters; they should ask their Stone Mason/Funeral Director to seek advice from the Parish Council's Burial Ground Superintendent. It is important that this is done to avoid abortive expense to themselves at a later date should, for example, the Council not be able to accept their first choice of stone or any aspect of the inscription planned thereon.

Memorial Tablets on Plots containing Cremated Remains

Such commemorative stone tablets must be approved in advance by the Parish Council and must be laid flat in the approved position on the plot.

Each tablet may contain a recess to take one single flower vase/pot only. Any flowers/plants to be placed on the grave must be accommodated in one recess, placed on the tablet itself. Flowers/plants must not be placed on the grassed surface of the grave area.

Commemorative tablets are limited in size to 450mm (18ins) by 380mm (15ins) and must be mounted on a foundation slab fitted flush to the ground and with surface dimensions of 480mm (19ins) by 410mm (16ins).

No kerbstones, railings or any similar device may be erected around the grave space.

Additions/Amendments to Inscriptions on Headstones/Memorial Tablets

Headstones to coffin graves (and memorial tablets to plots containing cremated remains) may from time to time require additions or amendments to their inscriptions. This will usually be where additional interments within the grave space have occurred and it is wished to reflect this in the inscription.

However, this regulation applies generally to all changes made to inscriptions - even where the change is made without the need to remove the headstone/tablet from site. The term inscription covers graphics as well as wording (see page 4 of these "Rules and Regulations").

The following procedure shall apply also to any request to clean and/or re-gild or re-furbish a headstone or memorial tablet, whether or not the headstone/tablet needs to be removed from site for the process.

Before a headstone/memorial tablet is removed from site and/or any change is made to the inscription, written permission must be obtained from the Burial Ground Superintendent who will supply the appropriate application form for this purpose. A charge will be levied for such applications.

Once the work is completed, the headstone/memorial tablet may be returned to site only after inspection by the Burial Ground Superintendent has warranted that the works completed have corresponded with those for which approval has been given.

Works to headstones/memorial tablets on site may take place only with the express written permission of the Burial Ground Superintendent and are subject to the same application form procedure as described above.

Flowers placed on Graves

The following Rules relate to graves containing interred coffins and to those containing cremated remains.

It is acceptable for floral tributes to be of either fresh or artificial variety. If fresh flowers are chosen then varieties such as roses, sweet williams, geranium and iris are advisable since they appear to be the least attractive to rabbits. However, the variety of flowers chosen is a matter for the personal preference of the donor. In lieu of cut flowers, one plastic pot plant may be left as a floral tribute.

All floral tributes including artificial flowers, or a plant must be contained within the recess provided in the plinth/tablet where such a recess exists or otherwise on the plinth/tablet itself. No flowers or plants may be stood on the grave surface. However, these must be of an unbreakable material (no glass or ceramics) due to the potential of them breaking and causing injury to grounds staff. No other tributes or adornments may be left within the grave area.

The Parish Council does take steps to discourage the presence of rabbits. However, it must be remembered that with Comber Ridge being a rural hillside burial ground, the presence of rabbits is a natural occurrence.

In the interests of the good order of the burial ground overall, the Parish Council reserves the right to remove floral tributes (including pot plants) when they become spoiled, decayed or otherwise unsightly and/or where they do not comply with these Rules and Regulations. Similarly, the Parish Council reserves the right to remove from graves any items that do not conform to these Rules or Regulations or are otherwise thought by the Parish Council, at its sole discretion, to be unsightly or unsuitable.

Insurance of Graves, Headstones, Plinths, Memorial Tablets, Vases, Flowers etc

None of the above items is covered by the Parish Council's insurance policy and the Council can accept no liability whatsoever for any damage to, loss or theft of, these items or for the result of any instability or falling of headstones etc. Those purchasing the exclusive right to bury must maintain such items in a sound and stable condition at all times and are advised strongly to effect their own insurance cover for such items.

The Responsibility of Funeral Directors

The Funeral Director must be satisfied that the grave is correctly prepared and ready 24 hours before the interment of a coffin is due to take place. For a cremated remains plot, this should be prepared 1 hour before the interment takes place. All Rules and Conditions in the Local Cemeteries Order 1977 are to be observed. Funeral Directors must ensure that any operatives working on their behalf in the burial ground observe all statutory safety requirements and all appropriate safe working guidelines/practices.

The Scattering of Cremated Remains

As an alternative to coffin burials and the interment of cremated remains, the Council offers a service of scattering cremated remains in a garden of remembrance. Those selecting this service must appreciate that it does not include the provision for any tangible memorial to be erected at the last resting place of the deceased – nor does it permit floral tributes to be brought

to the area of scattering. Furthermore, the area set aside as the garden of remembrance is not consecrated ground.

The Rules and Regulations specific to this form of committal are as follows –

The right to have Ashes scattered in the burial ground is restricted to those who were residents, or one-time residents, of the Parish of Kinver. The right extends to the immediate family of such a person, the immediate family comprising strictly the wife, husband or long-time partner, sons and daughters of those who so qualify.

Note: For the avoidance of doubt, the right does not extend to the mother or father of the person concerned.

All scattering of Ashes is strictly by prior appointment with the Burial Ground Superintendent and subject to the Certificate of Cremation being provided in advance to the Superintendent thus enabling the right as set out above to be verified.

Ashes are to be scattered by the Burial Ground Superintendent (or his representative) only, and only within the area designated by the Council. (i.e. behind the Chapel within Comber Ridge East.)

The fee charged for this service is additional to any other fees/charges in relation to Ministers of Religion or Funeral Directors (see below)

The ashes are scattered over a sufficiently wide area so as to provide no specific point of interment or resting place in any individual case and no memorial is permitted in the area of scattering. However, there is provision for a plaque to be fixed to the side of the waterworks building near to the area where ashes are scattered.

Note: any family wishing to have a bespoke resting place, which can be accompanied by a memorial marking the plot, should consider a conventional interment plot for cremated remains or a burial plot.

A record is kept of the names of the deceased whose remains have been scattered and the date of scattering in each case, there being no additional fee for this service.

There is no objection to the presence of a Minister of Religion at the scattering of Ashes in order that a brief address might be given or prayers offered – but responsibility for such, and for any associated disbursements due, are the responsibility of the family of the deceased.

Any arrangements for the presence of a Funeral Director when Ashes are to be scattered, and any associated fee, also is the responsibility of the family of the deceased.

General

In considering any approvals which the Parish Council needs to grant under these regulations, it will be guided by – but not necessarily limited by – the guidelines relating to the Management of Churchyards and Burial Grounds as issued by the Diocese of Lichfield.

In Conclusion

At first sight, these Rules and Regulations might appear formidable. In fact, they comprise a simple common-sense approach to maintain the character of the burial ground and make for the effective maintaining of the area. The Burial Ground Superintendent will be happy to deal with any problems or difficulties that might arise where the solution is not immediately apparent from the application of these Rules and Regulations.

If any areas of dissatisfaction remain after consultation with the Burial Ground Superintendent, these should be referred to the Chairman of the Parish Council at the address set out below for discussion at the next Parish Council meeting as they are the Burial Authority –

Kinver Parish Council Offices
95 High Street, Kinver, South Staffordshire DY7 6HD
June 2019