

Swaffham Cemetery

Brandon Road, Swaffham



Cemetery Guidelines 2026.27

created by the Council for the management of Swaffham Cemetery, Brandon Road, Swaffham.



Swaffham Town Council is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the Cemetery, working closely with local Funeral Directors and Stonemasons to maintain a respectful final resting place for loved ones and a tranquil place for families and friends to visit.

The following are guidelines we ask everyone to follow to ensure this.

General Information

- The cemetery is open to the public daily between 8.00 a.m. and half an hour before sunset.
- There is an automatic barrier that is open from dawn until dusk.
- All enquiries relating to the cemetery should be directed to the Town Hall, 4 London Street, Swaffham, PE37 7DQ, 01760 722922, reception@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk and information, including layout can also be found on the council website: www.swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk.
- The Town Hall is open **Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm, Friday 10am-1pm.**

Funerals

- **Three clear days'** notice (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays) must be given to the Council for an interment in a grave - burial or ashes.
 - This does not apply to any religion which requires immediate burial or, in the case of death from endemic disease, upon medical certification.
- All requests must be received on Council approved application forms **before** the interment and, in the case of memorials, **before** they are erected.
- All relevant fees or charges are to be paid under the terms of the invoice.
- Interments can take place – **Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 3.30 p.m.** (October to March) **9.00am to 4.00pm** (April to September) and **Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm.**
- No interment can take place on a weekend or Bank Holiday except on the certificate of a Coroner or Registered Medical Practitioner where immediate interment is necessary.

Burials & Ashes

- A Council Interment application form is required from the Funeral Director.
- Council approval is given once records are checked and paperwork processed.
- For new plots an Exclusive Rights fee & certificate will be issued for the plot.
- The certificate (green form) for the disposal of a body, or in the case of an inquest the Coroners Order for Burial, must be produced before interment.
- If the deceased was diagnosed with CJD or Anthrax only a single grave will be dug, and it cannot be reopened for a second interment.
- For the burial of a still-born child an appropriate certificate issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, or the Coroner will be required.
- A Certificate of Cremation must be produced within 10 days following the interment of ashes.
- Once the funeral/interment has been completed the Council will issue an invoice.
- Once the invoice has been paid the relevant Exclusive Rights certificate is issued ~~via the FD or direct~~ to the next of kin.

Memorials

- A Council Memorial application form is required from the Stonemason – including a drawing with the proposed inscription and details of any decorative engraving.

- Approval can only be given by the Council for plots where a burial / ashes has been allocated / completed.
- For Burials the memorial stone cannot be laid for at least 10 months after interment and full kerb stones for at least 12 months after interment.
- For Ashes it is acknowledged the stone may be required for the same date as the interment – in these instances the Council require an Interment Form for the Ashes interment be approved first - even if an interment date has yet to be agreed – before approval can be given on a stonemason request.

Graves - burials & ashes

- All graves must be excavated and back filled only by qualified persons appointed by the Funeral Director or authorised by them and, except in the case of children's and/or ashes graves, are to be dug a minimum of :
 - 4 feet 6 inches deep (single).
 - 6 feet 6 inches deep (double)
- All grave mounds will be levelled where applicable after the minimum of twelve months from the date of interment and where necessary made good.
- Temporary markers must be erected by the undertaker however may be removed after 9 months from the date of interment or when a memorial (headstone etc) is erected, whichever is sooner.
- Identification
- The Coffin/casket must show the name of the deceased. The identity shown on the coffin/casket will be verified by the Council's officer in attendance at the funeral by the Funeral Director at each burial service.

Exclusive Rights

- Any member of the public or Funeral Director can enquire as to available plots.
- Plots can be provisionally set aside however until a formal Exclusive Rights approval has been given by the Council (application and fully paid invoice) then the plot remains available to the public.

Purchasing Exclusive Rights of Burial

- Purchasers may select burial plots subject to the Regulations of the Council.
- The sites of available or common graves or those reserved for cremated remains will be determined by the Council.
- Exclusive Right of Burial may be purchased upon payment of the appropriate charge - the purchaser then possesses the Exclusive Right of Burial in that grave for the period of 99 years.
- The grant of such rights does not confer on the owner any right of title to the land, the grave itself remaining, at all times, the property of the Council.

Graves where no Exclusive Right of Burial has been granted

- For new Interment applications, where no Exclusive Rights have been purchased previously, the Council will issue an Exclusive Rights of Burial as part of the interment process.

Transfer of Ownership of Exclusive Right of Burial

- Effecting a legally sound transfer of ownership is vitally important in order to protect the Council. ~~your authority or company.~~ It is imperative that ~~you~~ the Council only allow a transfer of ownership to take place to the person or persons who are entitled.
- A transfer can be legally effected on the production of a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration.
- If one or the other of these legal documents have not been issued a Statutory Declaration made by the lawful next of kin must be completed and witnessed by a Magistrate or Commissioner of Oaths (usually a solicitor).
- You can check the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) website for clarification: <https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/>.

Memorials

- No monument is allowed to be erected, placed on any grave or in any part of the Cemetery without the written consent of the Council.
- If any monument is erected in breach of the Council guidelines, they may be removed by the Council without notice.

- No monuments may be constructed on graves and no memorial stones (other than approved headstones and/or flower vases) may be erected.
- Cemetery grave memorial inscriptions should record those interred in the grave, matching burial records, or state "buried elsewhere" and referenced in the memorial inscription.

Memorials which may be permitted are:

Grave Sections – A, B, C, D, F, G H, I

- A Headstone not exceeding 2'6" in width, 4" thickness and 3'0" in height.
- A Headstone not exceeding 2'6" in width, 4" thickness, between 3'0" and 4'6" 4' maximum in height:
 - if a stepped plinth is incorporated in the design the base will be permitted up to 2'6" by 1'6".
 - the concrete base should not be above ground level when fitted.
- A Headstone memorial with a kerb stone enclosing a space not exceeding
 - 7'x 3' - Headstone not exceeding 3'0" in height, 4" thickness and 3'0" in width.
 - 7'x 3' - Headstone between 3'0" and 4'6" 4' maximum in height, 4" thickness and 2'6" in width.
 - 7'6"x 7'6" - Headstone not exceeding 3'0" in height, 2'6" in width, and 4" in thickness.
 - 7'6"x 7'6" - Headstone between 3'0" and 4'6" 4' maximum in height, 4" thickness and 2'6" in width.
- Coloured graphics on headstones by prior approval only.
- Flat stone placed horizontally with the top at ground level 12"x12".

For use when ashes are interred in a grave or for a person not interred in Swaffham Cemetery e.g "resting elsewhere", "buried at sea", etc

Ashes Section E & J

- Flat stones placed horizontally with the top at ground level 15"x12"
 - A desk tablet not exceeding 1'6" x 1'6" will be permitted. All ashes tablets must be placed on a 24" x 24" slab base.
- All foundations of monuments, the removal of, or re-fixing of same, and all other connected work will be regulated by the Council; work undertaken must be by qualified Stonemasons and must ensure the protection of the grass and the walks during the progress of the work and once completed must clear away any materials not used, rubbish etc. and shall be responsible for any damage done in carrying out and completing any of the above works.

Fixing

- The memorials shall be in line at the head of the grave on a 3" deep reinforced concrete foundation or landing with ground anchorage, set firm and level 1/2" below ground level, with a 4" projection all-round the bases of the headstone or plinth.
- Headstones shall be securely dowelled to the landing or the plinth and bedded in cement mortar. Plinths shall be bedded on to the landing.
- Tablets (and Flat Stones) on ashes plots shall be secured in a concrete foundation, set firm and level 1/2" below ground level, such foundation not to exceed 24" x 24".

N.B. ALL MEMORIALS must be erected to the specifications applicable at the time by members of the **National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) & BRAMM**. These may change at various times in line with Government Legislation and Stonemason guidance. All memorials shall be the subject of a visual inspection by the Council annually. If found to be unsafe the Council, having a duty to minimise risk, will take the action which best suits the circumstances relating to the individual memorial. Action may need to be taken immediately following an inspection.

- All monuments shall be inscribed with the grave section, row, and number to which they relate.
- Any monument/inscription for a person not interred in Swaffham Cemetery must indicate that fact (e.g., "resting elsewhere", "buried at sea", etc
- At least 24 hours' notice must be given to the Council Office before the monument/cross is erected to avoid clashing with other activities in the Cemetery.

- All monuments including permanent wooden crosses shall, after erection, be kept in good repair by the owner and unless this is done the Council reserve the right to cause them to be repaired or removed at the owner's expense.
- Small wooden crosses may be erected temporarily for a short period after interment either to identify a new grave or until a permanent memorial stone is erected, however, these crosses must not be left on graves for more than one year.
- Grave mounds will be levelled nine months after each burial.
- Cleaning of any memorial stone is the responsibility of the owner of the stone.
- If any monument is erected in violation of the Regulations of the Council, the same may at any time be removed by the Council without notice.

Greenery/Decoration

- Vases - a maximum of **2** vases, 8" maximum in height, width or thickness are permitted per grave.
 - These can be freestanding vases, pots or receptacles and must be placed in line with the memorial headstones, or two vases preformed within the headstone itself.
 - Vases or receptacles made of glass are **not permitted** anywhere in the Cemetery.
- Unauthorised materials (*stones metal/hoop wire, lawn edging, temporary memorials including wreathes, ornaments, vases, silk flowers etc*) will be removed without notice and disposed of by the Council.
- Christmas Wreaths, Floral Tributes, and other adornments:
 - Wreaths and cards on graves are permitted during the Christmas period however must be removed by 14 February. ALL wreaths and cards left will be removed by the Council and disposed of respectfully.
 - Other floral tributes will be removed when faded.
 - Other adornments should be restricted to the memorial headstone.
- No Shrubs, plants or flowers may be planted within the Cemetery or on any grave.
- The Council reserves the right, without notice, to remove any unauthorised planting.
- Council staff take every care when maintaining the cemetery to avoid damaging memorials, vases etc

Vehicles

- Vehicles are permitted only to use the entrance drive and designated tracks located mainly around the perimeter, no vehicles are allowed to enter the Cemetery burial areas.
- Parking, for short periods, is only permitted for the purpose of funerals, family and friends visiting and in connection with the erection and maintenance of graves and memorials.
- The cemetery barrier, erected 2026, is open from dawn until dusk.

Visitors

- Vandalism, of any kind, within the cemetery will be reported to the Police and offenders will be liable to prosecution.
- Children under the age of twelve years of age are not allowed within the Cemetery except under the care of a responsible adult; and visitors will be expected to observe proper decorum at all times.
- No person shall be allowed to offer goods for sale or to solicit orders for the sale of any goods within the Cemetery. Offenders will be liable to expulsion.
- It is forbidden to play any sports, discharge firearms, except at a military funeral, or disturb any person assembled in the Cemetery for the purpose of burying a body or commit any nuisance within the Cemetery; offenders will be liable for prosecution.
- The consumption of alcohol within the Cemetery is strictly prohibited.
- Dogs must always be kept on a lead and under proper control with any dog mess deposited in the bins.
- The riding of horses, cycles and motorcycles through and within the Cemetery is strictly prohibited, unless the rider is attending a funeral.

The Council reserve the right from time to time to make alterations or additions to the foregoing Rules and Regulations consistent with the Burial Acts. The Regulations of Her Majesty's Secretary of State, under the Burial Acts, and applicable to the Cemetery must be considered as incorporated herewith.

Reviewed and agreed July 2026