

**Okehampton Town Council
Parks Committee 29th September 2025
Meeting Report**

Date:	8 th September 2025
Name:	Abi Horn

7.1 Bookings

14th September 100 Years of Girl Guiding Picnic

12th -20th Anderton and Rowland Fair in the Park

7.2 Putting Improvements

Background

The putting green area is currently underused and has become a wildlife wilderness, with only poor-quality grasses growing. In its current state, the space requires significant winter maintenance by the Parks Team, which will incur unavoidable costs even if no improvements are made.

Proposal

It is recommended that the Council adopts a phased approach to upgrading the putting green, making best use of the funds already allocated in the budget.

Phase One – Immediate Works (within existing budget)

- **Installation of Putting Green Structures:** Purchase and install the required metal hole structures.
- **Safety and Maintenance Improvements:** Place stone edging around each hole, level with the ground, to remove any trip hazards and enable easy mowing.
- **Planting for Biodiversity:** Begin planting schemes around the putting green to improve biodiversity and enhance the visual appeal of the area.

Rationale

- **Cost Efficiency:** Even if the upgrade is not started, substantial winter maintenance work will still be required, resulting in costs to the Council. Undertaking Phase One ensures money is spent on improvements rather than simply maintenance.
- **Encouraging Usage:** By making the area more attractive and usable, it is anticipated that usage will increase, generating income that could be reinvested in subsequent phases of the project.
- **Biodiversity Gains:** Early planting will establish growth ahead of next summer, improving the look of the green and supporting wildlife.
- **Future Flexibility:** A phased approach allows the Council to manage expenditure over time, while ensuring that visible improvements are delivered quickly.

Recommendation

That Council approves the commencement of Phase One works to the putting green, using the existing budget allocation, with the intention of delivering further phases as income and resources permit.

7.3 Car Park Surface

Our CEO did the monthly car park check today at Simmons Park Car Park and has provided a report as regards potholes and potential health & safety hazards etc. There are some clearer photographs of the current state below and I have attached the CEO's report for your consideration.





7.6 Cooper Beech Tree

Please accept this email as confirmation that the Local Authority wishes to raise **No Objection** to the works detailed within your exemption request at W3W location scale.waistcoat.brick, noting the works must be limited solely to those detailed within your notice. If your notice entails the removal of a protected tree of visual amenity value or that the works '*destroy it as an amenity*' we are required to ensure its replacement under Section 206 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, we will make further contact to issue a formal Decision Notice where trees have been felled. You may now remove the tree at your earliest convenience upon receipt of this email

7.7 I am asking for permission to store some goal posts in Simmons Park. I'm currently a youth football coach for Okehampton Argyle and for many years the goals have been stored behind the pavilion in the park on brackets. The four small goals are 12x6 feet and I am proposing that they be stored leaning against the green school fence but on the leisure centre side next to the small access gate into the cricket/football field.

The under 8s, under 9s and under 10s all use these goals, and we all play on the two pitches nearest to the play park end. Having to carry four goals from the rear of the pavilion to the location is difficult and backbreaking and being able to move them within close distance to the pitches would be incredibly helpful for all the coaches.

I have attached two photos to show the location I am suggesting. For clarity I am asking for permission to store the goals between the green fencing and the hedge to the left of the small access gate which leads towards the putting green/leisure centre. The four goals will be chained to the green fence with a coded padlock for access by coaches, during evenings and weekends. They will not be visible from the leisure centre side due to the hedgerow and will be partially visible from the pitch side.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter and your ongoing support of Okehampton Argyle Youth Football Club.





9.1 Burial Report

Burials since last report 1

Headstones additional inscriptions 3

Scattering lawn request 0



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

DRAFT

Snow and Ice Management Policy

This policy is in accordance with a resolution made by the Parks Committee on 11th February 2019. The policy sets out how snow and ice within Simmons Park and other outdoor areas which are the responsibility of the council will be managed as reasonably possible if members of staff are able to safely access the relevant sites and equipment.

Simmons Park

Footpaths

On being advised of imminent snow/icy conditions temporary warning signage will be strategically placed at the pedestrian entrance, at both sides of the bridges and other prominent areas of the park, advising caution as paths may be slippery and untreated.

Being the area within the council's responsibility which has the highest footfall and most likely to be frequented by members of the public during periods of snow, the pathway from the pedestrian entrance gate to Chalet Treloar and across Jubilee Bridge into the car park will be cleared of snow and gritted, as much as reasonably possible and if members of staff are able to make their way safely to the site.

Grit spread on Jubilee Bridge will be kept to a minimum to reduce the risk of it washing into the river.

Carpark

If staff are able to safely attend the site, temporary warning signage will be strategically placed at the entrance to the carpark.

It will not be possible to clear snow or grit from the carpark or its access roadway due to staff capacity and if it is felt necessary the carpark will be closed. This being the decision of any member of staff who is able to make it to the site, access and erect the signage.

Clapps Wood

The pathway will not be cleared of snow or gritted.

On being advised of imminent snow/icy conditions temporary warning signage will be fixed to the gate at each end of the pathway through the woods.

Fairplace Garden and Public Toilets

The pathway in front of and entrance to the public toilets at Fairplace and Market Street will be cleared of snow and gritted, as much as reasonably possible and if members of staff are able to make their way safely to the site.

On being advised of imminent snow/icy conditions temporary warning signage will be placed as near as possible to the entranceways.

Other Areas

It will not be possible to clear snow or grit, or place signage in other areas, including the skate park, council parking area in Market Street and Council owned Cemetery adjacent to All Saints Church, and these will be left untreated.



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Cemetery



Contact details:

Okehampton Town Council
Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

cemetery@okehampton.gov.uk

www.okehampton.gov.uk

Address:

Church Path
Okehampton
EX20 1LE

What 3 Words:

scanner.bibs.square

Council Cemetery

Okehampton Town Council only owns and is responsible for the newest Cemetery area at All Saints Church. This is known as Okehampton Cemetery and is highlighted in green on the map.

The Cemetery ~~has been~~was managed by the Northmoor Team Ministry ~~until~~On 1st April 2021 ~~when the~~ Cemetery management was brought in-house and run by the Town Council under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. Management of all aspects of the cemetery is subject to the Town Council's regulations

The Cemetery area owned by Okehampton Town Council is un-consecrated.

Cemetery Regulations

The Council believe in offering as much choice as possible to bereaved people and have attempted to keep regulations to a minimum. It is recognised, however, that some regulations are necessary in order to ensure that the cemetery is a safe, attractive, and fitting place for all those who visit and work in them.

Full copies of the Council's Rules and Regulations, together with its Memorial Management Policy, are available from the Town Clerk. They can also be viewed online at www.okehampton.gov.uk.

A brief summary of some of the regulations and other factors relating to the upkeep and working of the cemetery are given here.

Okehampton Cemetery is a place of peace and quiet reflection. It is also a workplace. Visitors to the cemetery are welcome, but please respect the special nature of the site, the needs of all users, and safety factors.

Memorials on graves must be of good quality, hard-wearing materials and must be approved by the Council before being fixed. It is recommended that accredited memorial masons are used. More information is available from the Town Clerk.

We require cooperation in keeping the grassed area of graves free of pots, plants, and other artefacts. This is so that the grass can be cut using mowers without causing damage or risking injury to the operator and visitors from glass or plastic shards.

We recognise that you may wish to leave tributes, therefore we allow pot plants and suitable artefacts to be placed at the head of the grave where

they are at less risk of damage by mowing. We ask that vases are made from non-breakable material, as glass or ceramic pots will shatter during winter due to the freezing of any water in them. Broken glass or pottery presents a danger to visitors, staff, and wildlife in the cemetery. Plastic flowers are not permitted. Please think carefully about your choice of container and seek advice from the Town Clerk if necessary.

Please note that if you place articles along the length of the grave, we will not be able to cut the grass for you and the grave may look untidy compared to those around it. We reserve the right to remove the articles and place them at the head of the grave or take them to the Council offices for collection. Please be aware that the cemetery is a community asset and choose items for your grave that are in-keeping and appropriate.

Please note that it may be necessary at some point in the future to excavate the graves surrounding yours. If so, we will need to place boards over the grave and a box to accommodate the soil, and you may therefore not be able to visit the grave for a short while. Please be assured that this will only be necessary where there is no other option, and that the grave will be cleaned and tidied and returned to its usual condition as soon as the burial has taken place.

Exclusive Rights of Burial

When you purchase a grave, you do not actually buy the land that the grave occupies – that remains in the ownership of the Council. Purchasing a grave means that you purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial of the grave. This means that no burials can take place in the grave without your permission. In Okehampton Cemetery, purchasing the Exclusive Right of Burial also gives you the right to have a memorial placed on the grave, subject to current memorial regulations and the payment of a permit fee.

If the Exclusive Right of Burial of a grave is not purchased, the Council retains the rights, and may use any remaining space in the grave for further unrelated burials. No memorials are allowed on unpurchased graves.

The purchase of a grave gives you:

Control over who is buried in the grave

The right to place a memorial stone or other type of memorial

You can choose to transfer the rights to the grave to another person, but this must be done using an official form available from the Town Clerk,

and it is subject to an administration charge. You may bequeath the rights in your Will, but the Executor will need to contact the Town Clerk in order to effect the Transfer to the new owner. If you do not leave a will, your next of kin will need to contact the Town Clerk for advice on how the rights can be transferred.

Deed of Grant

When you purchase a grave, the Council will issue you with a Deed of Grant. The Deed is proof of your ownership and is a very important document. You should keep the Deed in a safe place as you may be asked to produce it when you ask for a burial to take place in the grave.

Length of purchase

You may purchase a grave in Okehampton Cemetery for a period of 30 years. At the end of the lease the rights to the grave will revert to the Council, and any memorial on the grave may be removed. Leases may be extended during their lifetime but can only be extended back to the original 30 years.

Responsibilities of Owners

As the owner, you are responsible for the safety and condition of any memorial on the grave.

Although the Council has responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety of visitors and staff in cemeteries, the responsibility for the safety of individual memorials rests with the owner. If a memorial becomes dilapidated and/or unsafe, the Council has the right to remove it or make it safe. The cost for any such work can be claimed from the grave owner.


The Council undertakes regular safety checks on all the memorials in the Cemetery. Where possible, the grave owner will be contacted if a memorial is found to be in need of work. The owner would then be given the option of having the work done themselves using a mason of their choice or paying the Council to do the work for them. If neither option is chosen, the Council retains the right to remove the danger presented by the memorial.

In order to keep our records up to date so that we may contact you, if necessary, it is important that any changes of address are notified to us as soon as possible.

Responsibilities of the Council

Whether the grave is purchased or not, the Council will maintain it to a decent standard by cutting the grass regularly and ensuring that it is topped up and levelled if it should sink.

The Council will carry out periodic testing of the stability of any memorial on the grave and will contact you if there are any problems. The Council is not responsible for the maintenance of individual memorials.

 <p>Okehampton Town Council</p>	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Okehampton Town Council</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Cemetery Grave Digging Policy & Procedure</h2>
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It is the policy of Okehampton Town Council (the Council) to ensure a high standard of grave digging whilst maintaining safety and dignity. This extends beyond the day of interment to the weeks and months afterwards when the soil is settling to ensure that all graves are maintained to the highest standard.

1. Procedures

1.1 The following procedures are advisory and are not exhaustive. It is the responsibility of Funeral Directors to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and where these Procedures conflict with legislation then legislation shall prevail.

1.2 All Funeral Directors, grave diggers and contractors working in Okehampton Cemetery must comply with all legislative requirements and provide to the Council copies of policies, risk assessments, method statements, safe systems of work, staff training records, COSHH assessments, insurance certificates or any other document requested by the Council prior to undertaking any work on site.

1.3 The Council may undertake spot checks without prior notice to ensure compliance with their Policy and Procedures. Any Funeral Director, his employee, contractor or any other person found to be in contravention thereof may be prohibited from working at the cemetery, by the Council and shall not be entitled to any recompense whatsoever.

2. General Regulations

2.1 No grave can be dug in Okehampton Cemetery without the permission of Okehampton Town Council.

2.2 It is the responsibility of the Funeral Director to arrange for the excavation of the grave and removal of any existing memorials or kerbstones and the replacement of same after burial.

2.3 Funeral Directors are to employ their own grave diggers. It is their responsibility to ensure that the grave diggers employed by them are familiar with the cemetery and abide by this policy and these procedures.

2.4 No full grave or cremation plot should be dug more than 48 hours before the interment, except by prior arrangement with the Town Clerk.

2.5 Appropriate safety footwear must be worn at all times.

2.6 A hard hat must be worn when working in an excavation and protective eyewear should be worn when appropriate

2.7 Entry and egress from a grave must be by ladder. On no-account must a gravedigger climb out of a grave by treading on any part of the shoring.

2.8 A ladder must remain in place whenever an operative is working in a grave in order to maintain an emergency exit.

2.9 All finished graves should be prepared using imitation grass matting. The matting will be laid out neatly on staging leaving no folds or gaps which may cause any person to trip. Walkboards/staging must be laid along the length of the grave and supported at each end and must be capable of carrying the weight of the pall bearers and coffin.

2.10 All graves must be dug centrally within the respective grave space. Graves that are not dug centrally within the grave space will increase the risk of collapse, as the intervening wall of undug soil on one side will be of reduced thickness.

2.11 Shoring timbers and struts must be inspected prior to use for any sign of deterioration. Defective timbers and struts must not be used and must be cut down to prevent use by any other person.

2.12 Shoring must be incorporated as digging proceeds. The amount of shoring equipment required should be assessed according to the required depth of excavation, soil type and weather conditions and the depth of shoring timbers/hydraulic units.

2.13 Lowering webbings and putlogs must be inspected prior to each burial, to ensure that no deterioration has occurred and that they are capable of taking the weight of the coffin. Frayed webbings should not be used.

2.14 The interment area and surrounding graves and headstones are to be left clean and tidy. All equipment to be removed and the paths cleared of any debris.

3. Pre-Excavation Preparation

3.1 General

It is extremely important that Funeral Directors, their staff and in particular, grave diggers follow the advice contained within this policy and these procedures to ensure a safe working environment for all Cemetery operatives/visitors when excavating a grave, including themselves. It is important that grave diggers can safely assess the working site, including memorials, assess the risk, record the assessment accurately, and understand the range of options available for making the area safe for all who will use it.

3.2 Using Risk Assessment Techniques

Risk assessment is central to ensuring a safe working environment. Grave digging within the burial ground should be covered by a suitable risk assessment and safe system of work as identified in this policy. When assessing the hazards on a potential excavation site, a number of decisions need to be made based, on sound risk assessment principles.

3.3 Which areas of the burial process need to be considered during site preparation?

Consideration should be given to the range of hazards that may exist around the excavation area. Consideration should be given to activities that will subsequently take place:

- Safe and easy access for operatives and equipment
- Safe access for persons attending and officiating at the burial service
- The health and safety of operatives during the excavation process
- The health and safety of cemetery visitors

3.4 What range of hazards exist in the area surrounding the grave to be excavated?

When considering the safety of the site before, during and after excavation work, the following must be considered:

- Ground conditions – proper consideration of the ground conditions surrounding the grave and on the route to the graveside should be taken account of with particular care to be taken when areas contain multiple trip hazards. Safe route, proper footwear and care in unstable or wet/slippery conditions should be emphasised in risk assessment for this work.
- Memorials – memorials present specific hazards and must be dealt with according to the guidance produced by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).
- Correct positioning and marking out of grave.
- Protection of excavation – proper techniques to protect the integrity of the excavation are dealt with later in this document.
- Vegetation – proper consideration should be given to the effect of any evasive vegetation or work being carried out around trees that have low branches or unsafe branches.

The above risk assessment information is for guidance purposes only, lists are not to be considered all-inclusive but indicative of the types of risks that should be considered.

3.5 Locating Graves – Measuring and Marking

All graves to be excavated should be located and identified by using the cemetery grave plan. The location will have been marked in advance by a member of Council Staff.

All graves must be dug centrally within their respective grave spaces for the following reasons:

- If a grave is not dug centrally within its respective grave space one of the walls separating the adjacent grave will be of a narrower width and will increase the risk of collapse.
- When reopening a grave that was previously dug out of centre, the risk of collapse is increased.
- When a memorial is erected centrally on a grave that was dug out of centre the risk of the memorial subsiding and tilting is increased, which in turn increases the risk of the memorial becoming unstable and a danger in its own right.

3.6 Walkboards/Work Platform

Walkboards must be placed along each side of the grave to be dug that are supported on boards placed across the head and foot ends of the grave. This action will spread the weight of operatives and prevent falls due to crumbling surface edges. Walkboards should remain in place for the whole of the burial process, ie placed before excavation commences and not removed until after backfilling is completed.

4. Excavation and Ground Support

4.1 Preliminaries and Preparation

4.1.1 The grave space set aside for each burial shall not exceed 2.44m x 0.91m (8 feet long by 3 feet wide).

4.1.2 The grave digger will ensure that double depth graves are excavated to a standard depth of 2m (6ft 6”) for the first burial, to ensure that there is sufficient space for the second burial in the future.

4.1.3 The grave digger will ensure that all new graves are aligned so that memorial stones, when installed, will be in a straight line along the row.

4.1.4 No part of the coffin shall be at a depth less than 1.0m (3 feet) below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.

4.1.5 Burial, in a grave in which an interment has already taken place, shall ensure the new coffin is effectively separated from any other coffin previously placed and remaining in the ground by means of a layer of earth not less than 150mm (6 inches) in depth.

4.1.6 Shoring must be incorporated as digging proceeds. The amount of shoring equipment required should be assessed according to the required depth of excavation, soil type and weather conditions and the depth of shoring timbers/hydraulic units.

4.1.7 Any grave that is left unattended for whatever reason must be completely boarded over in such a manner as to prevent any person falling into the grave and fenced off.

4.1.8 All cremation plots will measure 18" x 18" for a single casket and the top of the casket should be a minimum of 2'6" below ground level.

4.1.9 No person shall disturb any interred human remains.

4.1.10 Spoil from the graves is to be placed in the area designated by the Town Clerk.

4.2 Machine Excavation

4.2.1 The Grave Digger must ensure that any machine used to dig a grave is operated by a person who has received appropriate training in the use of the machine.

4.2.2 The machine operator must ensure that no person stands within the area of the radius of the machine boom or bucket.

4.2.3 When moving a digging machine within the Cemetery, the driver must exercise caution and treat the grounds with respect.

4.2.4 When a machine is not in use, it must be parked on hard ground in such a manner that it does not cause an obstruction. When parked, the boom must be lowered with the bucket resting on solid ground. The ignition key must be removed. The blade on tracked machines must be in the down position whenever the vehicle is parked.

4.2.5 The machine operator must ensure that the machine is safely manoeuvred into the digging position.

4.2.6 The blade on a tracked machine must always be in the down position, when digging is in progress.

4.2.7 The operator must ensure that the machine is level before digging commences, to ensure that the sides of the grave are vertical. An unlevelled machine will cause one side of the grave to be under dug, which will increase the risk of grave collapse.

4.2.8 Care must be taken when excavating a grave whilst shoring is in place, to avoid striking any part of the shoring equipment with the machine bucket.

4.2.9 Striking or dislodging shoring will not only increase the risk of collapse of the grave but will also increase risk to the gravediggers who are required to rectify the situation.

4.2.10 Digging machines must be operated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and should be regularly serviced by a qualified person.

4.2.11 Any damage caused by grave-digging machinery must be reported to Okehampton Town Council immediately and remedied by the Grave Digger within 14 days.

4.3 Hand Excavation

4.3.1 Shoring must be incorporated as digging proceeds. Adequate shoring will be incorporated to prevent the collapse of the sides of the grave. Soil type and weather conditions will affect the requirements for each particular grave.

4.3.2 Care must be taken during periods of wet weather when it is advisable to close shore graves to full depth.

4.3.3 On completion of each excavation the gravedigger must ensure that the sides and ends of the grave are vertical and that the bottom of the grave is level. Shoring units must be level.

4.4 Dealing with Ground Water

4.4.1 Should water collect in a grave it should be removed prior to the interment. Ideally a motorised pump should be used, as this action will not require a gravedigger to enter the grave. The hose from the pump can be lowered into the grave from surface level.

4.4.2 When conditions indicate that water may collect in a grave a sump pit can be dug in the bottom of the grave towards one end.

4.4.3 The hose from the pump can be placed in the sump pit and as water is pumped out of the pit, the remaining water in the grave will be drawn towards the pit, thus leaving the greater part of the bottom of the grave dry.

4.4.4 When hand digging a sump pit can be kept open at one end with the gravedigger working away from it. This action will assist in reducing the amount of mud created on the bottom of the grave.

4.4.5 Once the bottom of the grave has been hand levelled off a sump pit can be dug.

4.4.6 Should water be removed from a grave using a petrol driven pump, no grave digger should be working in the grave while the pump is running, as exhaust fumes may enter the grave and collect at the bottom. Ideally the pump should be positioned as far away from the grave as possible and positioned down wind.

4.4.7 Should foul odours be encountered Okehampton Town Council should be informed immediately.

5. Preparation for Interment

5.1. Prior to preparing/dressing the grave the surrounding area should be examined to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe, unobstructed access is available for Funeral Directors' staff, clergy and mourners.

5.2. Any trip hazards that may be present must be removed.

5.3. Two putlogs should be placed across the grave onto which the coffin may be placed prior to the committal. Putlogs should 4' 6" X 4" (1.37m x 102mm x 102mm) and of good quality knot free planed timber. The distance between the putlogs should no less than 3'6" (1.07mm).

Care must be taken to ensure that sufficient webbing is placed on either side of the grave to enable each pallbearer to lower the coffin to the bottom of the grave.

5.4. Webbing should be checked for signs of deterioration or fraying before each burial service. Frayed or damaged webbing must not be used.

5.5. In some instances, there may be insufficient space to the side of the grave for the pallbearers to safely carry the coffin and place it on putlogs directly over the grave. A safer method for this situation is to place a board at either the foot or head end of the grave covered with grass matting on which to place the coffin. Two putlogs are placed across the board so that the coffin can be rested down with no risk of pallbearers trapping fingers. The lowering webbing is also placed across the board. At the appropriate time during the committal service the pallbearers can lift the coffin using the webbing and walk along the walkboards and safely lower the coffin into the grave.

6. Backfilling

6.1 General Requirements and Considerations

6.1.1 Backfilling should commence immediately after all mourners have left the cemetery and be completed fully on the same day.

6.1.2 Webbing and grass mats must be removed before backfilling commences.

6.1.3 Walkboards should be left in place during the whole of the backfilling procedure to prevent persons walking on any unprotected grave edge.

6.1.4 In order to reduce later subsidence and settlement of the grave, all backfill materials (including the material placed between the liners or vaults and sides of opened graves), shall be tamped and compacted in layers not to exceed 150mm in depth so that a compacted density of 90 percent shall result, using soil free from large lumps. **The grave is to be finished with a tidy mound of soil, covered with saved turfs to leave an immaculate finish.** The importance of this action cannot be stressed highly enough as the reduction of instances where the bereaved may be confronted with sunken graves is imperative. It will also subsequently reduce the risk of the memorial tilting and thereby becoming unstable.

6.2 Protection of the coffin

When backfilling large flints, pieces of rock or lumps of clay may damage the coffin when they impact from height. To reduce the risk of coffin damage, an angled timber can be placed into the grave. Backfill material will strike the timber, break its speed of fall and deflect to the sides of the grave.

6.3 Mourner Participation

6.3.1 Some ethnic and religious groups require carrying out the backfilling of the grave themselves. There is a conflict between health and safety and customer care in this situation and it is for the Funeral Director to assess the risk involved and decide whether to permit mourners to backfill.

6.3.2 In the event the Funeral Director gives permission to the mourners to backfill the grave, IT SHALL BE AT THE MOURNERS OWN RISK. The Funeral Director must take control of proceedings and stop backfilling at the relevant stages in order that grave diggers can remove shoring equipment.

6.3.3 It is vital to the health and safety of mourners that co-operation between cemetery staff, mourners and the Funeral Director conducting the funeral is established prior to the funeral and notified by the Funeral Director to the Council not less than 5 days prior to the date of the funeral.

7. Funeral Directors

7.1. Only Funeral Directors who have signed and returned the agreement to adhere to this policy and these procedures will be allowed to work in Okehampton Cemetery.

OKEHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL'S GRAVE DIGGING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

DECLARATION

I(name)

on behalf of (Name of Funeral Director)

Address:

.....

.....

acknowledge receipt Okehampton Town Council's Grave Digging Policy and Procedures at Okehampton Cemetery and undertake to comply with it. I shall make the Policy and Procedures known to all concerned and accept that it is my responsibility to ensure they in turn comply with them.

Signed Date



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Cemetery Rules and Regulations

Okehampton Town Council welcomes visitors to the Cemetery at All Saints Church and asks that visitors respect the peace and dignity of the facilities. This is a communal space for quiet reflection and remembering loved ones. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Please make yourself familiar with the regulations and ask a member of Council staff if there is any aspect on which you require further clarification. Through the rules and regulations, we aim to provide a balance between individual rights and information and the need to regulate for a safe, tidy and dignified environment with respect for the bereaved and visitors to the Cemetery. Please be aware that the ground surface can be uneven and we ask for your safety that you wear appropriate footwear when visiting. This is a burial area with only one hard standing path and has no hand rails or mobility aids provided and so visitors should recognise that they need to take care on uneven and possibly muddy or slippery ground. The cemetery is uneven in places and those with wheelchairs and mobility aids may find it a little difficult to move freely around the burial locations.

The newest Cemetery area at All Saints Church was purchased by Okehampton Town Council in 2004 and managed by the Northmoor Team Ministry until 1st April 2021 when it was brought in-house and run by Okehampton Town Council under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

These Regulations have been approved by the Town Council in respect of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order (LACO) 1977 and will subsequently be updated as required.

Copies may be obtained from the Town Council Office, Town Hall, Fore Street, Okehampton, EX20 1AA, or from the Town Council website at www.okehampton.gov.uk

Okehampton Town Council is committed to providing excellent customer care and maintenance standards. Our professional, committed and dedicated staff are more than pleased to assist, you need only ask.

Hours of Opening

The Cemetery will be open to the public daily throughout the year, however please be aware that at certain times access to individual graves may be restricted, for instance when an adjacent grave is being dug. Any disturbance will be kept to a minimum. Okehampton Town Council reserves the right to close all or part of the Cemetery at any time and without prior notice in the interest of public safety. Such closures will be published on the noticeboard situated at the entrance to the Cemetery and on the Council website, www.okehampton.gov.uk.

Office Hours

Okehampton Town Council Officers are available to assist you between 9.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Thursday, or by appointment outside of these hours.

Appointments can be made by calling 01837 53179 or alternatively by email to cemetery@okehampton.gov.uk

Hours of Interment

Interments may only take place Monday to Friday between the hours of 10am and 4pm, this being the time the last interment at the grave side must be concluded.

The time arranged for the interment is the time it commences at the graveside. If there is to be a service before the interment, sufficient time should be allowed for its duration and the journey to the Cemetery.

Notice of Interment

A provisional telephone booking followed by a written Notice of Interment form, provided by the Town Council, must be submitted to the Town Council at least 4 working days prior to an interment (exclusive of weekends, Public Holidays and the day of interment itself), except when an immediate interment under exceptional circumstances is required. **All information provided must be clear and completed on the Notice of Interment form in order to avoid delays or errors on the day of interment.**

The certificate of burial or cremation or the Coroner's Order for Burial and the appropriate fee must be submitted with the Notice of Interment form wherever possible. The burial may be postponed or delayed if the certificate or Coroner's Order is not delivered prior to the arranged time for the burial.

Fees

The list of burial fees and charges are available from the Town Council and by visiting www.okehampton.gov.uk. All fees and charges must be paid upon submitting the Notice of Internment. Fees are payable either via card payment (in person only), BACS or by cheque, made payable to Okehampton Town Council. Receipts for all payments will be given to the account holder.

Grave Spaces

The depth of every grave is controlled by the Town Council. No grave shall be deepened after the first interment. All coffins or other receptacles are interred in accordance with Part 1 Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities Cemetery Order (LACO), 1977.

No grave shall be excavated until verified and a grid identifying the location has been provided by a member of Town Council staff. Contracted grave diggers organised by funeral directors shall adhere to the Town Council's Code of Safe Working Practice which is available from the Council Office or via the Town Council's website. Funeral directors must notify the Town Council of all arranged grave digging.

Grave Rights

A Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) may be purchased at any time. An Exclusive Right of Burial is currently granted for a period not exceeding 30 years from the date of purchase.

The Exclusive Right of Burial can be issued in the names of up to three people.

A deed for the Exclusive Right of Burial will be issued to the purchaser/s of the grave upon payment of the appropriate fee. The Town Council's records contain the details of the registered grave owners; however, it is important that the grave owners keep safe their Exclusive Right of Burial deed. Possession of the deed does not in itself signify ownership of the Exclusive Rights.

When an interment is not that of the deed holder, consent in writing¹ from the deed holder(s) is required on the Notice of Internment form prior to the interment taking place.

Ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial can be transferred either during the owner's lifetime or after their death. Transfer of the Exclusive Right of Burial from the living owner(s) to another individual(s) is done so upon completion of an Assignment Form.

¹ In writing must include a "wet" signature, consent by email or with an electronic signature will be rejected.

The Exclusive Right of Burial may be transferred on the death of the registered owner to the person or persons entitled to it. In order to establish grave ownership, the person or persons wishing to take up ownership must be able to produce a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration. If these legal documents have not been applied for or issued, then ownership may be transferred to the executor by Statutory Declaration.

A transferred Exclusive Right of Burial is only valid if it has been registered and acknowledged by the Town Council.

Where no Exclusive Right of Burial exists the Town Council has the right to use unpurchased graves, that have sufficient depth, for further interments. No previous interments will be disturbed in such circumstances.

Funerals

The conduct of all funerals within the Cemetery is subject to the control of the Town Council. Coffins made from biodegradable materials only are accepted. Non-standard coffins may incur an additional fee.

After the interment the grave will be backfilled and any floral tributes will be respectfully placed on the grave.

The Town Council reserves the right to place soil on the graves next to those which are being opened without any prior notice. The soil will be removed immediately after the interment and the grave will be restored to its previous condition. Any work completed will be done in a respectful and sensitive manner.

Cremated Remains

Scattering of ashes is only permitted on the scattering lawn at the far end of the Cemetery.

Please do not scatter ashes in other areas of the cemetery or attempt to bury them yourself. Cremated remains left at a graveside or scattered without consent may be removed without notice. We are keen to ensure that the burial ground remains true to its ethos and it is important that the scattering lawn can be enjoyed as a place of peace and quiet reflection for the bereaved and future generations. As with all interments the location of the grave is recorded on the cemetery plans, and in the Register of Burials in Okehampton Town Council accordance with the Registration of Burials Act 1864, Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 and 1953, Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987. The placing of flowers and memorials on

the scattering lawn is not permitted. The lawn itself is a natural memorial for all to appreciate. If you would like to have a memorial arranged, please contact Okehampton Town Council.

Exhumation

Once human remains or ashes have been interred, they can only be removed with the permission of the Town Council and a licence granted by the Secretary of State. Any disturbance of buried remains is deemed to be an exhumation.

Memorials

No memorial of any description may be placed on unpurchased graves².

Only the deed holder/s may place a memorial on a grave.

No memorial may be placed on a grave without the approval of the Town Council. Memorials must be placed in accordance with British Standard 8415. The maximum size permitted is 0.91m (3ft) in height x 0.61m (2ft) in width, see the Schedule of Fees and Payments for more information.

An application for a Permit to Undertake Monumental Work will only be accepted from the Okehampton Town Council list of approved monumental masons. The appropriate fee must be submitted with the application form.

Memorials may not be placed on burial plots for 12 months from the date of interment, this includes second internments. This is to allow the earth to settle and prevent possible damage to memorials. The cremated remains section is exempt from the 12-month waiting period.

Temporary memorials may be placed on graves until a permanent memorial is placed. There is no fee required. A temporary memorial is defined as one that is provided by the undertaker.

Any unauthorised memorials placed on graves shall be removed in accordance with Article 14 of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order (LACO), 1977 and the cost invoiced to the family.

All new memorials must have the corresponding grave space number and the name of the monumental mason placed conspicuously on the reverse of the memorial.

² Burials that took place before April 2021 were under ecclesiastical rules and Okehampton Town Council does not expect EROBs to be purchased for these graves before a headstone can be erected. A statutory declaration signed in front of a solicitor will be required instead.

Kerbstones, border stones or any kind of boundary marking are not permitted in the Cemetery.

When digging graves in certain areas of the Cemetery we may need to respectfully move memorials and flowers from surrounding graves without notice, to make room for equipment. We will replace memorials in their correct position as soon as possible after the burial.

Prior authorisation is required to be sought from the Town Council before any work is undertaken, including the move of a Memorial to allow the interment of a second burial.

Maintenance

It is the responsibility of the grave owner to maintain the grave and memorial. Should it become dilapidated or unkempt through neglect, the Town Council will take appropriate action in accordance with Article 16 (2) of Local Authorities Cemetery Order (LACO), 1977. This could mean the removal of the memorial.

Records

The location of individual graves is recorded on the Cemetery plans, and in the Register of Burials in accordance with the Registration of Burials Act 1864, Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 and 1953, Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987 and the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977. The records are available to view by appointment.

It should be noted that records, including the Burial Register prior to 1st April 2021 were the responsibility of the Northmoor Team Ministry.

General Regulations

All visitors to the Cemetery must give due consideration and respect to other visitors, ceremonies and services that may be taking place at the time of their visit.

Grave owners must keep the Town Council advised of any change of address in writing, such notices must be signed by the registered owner.

The entrance to the Cemetery shall be kept clear at all times to allow the entry and exit of emergency vehicles, funerals, and visitors.

For their own safety children under the age of 12 are not permitted to visit the Cemetery unless accompanied by a responsible adult. Children must be supervised at all times.

Bicycles, skateboards or similar equipment may not be ridden in the Cemetery.

Visitors shall not sit, stand or climb on any memorial, gate, fence, tree or hedge in the Cemetery. Visitors should stay well clear of any monuments marked with fluorescent tape as they may be unstable.

We recognise that you may wish to leave tributes, therefore we allow pot plants and suitable artefacts to be placed at the head of the grave where they are at less risk of damage by mowing. We reserve the right to remove any articles placed along the length of the grave and place them at the head of the grave or take them to the Council offices for collection. We ask that vases are made from non-breakable material, as glass or ceramic pots will shatter during winter due to the freezing of any water in them. Broken glass or pottery presents a danger to visitors, staff and wildlife in the cemetery and any such items found will be removed and disposed of by Town Council staff without notice or taken to the Council Offices. Plastic flowers and astro-turf, gravel or similar are not permitted.

The planting of bulbs only on graves is permitted. Any other planting will be removed by Town Council staff and disposed of without prior notification.

Okehampton Town Council reserves the right to remove flowers placed on graves as part of routine care and maintenance. When funeral flowers and wreaths become unsightly, they will be removed for disposal. To avoid undue distress, bereaved family members who wish to retain wreaths or the attached memorial cards are advised to remove these prior to the third week after the interment.

All Christmas wreaths will be removed by Town Council staff for disposal during the last week of January. Bereaved family members who wish to retain wreaths or the attached memorial cards are advised to remove these prior to the above date to avoid any undue distress.

Plastic wrapping must be removed from floral tributes before being placed on a grave.

The Council shall not be liable for personal property brought into the Cemetery or for any damage or loss of memorials or memorabilia.

Photography is allowed for personal genealogy use only. Permission for all filming and photography for other purposes must be obtained in advance from the Town Council.

No alcohol is to be consumed within the Cemetery grounds.

Dogs must be on leads.

Visitors shall not interfere with Town Council employees working in the Cemetery, nor employ them to execute any private work whatsoever. Employees are not permitted to accept gratuities.

Those visiting or carrying out work in the Cemetery are required to follow these Rules and Regulations and any instruction given by Town Council staff.

Offences

In accordance with Article 18 of Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order, 1977 it is an offence to:

- Wilfully create any disturbance in a Cemetery
- Commit any nuisance in a Cemetery
- Wilfully interfere with any burial taking place in a Cemetery
- Wilfully interfere with any grave, vault, tombstone or other memorial, or any plants or flowers
- Play any game or sport in a Cemetery
- Enter the Cemetery when closed to the public unless authorised to do so by a member of Town Council staff

Okehampton Town Council reserves the right to update and amend these Rules and Regulations as and when deemed appropriate. Significant changes to the policy will be communicated as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Town Council can assist or advise on queries relating to the Cemetery. Please contact:

Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall

Fore Street

Okehampton

EX20 1AA

01837 53179

cemetery@okehampton.gov.uk

www.okehampton.gov.uk



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council Cemetery Schedule of Fees and Payments – April 2026

FEES AND PAYMENTS are settled under Section 34 of the Burial Act by Okehampton Town Council, effective on and from 1st April 2026. Cheques are to be made payable to Okehampton Town Council.

1.	INTERMENTS	Resident	Non-Resident
a.	For interment of a coffin in an earthen plot, at single or double depth	£250	500
b.	For interment of a coffin in an earthen plot, at single or double depth, for a person whose age at time of death did not exceed 18 years	No charge	£50.00
c.	For interment of cremated human remains in a burial plot If cremated remains are interred into a full grave space, no further coffin burials can <u>ever</u> take place within that plot	£200	£400
d.	For interment of cremated human remains in a cremation plot	£150	£250
e.	Scattering of ashes in the Garden of Remembrance	£40	£80
The fees cover Okehampton Town Council's administration and associated costs. They do not include any excavation work which should be arranged and paid for through the undertaker, or service fees.			

2.	EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL IN EARTHEN GRAVES	Resident	Non-Resident
a.	Purchase of single plot (up to two burials deep)	£ 600	£1500
b.	Purchase of a single plot (up to two burials deep) for a person whose age at time of death did not exceed 18 years	£0.00	£50.00
c.	Purchase of a plot for person who age at the time of death did not exceed 12 months	£0.00	£50.00
d.	Purchase of a cremation plot (up to two cremations deep)	£250	£450
e.	Extension of Grant for a further 10 years	£250	£1000
f.	Assignment to second party	£100	£250

- The purchase of a plot means that you purchase the exclusive right of burial of a grave but do not actually buy the land that the grave occupies. Purchase means that no burials can take place in that plot without your permission and it gives you the right to purchase a permit to place a memorial on the grave. You may purchase a grave in Okehampton Cemetery for a period of 30 years. At the end of the lease the rights to the grave will revert to the Council, and any memorial on the grave may be removed. Leases may be extended during their lifetime but can only be extended back to the original 30 years. The fee shall be applicable to the residency applying at the time the extension is applied for, not the residency at the time of the original application.
- In the case of the person being under the age of 18 years at the time of death, as at b. and c., the full fee for an extension of the grant applies.
- A grave can be purchased for the reservation of future burials
- Fees include the charge for the Certificate of Grant.
- The Council cannot guarantee the suitability of a plot to be used for multiple interments.

3. MEMORIAL STONES AND INSCRIPTIONS	Resident	Non-Resident
a. Memorial Stone or Scroll Book (not exceeding 0.91m high x 0.61m wide (3ft x 2ft))	£200	£400
b. Tablet (not exceeding 0.48m x 0.48m (1½ ft x 1½ ft))	£100	£175
c. Removal of memorial stone for the reopening of a grave or addition of a subscription	£0.00	£0.00
d. Plaque for Garden of Remembrance (provided by Okehampton Town Council)	£30	£60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees include the first and subsequent inscriptions which are to be arranged by the purchaser • Memorial stones and scrolls are not permitted to be placed on cremation plots. • Memorial stones on a child's plot must not exceed 0.61m high x 0.48m wide (2ft x 1½ ft) • Tablets must lie flush with the grass • In order to apply for a permit to place a memorial on a grave, exclusive right of burial must have been purchased • Permission must be sought from the Council for removal of the memorial stone for any purpose 		

4. OTHER CHARGES	
a. Search Fees (for burials within Okehampton Town Council's Cemetery only)	£15.00
Records prior to 1 st April 2021 are provided from information recorded in the Burial Register by Northmoor Team Ministry who were responsible for the burials prior to that date.	

5. DEFINITIONS AND NOTES

a.	A Resident is someone who pays their council tax in the civil parish of Okehampton Town (not necessarily those who have an Okehampton postcode) unless they have moved to a Residential/Nursing Home indefinitely from an Okehampton Town address, in that case that they are a parishioner until death. Proof of previous address may be requested.
b.	Coffins made from biodegradable materials only are accepted. Non-standard coffins may incur an additional fee.
c.	Provision of a scattering lawn is being progressed, the fees and charges within this schedule will be applicable once the facility is available for use.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Okehampton Town Council
Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
EX20 1AA

01837 53179
cemetery@okehampton.gov.uk
www.okehampton.gov.uk

Okehampton Town Council
Simmons Park (Kempley Meadows) Terms and Conditions of Hire

Please read the conditions of hire before completion and submission of the hire application form.

For the purpose of these conditions, the term HIRER shall mean an individual organiser of the event or where the HIRER is an organisation, the authorised representative. Simmons Park is managed by Okehampton Town Council, referred to in these conditions as the COUNCIL.

Applications

- All applications for use of Simmons Park must be made on the official application form. The person making the application shall be held responsible for the effective supervision of the area of the Park in its use, care and safety. Any hirer must be over the age of 18.
- The application only becomes a booking when it is confirmed by the Council.

Fees

- There is no charge for the hire of Simmons Park for not-for-profit groups, organisations or charities.
- The fee to be charged for all other hirings will be set at the discretion of the Council.

Cancellations

- In the case of a cancellation of a booking, the hirer shall inform the Council at the earliest opportunity.
- The Council reserves the right at any time to cancel the event, close or prohibit the use of the Park at its discretion. The Council will not be liable for any loss or expenditure incurred by or on behalf of the hirer or by or on behalf of any other person arising from the cancellation by the Council.

Right of Entry

- Authorised Council officers or Members shall be permitted entry to the Park at all times during the period of hire.
- During the hire period members of the public must be allowed to access the public open space.
- The Council reserves the right to fix a maximum limit for the number of persons attending the event.

Property

- The property of the Hirer and Hirer's agents must be removed at the end of the period of hire. The Council accepts no responsibility for any property left at the venue before, during or after the hire period.
- The Hirer shall not be permitted to remove or obscure Council notices or signs displayed in the Park without the prior written consent of the Council.
- The Hirer shall not interfere with or attach anything to any item of Park furniture.

Permits and Licences

- The Hirer shall ensure that any licence, permit or other consent which may be required is obtained before the event may take place and shall, where requested, produce copies to the Council. See West Devon Borough Council licensing department for more information www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/860/Licensing
- If the event includes the selling/preparation/handling of food, food hygiene regulations apply and you may need a licence. Please see www.westdevon.gov.uk/FSA for further information and details.
- Where the event includes the playing or performing of music requiring PRS and/or PPL licences the event organiser must meet all legal licensing requirements by obtaining the appropriate licences, see <https://pplprs.co.uk/business/live-music-festivals-concertvenues/> and <https://ppluk.com>
- Alcohol permits are available from [Temporary Event Notice \(TEN\) - West Devon Borough Council](#)

Health and Safety

- The Hirer must provide a site specific risk assessment for the event. The risk assessment should consider site specific issues/hazards. For example, these can include manual handling, vehicle movements, working at height, electrical safety, slips and falls and safety around the river.
- The hirer is responsible for adequate fire precautions and for the maintenance of clear exits for emergency vehicles and for ensuring that no pathways are blocked.
- The Hirer shall inform the Town Clerk of any accidents or serious incidents which occur during the event.

Indemnity & Insurance

- Hirers are required to hold a current policy of insurance in respect of public liability or third party risks (including products liability where appropriate). The relevant limit of indemnity must be no less than £10 million and the Council reserves the right to require a higher limit if deemed necessary.

Safeguarding Children & Young People

- Appropriate arrangements shall be in place for missing and found children.

Noise

- Consideration shall be given to neighbouring properties and event noise kept to reasonable levels at all times.

Litter

- All litter and refuse generated by the Event shall be removed from the Park by the Hirer/organiser. If any refuse is left on site, a fee of up to £100 will be charged depending on amount and type of waste left on site.

Stewarding

- An adequate number of stewards must be provided at the event having regard to the size of the event and the nature of the activities.
www.eventsmedicalservices.co.uk/event-medical-cover/event-medical-services-riskcalculator.html
- The Council reserves the right to request additional cover is provided.

First Aid Provision

- Adequate provision of first aid personnel and facilities must be provided for the number of people expected to attend and for the type of event and in accordance with the risk assessment.

Electrical Installations & Generators

- All electrical installations and equipment used at the event must be in a safe condition and suitable for external use.
- Generators and/or electrical equipment shall not be easily accessible to the public and must be barriered to prevent unauthorised access and/or interference.
- All portable electrical equipment brought onto the event site must be in a safe and serviceable condition and have a current in-date PAT label.

Electricity Supply Cables

- Electrical supply cables shall be positioned so they are not liable to physical damage and positioned so as not to cause trip/other hazard. If cables cross a footpath, they should be covered by standard walkway protection.

Use of Gas Cylinders

- Gas cylinders should be positioned away from ignition sources, gulleys, drains or other holes and securely fixed with the valve uppermost. No additional cylinders shall be stored on site.
- Gas cylinders must be conspicuously signed 'LPG Highly Flammable'.
- All fittings must be compatible with the type of cylinder/equipment in use and be in good serviceable condition.

Toilet Facilities

- Adequate toilet facilities must be available during the event.
- For large events, additional portable toilets should be provided if there are insufficient toilets nearby.

Inflatable Entertainment Equipment

- Any bouncy castles or similar inflatable entertainment equipment must have a current annual inspection certificate provided by a registered inspector. This must be provided to the council on request together with a risk assessment.
- Inflatable entertainment equipment must not be used when the wind or gusts are in excess of the maximum safe wind speed specified by the equipment manufacturer.
- Inflatable entertainment equipment must be attended at all times.

Fairground Rides

- All fairground rides at the event must have a current inspection certificate provided by organisation with the Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS).
- All fairground rides shall be operated in accordance with HSE Guidance for this type of equipment.

Temporary Structures (Gazebos, Tents & Marquees)

- If these are to be used, they should be placed considerately, secured to the ground and not used in high wind conditions. Fabric structures should not be left unattended at any time.

Animal Welfare

- Where the event involves animals the Event organiser must ensure that the best welfare practices are observed at all times.

Fly Posting

- Fly posting in connection with any hiring is prohibited and, if undertaken, could result in refusal of future reservation.

Advertising

- No commercial advertising is allowed at the venue unless associated with the use of the premises for hosting a specific event when temporary advertising up to 10 days in advance of the event will be allowed and must be removed at the end of the event.

Other

- The release of balloons, the use of Chinese lanterns or similar types of lanterns is not permitted.
- Barbeques and bonfires are also not permitted.
- Under no circumstances are animals to be given away or sold on Council property.