



# **Dartmoor Forest Parish Council**

## **Procedure 5.5**

### **Burials**

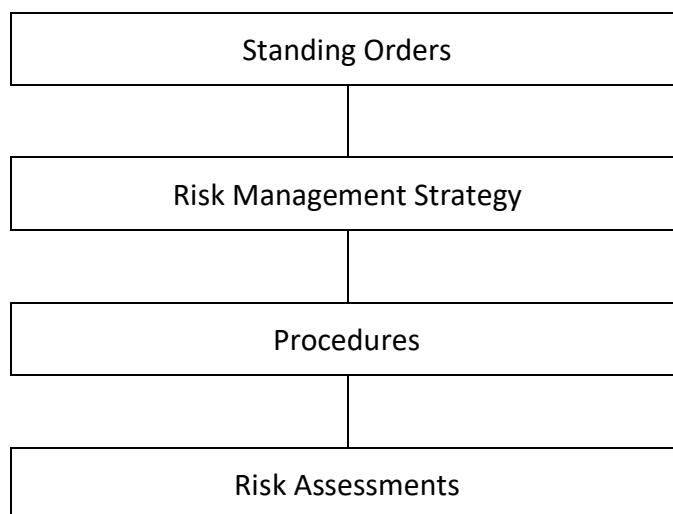
## Record of Amendments and Reviews

<u>Version</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Date of Adoption</u>
1	New procedure	3 December 2007
2	Revised to produce complete document, incorporating text from several semi-formal documents	23 November 2021

Next review required by:	23 November 2022
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## Document Hierarchy

In the event of any discrepancy between Dartmoor Forest Parish Council Codes, Regulations, Policies, Strategies, Procedures and other documentation, the version contained in the higher-level document detailed below will apply, unless changed by a resolution of the council.



## **References:**

- A. Department for Constitutional Affairs Guide for Burial Ground Managers (Nov 2005).
- B. Cemetery Management and Administration for Local Council Clerks - Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 Postbridge Cemetery was opened in 1903 by Lydford Parish Council and ownership was transferred Dartmoor Forest Parish Council in 1987.
- 1.2 There are two sections to the cemetery. Standing with the entrance gate behind you (facing North) the ground on the left hand (West) side is consecrated and that on the right (East) is not. Historically, those being buried in the un-consecrated area were not allowed through the gates and coffins were passed through a hole in the wall into the cemetery. This practice ceased some decades ago.
- 1.3 Additional land over the North bank at the bottom of the area was purchased in 2004 as an extension, but since the rhododendrons were cleared there is sufficient space in the original enclosure for the foreseeable future. Burials average less than one per year.
- 1.4 Dartmoor Forest Parish Council aim for Postbridge Cemetery to run on a self-financing basis and sets fees accordingly. There is no intent to raise general funds for the Council through the cemetery.
- 1.5 The Burial Clerk fulfils a legal requirement for burials at Postbridge Cemetery. The Burials Clerk acts as the first point of contact for funeral directors and stonemasons, and is responsible for ensuring all burial ground aspects of funerals run smoothly. The Burial Clerk is also responsible for liaising with clergy and maintaining the statutory Burial Records. The Burials Clerk may also deal directly with the bereaved for plot selection and on the day of the funeral.

## **Cemetery Maintenance**

- 2.1 The Parish Council is responsible for all aspects of managing the ground. The grass is cut by local volunteers organised by the Postbridge Ward Parish Councillors. When this is not possible, the work is done by the Parish Lengthsman. Tree surgery is necessary from time to time, for which a Tree Surgeon is contracted in. The Lengthsman usually completes any bank and wall maintenance and repair.
- 2.2 Penlee Lane is maintained by Highways. On occasions the Parish Council have asked residents whose property borders on to the lane to cut back encroaching hedges to prevent the hearse and funeral cortege cars getting scratched.
- 2.3 There is a separate procedure for memorial inspections.

## **FUNERAL PROCEDURE**

### **Initial Actions**

- 3.1 News of a death can come from several sources: the village Post Office; Parish Councillors; the deceased's next of kin; the funeral director; or the clergy.
- 3.2 On being informed of a death, the Burial Clerk's is to establish communications with the Funeral Director as soon as possible. If the Funeral Director is not familiar with

Postbridge Cemetery, the Burials Clerk must ensure the Funeral Director understands the constraints on parking and the non-availability of double plots (see below).

3.3 The Gravedigger is contracted by the Funeral Director, who is responsible for negotiating the fee for the gravedigging. The family is free to choose any Gravedigger, but the Parish Council recommends the local Gravedigger is Mark Hutchins (01364 621294) who knows the land well and holds a key to the cemetery gate.

3.4 The Burials Clerk must write to the Funeral Director giving the cost of the Parish Council's fees and the size restriction on monuments (Annex A) and forwarding the Application for Interment Form (Annex B).

3.5 The Burials Clerk must check to ownership of the grave. No permission is needed to inter the registered owner. If the registered owner is not the deceased, formal permission must be obtained before the grave is dug. If the registered owner is already dead, a transfer must be arranged so the new owner can give permission.

### **Plot Selection and Purchase**

4.1 The family may already own a plot with Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial in which case the only requirement of the Burials Clerk is to mark the plot for the Gravedigger. If the person named on the Grant document has died the plot legally is deemed to be an asset and passes to the estate to be administered by the Executor.

4.2 If Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is not owned for any plot, the Burials Clerk must meet with the family to guide them in plot selection. Historically, plot usage has been slightly random but over recent years the Parish Council has tried to be more logical. In selecting the plot, the Burials Clerk must ensure the family understand the difference between the consecrated and un-consecrated areas.

4.3 Double depth plots are not allowed as the land is far too hard and stony. This means that a second, usually adjacent, plot needs to be purchased.

4.4 When a plot is agreed upon, the Burials Clerk must mark the plot with a wooden marker with screwed metal numbers detailing the plot number and record it on the Plot Purchase Register and the Cemetery Site Plan. The Burials Clerk must create the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial Certificate and give this to the plot purchaser, keeping a copy in the Parish Council's records. Legally, this is the deed of purchase for the plot of land for 99 years. The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial certificate must be issued even if the grave is to be used immediately.

Note: It is DFPC Policy the certificate is to be printed on white paper of weight not less than 120gsm.

### **Before the Funeral**

5.1 The Burials Clerk must determine from the Funeral Director how many cars are expected. Normally, only three vehicles in addition to the hearse are able to drive to the cemetery. For larger numbers, mourners usually park on the B3212 by the church and walk up to the cemetery. Exceptionally, permission may be sought for additional cars to park in the driveway to Penlee Farm from the owner, Dave Fisher, who is a former Chair of the Parish Council (01822 880255).

5.2 The Burials Clerk must inform local residents bordering on the cemetery of the date and time of the funeral.

5.3 The Burials Clerk must ensure the Application for Interment Form (Annex A) is completed and returned by noon three days prior to the funeral. In exceptional circumstances, completion of the form could wait until immediately prior to the funeral but the burial cannot proceed until it is complete.

5.4 The Burials Clerk must arrange a time with the Gravedigger for the cemetery main gates to be unlocked to allow digging machinery in (unless it is local Gravedigger Mark Hutchins who holds a key to the cemetery gate).

Note: Dartmoor Forest Parish Council is responsible for health and safety during the grave digging. The Gravedigger must provide the Burials Clerk with evidence of public liability insurance, a method of safe working statement, and an appropriate risk assessment prior to commencing work.

5.5 The Burials Clerk must ensure the cemetery is looking tidy and well cared for. This is usually undertaken by the local volunteers co-ordinated by Postbridge Councillors, but may be done by the Lengthsman if necessary.

### **Burial Service**

6.1 The Burials Clerk must be in attendance when the burial service takes place.

6.2 No burials are allowed legally unless the Burials Clerk has received the Registrar's green burial certificate. In practice the funeral director will bring it to the cemetery and hand it over before proceedings begin.

Note: Under exceptional circumstances, if Funeral Director has forgotten the Registrar's burial certificate, there is a process called Form 18 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926, Section 1(1) that would enable the burial to proceed if the Funeral Director completes a declaration explaining why the form has not been delivered and promises to deliver it to the Burials Clerk later the same day as the funeral or, in exceptional circumstances, on the next day.

6.3 The Burials Clerk must take to the funeral:

The Register of Burials,  
The Parish Council's copy of the certificate for the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial,  
Any other Parish Council paperwork to be handed to the Funeral Director.

Note: The Register of Burials a legal ledger and special care must be taken of it. It is taken to the funeral to obtain the officiating clergy's signature. However, this may be impractical in inclement weather, and the signature may be obtained up to 14 days later (see below).

6.4 The Funeral Director will usually hand a cheque to the Burials Clerk in payment of the Parish Council's fees if this has not been done beforehand.

6.5 The Burials Clerk must arrive at the cemetery well before the funeral to:

Unlock and open the main gates,  
Ensure that the cemetery is tidy,

Help to guide cars requiring parking space, and  
Show the clergy/officiating person to the burial plot.

Note: Postbridge Councillors may assist on the day of the burials service.

6.6 During the service, the Burials Clerk is to stand inconspicuously outside the gates to prevent any interruption to the service.

6.7 The Burials Clerk must check the name on the coffin plate is the same as that of the booked deceased.

6.8 After the service, the Burials Clerk must obtain the signature in black ink in the Register of Burials of the member of the clergy who conducted the service. This can be done immediately following the service or within 14 days thereafter.

6.9 The Burials Clerk must complete the Register of Public Graves.

6.10 The Burials Clerk must complete the appropriate section of the Registrar's green burial certificate to certify the burial has taken place. Part C must be detached and send back to the Registrar of Births and Deaths who raised the Certificate for Burial **within 96 hours** of the burial taking place.

Note: following the Covid-19 pandemic emailed scanned burial certificates have been introduced that are locally printed by the Funeral Director. It is not known how long this practice will continue.

### **Interment of Cremated Remains**

7.1 There are no legal requirements to be met for the interment of cremated remains.

7.2 A plot for the interment of cremated remains must be purchased and recorded as above. These plots are smaller and in a separate part of the cemetery in both the consecrated and un-consecrated areas.

7.3 The Burials Clerk must be in attendance when the burial service takes place.

7.4 The Burials Clerk must complete all non-legal preparatory actions above prior to the service to inter cremated remains, as appropriate.

7.5 The Burials Clerk must arrive at the cemetery well before the burial service to:

Unlock and open the main gates,  
Check there has been no collapse or flooding of the open grave,  
Ensure that the cemetery is tidy,  
Help to guide cars requiring parking space, and  
Show the clergy/officiating person to the burial plot.

Note: Postbridge Councillors may assist on the day of the burials service.

### **Monuments**

8.1 Some people choose to pay for the fee to erect the monument at the same time as the funeral, other choose to pay it later, when the ground has settled properly.

8.2 The Burials Clerk must give a copy of the Headstone Requirements (Annex A) to the Funeral Director or a member of the bereaved family, and to the Stonemason.

8.3 The Burials Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the bereaved family and Stonemason comply with the Parish Council's Headstone Requirements.

8.4 The Burials Clerk must liaise with the Stonemason over the monument erection and arrange for the cemetery main gates to be unlocked for the access of equipment.

Note: Dartmoor Forest Parish Council is responsible for health and safety during the monument erection. The Stonemason must provide the Burials Clerk with evidence of public liability insurance, a method of safe working statement, and an appropriate risk assessment prior to commencing work.

8.5 If the bereaved family are to be present for the monument erection, the Burials Clerk is to ensure the cemetery is looking tidy and well cared for.

## Records

9.1 Some records are a legal requirement, others are for the efficient management of the cemetery. Computer records are permitted but must be maintained forever. As Dartmoor Forest Parish Council cannot guarantee this, spreadsheets and other computer records must be printed when updated and paper copies kept on file.

9.2 Records to be maintained are:

- a. **Register of Burials.** The burial will be recorded on the Register of Burials book and in the record index immediately after each burial. Each burial is given a unique consecutive number (the Burial Register Number). The Register of Burials Index is kept on a spreadsheet and the most recent page must be printed when it is updated. This is a legal requirement.
- b. **Register of Graves.** This must be maintained in grave number order. The rights applicable to each grave must be recorded. Details of the deceased buried in graves are recorded alongside the appropriate grave number. This is a legal requirement.  
Details of memorials erected may also be added.
- c. **Register of Purchased Graves.** When a plot is purchased the Burials Clerk must issue a Deed of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. This must be recorded on the Register of Purchased Graves. This is a legal requirement.  
A duplicate of each deed must be printed and kept in the Burials file folder.
- d. **Registrar's Disposal Certificate or Coroner's Order for Burial.** Within **96 hours** of the burial the detachable Part C of the green certificate must be completed and returned to the Registrar of Births and Deaths that raised it. This will normally be the Registrar where the deceased died. Part B of the green certificate is to be retained in the Burials file folder. This is a legal requirement.
- e. **The Statutory Grave Plan.** The Postbridge Cemetery Site Plan is kept on computer file and updated every time a new plot is purchased, whether for immediate burial or future use. Every time it is updated a new copy must be printed and kept in the Burials file folder. This is a legal requirement.
- f. **DFPC Computer Records.** Electronic files are kept in the Burials folder on the Parish Clerk's PC/Laptop. A new subfolder is to be opened for each plot purchase

and burial. All correspondence of any type relating to the plot/burial is to be kept in this folder.

g. **DFPC Paper Records.** The Burials file folder contains:

Printouts of the latest versions of:

Index of the Register of Burials (in chronological order of burials).  
Index of the Register of Graves (by grave number).  
Register of Purchased Graves.  
Postbridge Cemetery Site Plan.

For each burial:

Completed Application for Interment Forms.  
Registrar's Disposal Certificates, or  
Coroner's Order for Burial.  
Copy of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial.

For each plot purchase:

Copy of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial.

9.3 Historic Records. In May 2017, Mr Ian Quance, an Independent Bereavement Consultant of 185 Mincinglake Road, Exeter EX4 7DR advised that Dartmoor Forest Parish Council's historic records may be insufficient for statutory purposes.

Annexes:

- A. Postbridge cemetery Fees.
- B. Application for Interment Form.
- C. Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial Certificate.



**POSTBRIDGE CEMETERY FEES****PURCHASE OF GRAVE**

Plot for burial of coffin - £100.00

Plot for burial of cremated remains - £50.00

Deed of Assignment/Grant of Right of Burial - £8.00

**BURIALS**

Interment of coffin in burial ground - £100.00

Interment of stillborn infant and infant dying within first five years - £Nil

Burial of cremated remains (in container) in burial ground - £50.00

Burial of cremated remains (loose) in burial ground - £50.00

Scattering of cremated remains in burial ground - On application to the Clerk

**MONUMENTS IN BURIAL GROUND**

Small cross of wood - £50.00

Vase not exceeding H12" x D8" x W8" - £50.00

Tablet (erected horizontally or vertically) not exceeding 21" x 21" - £50.00

Boulder style headstones not exceeding 21" x 21" - £50.00

Base with flower/vase hole(s) - £25.00

Larger headstones and standing crosses - £100.00

Kerbed headstones (in addition to headstone cost above) - £50.00

Any other monument - On application to the Clerk

Original inscription on tablet - £Nil

Additional inscription on existing tablet - £Nil

**HEADSTONE FINISHES**

Granite headstones that are predominantly grey in colour, or other stone with similar visual properties, are preferred in Postbridge Cemetery.

Headstone finishes that are permitted include:

- Honed (eggshell - smooth, yet unreflective);
- Part-polished (only polished on the inscription and base area);
- Pitched (rustic rock finishes)

Owing to the rustic and traditional appearance of Postbridge cemetery, fully polished headstones are not permitted.

**Engravings**

There is no restriction on the font or colouring for headstone engravings.

## **RESIDENTIAL CRITERIA**

The fees above apply to Postbridge residents. A Postbridge resident is defined as someone who, at the time of his/her death:

- Resided in a property within the Postbridge boundary
- Or had been hospitalised from a property within the Postbridge boundary
- Or had moved to a residential home from a property within Postbridge

Fees for former residents of Postbridge are 50% higher than the figures given above

Fees for anyone who has never resided in Postbridge are 100% higher than the figures given above

The Parish Council will consider applications for variations/exceptions to the residency rules on an individual basis. The Parish Council's decision in such matters is final

It is regretted that double depth burial plots are not available due to the stony nature of the ground

Dartmoor Forest Parish Council aims to keep Postbridge Cemetery self-financing and non-profit making as far as possible. Fees were set by the Parish Council in September 2012 (see Parish Council minutes) and were reviewed in May 2020 (see Parish Council minutes).

All applications and payments should be forwarded to the Parish Clerk.

Cheques are to be made payable to "Dartmoor Forest Parish Council".

Details for bank transfers are:

Bank: Lloyds Bank, Fore Street, Okehampton EX20 1HJ

Account Name: Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

Sort Code: 30-96-23

Account Number: 00741473

Parish Clerk [clerk@dartmoorforestparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@dartmoorforestparishcouncil.gov.uk)

# Dartmoor Forest Parish Council



Parish Clerk: Mr S J Cox

Middle Woodley, Sydenham Damerel. Tavistock. Devon. PL19 8QU

Telephone: 01822 258549, 07775 561855

Email: [clerk@dartmoorforestpc.net](mailto:clerk@dartmoorforestpc.net)Website: [www.dartmoorforestpc.net](http://www.dartmoorforestpc.net)

## Application for Interment

This application must be delivered to the Parish Clerk **No later than noon 3 working days prior to interment**

Cemetery in which interment is required		Postbridge	
Funeral Director			
Day, date & time of burial			
Full name of deceased			
Maiden Name			
Address			
Postcode			
Place where death occurred			
Date of death		Age	
Dimensions of coffin or casket			
(in inches) Length		Width	Depth
Coffin type			
Religious denomination		Officiating Minister	
Chapel or straight to grave		Number of grave	
Was deceased a resident of Postbridge		<b>YES / NO</b>	
Occupation (prior to retirement)			

Please complete sections A or B

### Section A New graves only

I would like to purchase the Exclusive Rights of Burial for 100 years.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to deceased \_\_\_\_\_



**Section B Previously purchased to be opened**

To be completed by the grave owner or their next of kin where the deceased is the grave owner.

Please open grave number \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery

for the interment of

I am the registered owner of the grave / next of kin / executor of the owner (delete as appropriate)

If none of the above please state your relationship to the deceased grave owner

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Full name \_\_\_\_\_ Title

Address

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number

**N.B. Dartmoor Forest Parish can only authorise the opening of a purchased grave with the permission of the owner or to inter the owner. In all other cases ownership must be transferred to someone who can legally prove that they are entitled to receive these ownership rights. Whilst the Council will offer all assistance in establishing the means of transfer, responsibility remains with the funeral arranger to have clarified this matter before booking.**

**In accordance with our responsibility under the Data Protection Act, you should be aware that the personal information you are giving will be held and may be passed to other services of the Council, so that you are provided with the best possible support.**

**We will not pass your personal information to external individuals or organisations unless there is a legal obligation to do so.**

Fees		Details of Funeral Director / Arranger
Purchase		
Interment		
Chapel		
Total		
Receipt Number		

18 May 2017

**GRANT OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL CERTIFICATE**



**Plot N<sup>o</sup> A/B XX**

**DARTMOOR FOREST PARISH COUNCIL  
POSTBRIDGE CEMETERY**

**GRANT OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL**

Section 214(3) of and Schedule 26 to the Local  
Government Act 1972 and Article 10 (1) of the  
Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

**BY VIRTUE OF THE COUNCIL** in consideration of the sum of:

*Amount pounds*

paid to us by:

*Name  
(on behalf of ...  
Address*

(hereinafter called the 'Grantees') **HEREBY GRANT** unto the Grantees the exclusive Right of Burial in Grave Number **XX** on the plan of the said Burial Ground in the Unconsecrated section of the said Burial Ground **TO HOLD** the same unto the Grantees for the period of one hundred years for the purpose of Burial subject to any Regulations or Byelaws now in force or which may hereafter be made in relation to the Burial Ground and to interments therein.

**IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED** that the transaction hereby effected does not form part of a larger transaction or a series of transactions in respect of which the amount or value or the aggregate amount or value of the consideration exceeds one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds.

**DATED** this **XX** day of **XXXXXXXX** 20**XX**

Burials Clerk to the Council