

Rules and Regulations



Introduction

Although these regulations are a necessary requirement for the management of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Cemeteries, every effort has been made to avoid restricting the rights and choices of the individual. These regulations have therefore been prepared with a balance between individual rights and the need to regulate for safe and tidy grounds.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council works hard to achieve the highest possible standard of service provision within its cemeteries.

All local authority managed cemeteries are subject to standards and conditions known as cemetery rules and regulations. These are designed to inform all cemetery users of the aspects of the management of the cemeteries and the reasonable requirements applicable to them. These regulations include the statutory requirements contained within The Local Government Act 1972, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) and the Health and Safety at Work Act together with any other relevant legislation that governs this service.

The Council aims to inform any customer of the regulations in force at the time of enquiry to allow customers to make an informed decision with regard to funeral proceedings and choosing the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council cemeteries as a final resting place.

You have a right to be given a written explanation why a particular regulation has been used to restrict or otherwise influence your rights. Where you remain dissatisfied you can utilise the Councils complaint procedure. Further information on these procedures is available on request.

Interpretation of Terms

Throughout these regulations, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings hereinafter respectively assigned to them:

“The Council” – means Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

“The Support Officer” – means any person for the time being appointed by the Councils Cemetery Services Team whose duties include all administrative matters associated with the burial service.

“The Cemetery Officer” – means the person for the time being appointed by the Council as responsible for all the day-to-day matters associated with the cemetery.

“The Cemetery Service Manager” – means the person responsible for the strategic planning for the cemeteries.

“The Cemetery” – means the cemetery provided by and vested in the Council under the Burial Act of 1853 and The Local Authorities Cemetery Order of 1977, and situate at Hatfield Hyde, Hollybush Lane, Welwyn Garden City or The Lawn Cemetery, Southway, Hatfield.

“Grave”- means a burial place formed in the ground by excavation and without any internal wall or brickwork or stonework or other artificial lining; including a grave excavated for the burial of cremated remains.

“Private Grave”- means a grave in respect of which the exclusive right of burial has been purchased.

“Public Grave”- means a grave in respect of which no exclusive right of burial has been purchased.

“Lawn Grave”- means a grave laid out which permits only an upright memorial to be placed on a predetermined concrete plinth at the head of a grave. No other items to be placed in or amongst this grave space.

“Traditional Grave”- means a grave laid out which permits a memorial to be placed across the entire length of the grave space.

“Cremated Remains Grave” means a grave in respect of which is designed to commemorate cremated remains only.



Management

Notwithstanding the provisions of these regulations the Council reserves the right to close the cemeteries or limit the entry of persons thereto at any time.

Subject to these regulations and any variations thereof made by the Council, the general management of the cemeteries shall vest in the Cemetery Officer.

All persons admitted into the cemeteries shall observe these regulations, and the Officer shall have full power to exclude or remove from the cemeteries any person whom, at the Officer's discretion, may think fit to exclude or remove without stating any reason.

The Council does not hold itself responsible for any failure in arrangements due to circumstances beyond its control.

These regulations may be changed as the Council requires and any future amendments shall also be accepted.

Cemetery Services Office Location

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

Tel: 01707 357 000

Fax: 01707 357 557

Email: CemeteryServices@welhat.gov.uk

Website: www.welhat.gov.uk/cemetery

Hours of Opening and Closing

The cemeteries are open to the public from 9.00hrs daily and the closing times are as follows:

October to February	16.30hrs
March	18.00hrs
April	20.00hrs
May to July	21.00hrs
August	20.00hrs
September	19.00hrs

Burial Records

Records of burial are maintained by the Council. A request can be made to the Council to view the original burial registers. Records were kept electronically between 2004 and 2017. Since January 2018 records have been kept both electronically and in the burials registry.

Children

No children under 14 years of age will be admitted to the cemetery without the permission of the Officer unless in the charge of a responsible adult.

Animals

Domestic animals brought into the cemetery must be kept on a leash and owners are responsible for clearing up after these animals. Horses are permitted for funeral processions.

Sale of Goods and Soliciting Orders

No goods, plants or articles may be sold within either cemetery or orders for the erection or repair of monuments or memorials, or for any other work connected with graves within the cemetery be solicited without the permission of the Council.

Liability of the Council

No liability whatsoever is accepted by the Council for any injury to any person, or damage to property arising out of anything existing at the cemetery or done by the Council, its employees, agents or contractors or by any independent contractor at or in connection with the cemetery.

Gratuities

No employee of the Council is allowed to solicit or receive any gratuity.

Behaviour of Visitors

Visitors to the cemetery must conduct themselves in a quiet orderly manner. No person shall climb upon or over any memorial, boundary fence or gate.

Vehicles

Vehicles of all descriptions, whether in attendance for funerals or not, shall be subject to the control and direction of the cemetery staff whilst in the cemetery or in the cemetery approach.

The Council reserve the right to forbid the entry of any hearse or other vehicle into the cemetery.

Vehicles allowed entry to the cemetery in connection with work on graves or memorials must not remain longer than necessary for loading or unloading. All persons accessing the cemetery for reasons of work must inform the Cemetery Department prior to their arrivals to ensure no burials/internments are taking place at the requested time.

All vehicles allowed into the cemetery must park in the car parks provided, except at the discretion of the Cemetery Officer.

Rights of Passage

The Council reserves the right of passage overall graves as circumstances may require.

Funeral Regulations

The Council does not hold itself responsible for any failure in arrangements due to circumstances beyond its control.

Work should be limited while a funeral is taking place.

Responsibility of Funeral Director or individual arranging a funeral

All information shall be provided correctly and openly when organising a burial to ensure that the Council can maintain the funeral regulations to a high standard without disruption.

It is required that, if a funeral party shall be arriving 15 minutes earlier or later to the cemetery, the Cemetery Department must be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

Any last minute alterations to the funeral procedure may result in extra fees payable to the Council.

It is advised that all funeral arrangers visit the relevant cemetery prior to a funeral to ensure all information provided is accurate.

Notice of Internments

To arrange an interment in the cemeteries, the Council must be notified not less than 3 clear working days from the time the

arrangement is made. An interment within 3 working days may be arranged at the discretion of the Cemetery Officer.

The allocated times available for the booking of interments are:

Monday to Friday	11.00hrs and 14.00hrs
Saturday	11.00hrs

The allocated times available for the booking of the interment of cremated remains are:

Monday to Friday	11.00hrs, 12.30hrs and 14.00hrs
Saturday	11.00hrs

To view live availability visit: www.welhat.gov.uk/BurialAvailability
No interment shall take place on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays or any other Public Holidays.

Once a booking has been made, a Notice of Internment must be provided using the Council's Application Form. The form must contain all the information requested and be signed by the individual or funeral directors organising the funeral and the current/future deed holder. The form must be received by the Council not later than three working days prior to the funeral. Notices received after this time may only be accepted at the Cemetery Officers discretion. All forms must be accompanied by a cheque for the appropriate fee, unless other arrangements have been approved by the Cemetery Officer.

Failure to provide this information may result in the cancellation of the booking.

An additional fee may be charged for postponed or cancelled interments as assessed by the Cemetery Officer according to the amount of abortive work involved.

Where a funeral is likely to exceed 20 vehicles, include a horse and carriage procession, or may involve escorted guests of Her Majesty, the Cemetery Department must be notified at the time of booking. The person organising the funeral will be asked to complete an additional form, which they must return fully completed to the Cemetery Department.

Purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial or Licence

Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial or Licence must be purchased in respect of all private graves or plots. The ownership of Exclusive Right of Burial is subject to the Grant of Burial being endorsed by the Officer and payment of the appropriate fees.

A Grant or Licence shall be made for a term of a maximum of 75 years. At the end of the term, it is the responsibility of the Grant/Licence Holder to renew or extend the period. No remains will be removed or disturbed at any point however the grave or plot may be made available for future dedications.

Before a grave can be opened, the person(s) with such Grant or Licence must signify their assent in writing to the Cemetery Officer. In cases where the owner of the Grant or Licence is the person to be interred, the Council shall, if required by the person giving notice of interment, order the grave to be reopened for the interment of the said deceased without obtaining the consent of any executor or other representative.

Grant or Licence holders must inform the Council of any changes in their contact details at all times.

No Grant or Licence will be issued to the funeral directors, or partner, or employee in such a form, unless satisfactory evidence is submitted that the grave is required for use by the applicant as a private individual and not for the purpose of business.

The sale or transfer of a Grant or Licence in any grave is in every case within the absolute discretion of the Council.

After the interment of the registered owner of the Grant Licence to any grave space, the legal personal representative shall request the change of ownership so that the transfer may be duly established after payment of a prescribed fee. Until ownership is satisfactorily given to the Cemetery Officer the grave shall not be re-opened or otherwise dealt with.

The Council may exercise to terminate any Grant or Licence by giving not less than three months prior notice in writing to determine to expire at any time.

Allocation of Grave Spaces

All grave spaces will be allocated in sequence. All requests for pre-selection are at the discretion of the Officer and will be subject to a premium fee.

Graves or plots **cannot** be pre-purchased in advance, however a specific grave may be reserved for a period of time and subject to the appropriate fee.

Coffins, Caskets and Containers

The name of the deceased as written on the death certificate is to be inscribed on the top of the container. The Officer or Cemetery staff shall be allowed free access prior to interment to inspect the inscription so they are certain of the individual to be interred. If any uncertainties are found, this may result in a delay or cancellation of the funeral until the Cemetery Officer is satisfied of the identification of the container.

Non-wooden containers will only be permitted by agreement of the Cemetery Officer.

Open Casket/Exposure of Human Cadavers

The council will assist to meet the needs of the bereaved and will consider all requests to open the container during a service.

Any request for an open coffin should be requested on the application form.

Where the deceased died of a notifiable disease infectious disease, the cadaver will not be permitted to be exposed.

Interment Depth

The size of an individual grave space shall accommodate a container no greater than 96" in length, 24" width, and 16" height. Should the container measure greater than these measurements, it may be necessary for two plots to be purchased.

Graves can be prepared at the following depths:

	No of coffins	No of caskets
8ft	3	2
6ft 6"	2	1
5ft	1	0
3.5ft (with grave liner)	1	0

When a shallow grave is prepared and an Ultima Grave Liner required, additional costs will apply.

All containers will be covered with earth immediately following an interment.

Excavation and Backfilling of Graves

All graves will be excavated by grounds staff appointed by the Council and superfluous soil will be disposed of as the Cemetery Officer or staff shall direct.

Prior to arrival of the funeral cortege, the cemetery staff will ensure that the grave is correctly dug to the depth and size specified on the application form and, if required, the grave is supported by shoring and the grave surrounded by timber. Grass matting will be laid to the grave surround.

Putlogs will be placed over and adjacent to the grave to support the coffin and clean webbing laid out for lowering the coffin; the approach to and the surround of the grave will be left clean and tidy. All cemetery machinery will be stored in the yard out of sight.

Should a lowering device be requested to be used, then the Council must be informed through notification on the application form.

The backfilling of the grave will commence when all mourners have left the site, unless otherwise specified in advance by the person arranging the funeral. The site will be left neat and tidy with the wreaths and flowers carefully placed.

The grave space will sink as compaction occurs, particularly after heavy rainfall. This will be made good by the cemetery staff as soon as ground conditions permit.

Maintenance

Grave spaces will be seeded within six months (possibly sooner if weather permits) after burials have taken place. During this six month period, settlement will take place and extra soil will be placed on the grave to keep the ground level. Any work done by the grave owner is done at their own expense and, if grave maintenance is required, may be changed by cemetery staff.

This will usually be conducted between April/May and September/October each year.

Maintenance of the grave space at the Lawn Cemetery will be carried out by the Council. No items should protrude from the concrete plinth.

Maintenance of the grave space at Hatfield Hyde Cemetery is the responsibility of the Grant Holder. The Council will maintain the grass should any memorial be lateral and provide an uninterrupted area for mowing.

Public Graves

Public grave space is where the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial has not been purchased but is held by the Council. Each Public Grave can contain up to 3 unrelated persons.

The Council provides a municipal funeral service for deceased residents who have no known next of kin. The Council will take reasonable measures to find a next of kin to take responsibility for funeral procedures.

Memorial Regulations

Any contravention to the memorial regulations may result in a fine. This fine may consequently penalise the memorial mason/funeral director and the grave owner from allowing further works or ultimately burials to be carried out within the Council's cemeteries.

Memorial Permit Applications

No work on memorials may be carried out at the cemeteries until a permit has been endorsed by the Cemetery Officer. This work includes any erection, inscription or renovation to any memorial, vase or kerb on any grave. An application giving full details must be made to the Cemetery Officer on the appropriate form. This form must be signed by the registered grave owner and accompanied by the applicable fee. No permit will be issued until the appropriate fee has been paid and all details are to the satisfaction of the Cemetery Officer. No permits will be issued until burial payments have been received.

Materials

Materials used for any memorial must be approved by the Cemetery Officer.

Identification

If a grave has been approved for the allowance of a memorial, the grave owner must ensure that any temporary marker (wooden cross, plaque, etc.) placed at the grave in the meantime is removed once installation of the permanent memorial has taken place. No temporary marker shall be removed by cemetery staff unless a permanent memorial is in place or if the marker is in a state of disrepair. All reasonable measures will be made to ensure that the grave owner is notified, if such removal is necessary.

The grave section and number must be inscribed on the back of all upright memorials. The letters and figures need to be at least 25mm high and the number must be the same as the entry in the register of graves. Grave owners are required to pay for this inscription.

Where kerb memorials are permitted (Hatfield Hyde Cemetery only) the inscription may be on the foot of the kerb. If grave owners have vases/posts incorporated in the approved memorial application, it is advised that these items can be identified to the appropriate grave in case, for whatever reason, they become separated.

If a memorial has not been identified properly, the grave owner will be notified and will be required to have the memorial inscribed appropriately. Failure to do so will result in a contravention of regulations. In addition to the grave space number, with the consent of the owner

and to the satisfaction of the Council, the name only of the sculptor or monumental mason shall be engraved on the reverse side of memorials, in letters no more than 12.5 mm in height and no more than 150 mm from ground level.

Use of Quick Response Code and Matrix Barcodes

The use of QR Codes on memorials is permitted however it must be possible to remove them should it be required.

Execution of Work

All stone-work must be ready for fixing before being brought into the cemetery and all work in the cemetery must be completed to the satisfaction of the Cemetery Officer.

Persons engaged to work on memorials must provide all necessary tools and materials for the required work, and must take all steps necessary to protect the surrounding turf and adjacent memorials.

Masons and their workmen may only work in the cemeteries during normal working hours of the cemetery staff.

Work will not be permitted whilst a funeral is in progress. Masons must contact the Cemetery Department in advance to confirm whether a funeral is going to take place, if access is required. A height barrier is in place at the Lawn Cemetery. This will be opened by cemetery staff when notification of work is received.

The work of fixing or removing memorials shall be carried out by competent tradesmen to the reasonable satisfaction of the Council or their duly authorised representative and all materials used in this work shall be approved by the Council.

Masons shall, under the instructions of the Cemetery Officer, remove all spare soil and clean the ground carefully after completing their work. They will be held responsible for any damage caused by them or their workmen, either to the ground of the cemetery or any memorials therein.

Making Good Damage

Any damage done to the Council's land or premises in the course of work on graves or memorials or in any other way, must be made good at the expense of the person or persons causing or responsible for such damage within a period stipulated by the Council.

Maintenance

The Council has a duty of care to ensure memorials within the cemeteries are maintained at a high standard and all memorials are subject to safety inspections by cemetery staff or relevant contractor approved by the Council.

All memorials, vases and kerbs must be maintained in good condition and repaired at the expense of their respective owners. If any maintenance or repair, which in the opinion of the Council appears necessary, is not carried out within three months of notice in writing to the owner of this, the Council shall have the power to cause removal of the memorial.

If the address of the owner is not known and in the Council's opinion cannot reasonably be ascertained, the Council may remove the memorial without notice.

The Council will not be responsible for an accident to any memorial. Checks are made by cemetery staff before any work is undertaken around the plot. Should a memorial be found to be unstable the deed holder will be contacted immediately and asked to repair. Where necessary, cemetery staff will lay the memorial down so damage cannot occur or an accident happen.

All memorials placed within Council operated cemeteries are subject to stability testing. Stability testing is conducted every 5 years. Failure to meet the stability requirements will result in a memorial being laid flat. Any repairs to a memorial will be at the Grant or Licence holder's expense.

Liability

Memorials shall remain in the cemetery at the sole risk of the owner therefore the Council shall not be responsible for any injury or damage thereto or damaged caused thereby.

It is strongly advised that the grave owner obtains their own insurance in respect of the memorial and also it is good practice to engage a mason that can guarantee their work for a period of time.

Rights of Council

The Council reserves the following rights:

To remove all memorials from a grave space after the expiry of a Grant or Licence period

To remove any memorial which is considered unsafe or is in a state of disrepair. To remove any memorials not placed on the plinth of the lawn graves at the Lawn Cemetery.

In the case where permission has been previously granted, the Council has the right to revoke permission and may require the owner to remove any part of the memorial from the cemetery.

The Lawn Cemetery

Lawn Graves

Memorials on lawn graves are constrained to a shape and size and must only be located and fixed to the concrete plinth provided by the Council. The fitting of kerb sets is not permitted. Only upright headstones placed on the concrete plinth at the head of the grave are permitted. The size and shape of the memorials are designed to ensure a well maintained landscape. From April 2018, only single headstones will be permitted and no headstones can be placed on reserved plots. Reserved plots are only for a designated period of time and the placement of memorials means these plots cannot be used by the Council should demand require after the reserved period expires. Headstones are only permitted once an interment has taken place and full payment for the burial has been received.

From 2010, new graves in Welwyn Hatfield Lawn Cemetery will not be allowed kerb-settings or extensions beyond the headstone foundation will be allowed. Half-kerb settings and small garden extensions in situ, prior to 2010, will be allowed so long as they are kept to a high standard and do not pose a detriment to the cemetery. The grave spaces that have been neglected over a period of time will be notified that they need to tend to the space or the items will be removed and disposed of by the Council and the area turned to grass.

Under no circumstance shall the whole of the grave space be occupied by tributes or stone work.

Erection and Fixing

Memorial headstones must be fixed using a Namm (National Association of Memorial Masons) approved anchorage system in back-to-back rows at the head of each grave space on concrete platforms provided by the Council. This shall also be identified by a small anchor inscribed on the back.

Materials

The use of wood, or of Bath, Caen, or other soft stone is not recommended for any memorials. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials. The materials and workmanship generally must be to the satisfaction of the Council.

Columbarium Wall Memory Plaques

Granite memorial plaques seal niches within tall brick columns. Niches can be used for the placement of memory items. The memory plaque is provided by the Council.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

Commemorative Garden Tablet

Cremated remains are covered by granite tablets which are provided by the Council and incorporate a vase for floral tributes.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

Cremated Remains Memorial Plots

Small graves are available for the interment of cremated remains. The plots measure 1 m² and can contain up to four caskets of cremated remains. A variety of memorials and tributes can be placed within the plots providing they do not exceed the boundary.

Erection and Fixing

All memorials or cremated remains memorials plots are constrained to a shape and size. Memorials must be fixed on a York Stone landing or on a pre-cast reinforced concrete landing from an approved manufacturer. The landing must not be less than 4" in thickness and laid with the top surface at or below ground level. The use of wood or soft stone is not recommended. Memorial headstones must be fixed using a Namm (National Association of Memorial Masons) approved anchorage system. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials.

Materials

The use of wood, or of Bath, Caen, or other soft stone is not recommended for any memorials. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials. The materials and workmanship generally must be to the satisfaction of the Council.

Commemorative Rose Bushes

A rose bush accompanied by a small granite plaque can be placed either in memory of someone or to mark cremated remains. Both the rose bush and plaque are maintained by the Council.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

After the expiration of the licence period, the licence holder will have the choice whether to renew their licence or not. Should the licensee decline to renew, their plaque will be removed and the plot will be made available for new dedication. Ashes will not be disturbed.

Hatfield Hyde Cemetery

Traditional Graves

Memorials on traditional graves permit a wider range of memorials to be erected which can be placed on the entire grave space. If access to a grave is required for further interment and has a memorial or kerbs in situ, it is the responsibility of the grave owner or person arranging the funeral to remove the memorial within three working days prior to the booking. Memorials on traditional graves are constrained to a shape and size.

The Council may be required to move adjacent memorials to facilitate future burials and no restriction to these works shall be made by other grave owners.

All vases, ornaments, figures or additions to memorials must be fixed so that no portion projects beyond the inside edge of the kerbing.

Paving, rockwork or chippings are not allowed unless enclosed by kerbing.

No memorials shall be erected or re-erected on a traditional grave within a period of 6-12 months from the date of the last interment

All kerbs and memorials on graves must be fixed on a York Stone landing or on a pre-cast reinforced concrete landing from an approved manufacturer. The landing must not be less than 4" in thickness and laid with the top surface at or below ground level.

Materials

The use of wood, or of Bath, Caen, or other soft stone is not recommended for any memorials. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials. The materials and workmanship generally must be to the satisfaction of the Council.

Cremated Remains Memorial Plots

Small graves are available for the interment of cremated remains. The plots measure 1 m² and can contain up to four caskets of cremated remains. A variety of memorials and tributes can be placed within the plots providing they do not exceed the boundary.

All memorials or cremated remains memorials plots are constrained to a shape and size. Memorials must be fixed on a York Stone landing or on a pre-cast reinforced concrete landing from an approved manufacturer. The landing must not be less than 4" in thickness and laid with the top surface at or below ground level. The use of wood or

soft stone is not recommended. Memorial headstones must be fixed using a N.A.M.M. (National Association of Memorials Masons) approved anchorage system. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials.

Materials

The use of wood, or of Bath, Caen, or other soft stone is not recommended for any memorials. Cramps and dowels used in the construction thereof must be of copper, brass or non-ferrous materials. The materials and workmanship generally must be to the satisfaction of the Council.

Commemorative Rose Bushes

A rose bush accompanied by a small granite plaque can be placed either in memory of someone or to mark cremated remains. Both the rose bush and plaque are maintained by the Council.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

Sanctum Vault

Above ground granite vaults can contain cremated remains and are sealed by large granite tablets. Each vault is provided by the Council and incorporates a vase for floral tributes.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

After the expiration of the licence period, the licence holder will have the choice whether to renew their licence or not. Should the licensee decline to renew, their plaque will be removed and the plot will be made available for new dedication. Ashes will not be disturbed.

Memorial Garden Kerbs

A granite kerb is placed by the Council around the landscaped memorial garden. Cremated remains can be placed directly behind the kerb which incorporates a small vase for floral tributes to be placed.

No other items to be placed in or amongst this area.

Dimensions

Memorials should preferably be a headstone, book or cross of natural stone and incorporating no more than two vases of the same material. From April 2018 only single headstones will be permitted once a burial/interment has taken place and payment has been received.

	Height	Width	Depth	Thickness	Kerb length
Lawn Grave	90cm	90cm	37.5cm	75mm	-
Islamic Grave	90cm	90cm	37.5cm	75mm	-
Memorial Plot	65cm	90cm	90cm	75mm	-
Traditional Grave	152cm	90cm	37.5cm	75mm	198cm

Tributes

Anything attributed to the deceased, including fresh floral arrangements, left within the cemetery is done so at a risk. Any articles that stray from graves will be disposed of.

The Council reserves the right to remove any neglected, unsightly, broken, dilapidated, dangerous or unsafe articles or materials from any grave, or any article or material considered by the Cemetery Officer to be a nuisance or detrimental to the grounds without notice. This includes: solar lights, lights, candles, candle holders, silk flowers, pinwheels, lighters, matches and any other item the Council deems detrimental to the cemetery. Glass pots, jars, bottles, vases or tins and such articles used to contain plants or flowers, are not permitted in the cemetery and should they be found, will be removed. This list is not exhaustive of items not permitted.

Floral tributes placed on a grave immediately following a burial will be allowed to remain until they have withered or up until a period of 14 days. The council needs to maintain the grounds and items extending over the graves will not be accepted.

For a period of six months after a new interment the bereaved may place, only in the plinth area assigned to the head of each grave (90 cm wide by 37.5 cm deep) personalised tributes. Again the Council reserves the right to remove any neglected, unsightly, broken, dilapidated, dangerous or unsafe articles or materials from any grave including the headstone area without notice.

The Council will remove and dispose of fresh floral tributes placed on a grave as soon as they have withered. If they are placed in a container, the container may also be disposed of.

Broken glass, vases, or any other sharp articles shall not be placed in cemetery bins.

Grave spaces will be seeded within six months (possibly sooner if weather permits) after burials have taken place. During this six month period, settlement will take place and extra soil will be placed on the grave to keep the ground level. Any work done by the grave owner is done at their own expense and, if grave maintenance is required, may be changed by cemetery staff.

Plants and Shrubs on Graves (The Lawn Cemetery)

Shrubs and plants on or planted within graves are not permitted. The Council reserves the right to dig up and remove any shrubs, plants, trees or flowers growing on the graves without notice. If reasonably possible the Council will place any items on the memorial area as stated in the tribute section above.

Plants and Shrubs on Graves (Hatfield Hyde Cemetery)

Shrubs and plants on graves must be kept within the limits of each grave. The Council reserves the right to prune, cut down, dig up and remove any shrubs, plants or flowers growing on the graves and which may become overgrown.

Bench Regulations

From April 2012, only benches installed by the Welwyn Hatfield Council will be permitted within the Council's maintained cemeteries: Hatfield Hyde Cemetery and The Lawn Cemetery. These regulations will help to create a unified and cohesive landscape at both sites.

Bench locations have been predetermined and no alternatives to these sites will be considered. For maps or further clarification of where memorial benches will be located, please contact Cemetery Services on 01707 357 000

Two different style of Benches are available, a traditional wooden style bench and a bench constructed from granite.

All efforts will be made to ensure benches are placed in close proximity to the desired position; however, available locations will be distributed on a first come first served basis.

Benches will be installed by the council on behalf of the Licence Holder. Under no circumstances should anyone else install a bench. If a bench is found to have been installed by anyone other than the Council, it will be removed without guarantee of safe return.

Benches are available for single or multiple dedications. A wooden bench which has multiple applicants will hold up to four dedications, a granite bench two. When multiple requests have been made for one particular bench all applicants will be informed, however should a bench already be dedicated, then further dedications will not be made. Exceptions will only be permitted on occasions where the bench holder expresses this as their wish.

Licences for a memorial bench can be purchased from the Council for a minimum period of ten years. This fee includes the cost of bench installation in an agreed location, creation and installation of a plaque, with an agreed inscription. The Council own the bench from 2012 and are responsible for the maintenance and general upkeep.

After the expiration of the licence period, the licence holder will have the choice whether to renew their licence. Alternatively, should the licensee decline to renew, their dedication will be removed and the plot will be made available for a new dedication.

Should a bench or plinth become damaged or unsafe, the Council will arrange repairs or a replacement, as appropriate. In such circumstances, the council will take responsible action to notify the licence holder. However, it is the licensee's responsibility to ensure that the council has up-to-date contact details for them at all times.

No articles are permitted on or around any memorial bench. Should any article be found, they will be removed and possibly at the expense of the person responsible depending on the work required to do so.

It should be noted and accepted that licensees have no particular rights to a bench and any person may sit on any memorial bench in the cemetery, in comfort and with respect.

Please contact the Council on 01707357000 if you are interested in purchasing a plaque for a bench.

Existing Bench Regulations

After the initial licence period has expired; and should the bench owner wish to continue with the memorial, the license will need to be renewed, with the current renewal fee applying.

At this time all benches will have to be replaced by ones provided and installed by the Council, with new memorial plaques also being produced.

Providing the existing plinths are safe and there are no issues with the location of the original bench, the new bench will be placed in the same location. However, should the original location be deemed unsuitable, the bench would have to be relocated, with the original location being returned to grass.

All efforts will be made to reallocate the bench to an available plinth as close as possible to the initial position. It should be noted that all bench locations will be distributed on a first come first served basis. If, at this time, the bench owner no longer wishes to continue with the memorial, they would be given a period of 30 days to remove the bench and plinth from site and undertake remedial grounds works to return the area to grass. If this work is not completed within the given timescale the council will arrange for this work to be completed without notice and without guarantee of safe return of the bench. This may also result in the associated costs being recharged to the bench owner.

Should an existing bench or plinth fall into disrepair or become unsafe, it would be the bench owner's responsibility to undertake remedial works. If this is noticed by cemetery staff, all efforts will be made to notify the bench owner as soon as possible.

If, after a period of 30 days, no suitable remedial action has been taken, the council reserves the right to remove the bench, which may result in the associated costs being recharged to the bench owner. If the condition of the bench or plinth means that it is not possible to repair the damage, the owner would be given the opportunity to purchase a new bench under our bench policy, or to remove the bench and plinth entirely and to return the area to grass.

Fees and Charges

The Council will maintain up-to-date fees and charges that are available from the Cemetery Services Department.

Payment

Fees are payable to the Council as shown in the Fees and Charges Schedule available from the Council. Payment for services is required prior to an event occurring unless arrangement has been made to invoice the payee. The Council reserves the right to not provide the requested service. Memorials will not be permitted until full burial/ internment fees have been received. Proof of residence within the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield is required for all burial/ internment applications. If no proof is received treble fees will be applied.

Treble Fees

All fees in relation to graves are trebled for a deceased person who at the time of death resided outside the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield. Any fee relating to the grave afterwards will also be trebled. The only exception to the trebling of fees is applied as follows:

If a grave for more than one person is purchased at the standard rate for the first interment for a resident of the borough, any future fees will remain as standard.

If a resident is required to move out of the area for medical care or to a nursing home within the last 2 years due to ill health, a standard fee would apply. Proof of previous residency within the Borough will be required by the Council.

