

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Report

Subject : Proposed Cemetery Regulations Paper
Committee : Environment
Date : 29 September 2025
Author : Marc Read, Head of Environmental Services

1. Report Summary:

- 1.1. This report seeks Councillors' approval for the adoption of updated Cemetery Regulations covering memorials, benches, and graves within the following cemeteries; Devizes Road, London Road, The Avenue.

2. Background:

- 2.1. The existing regulations are outdated and inconsistent. They do not provide sufficient clarity on:
- The type, size, and placement of memorials;
 - The design and materials permitted for benches;
 - The nature and extent of permissible grave decorations.

As a result, issues have arisen with health and safety, maintenance, and the appearance of our cemeteries.

3. Reasons for Review:

3.1. Health and Safety

- 3.1.1. Unstable or poorly installed memorials can fall and cause injury.
- 3.1.2. Damaged or unsuitably placed benches may collapse.
- 3.1.3. Loose kerbstones, grave surrounds, and ornaments can create trip hazards for visitors and staff.

3.2. Grounds Maintenance

- 3.2.1. Some memorials and decorations obstruct mowing, edging, and routine upkeep.
- 3.2.2. Non-standard items create additional workload and increase costs.
- 3.2.3. Clear regulations will allow staff to carry out maintenance more effectively.

3.3. Appearance and Dignity

- 3.3.1. Consistent rules for memorials and benches ensure the cemetery retains a respectful and orderly appearance.
- 3.3.2. Excessive or unregulated decorations create visual clutter and undermine the serene atmosphere.
- 3.3.3. Updated guidelines strike a balance between allowing families to commemorate their loved ones and protecting the appearance of the cemetery.

4. Considerations

4.1. Operational

- Regular inspections will be required to monitor compliance.
- Processes will need to be in place for notifying families about non-compliant items and arranging removal if necessary.

4.2. Financial

- Initial costs include staff training and consultation.
- Long-term efficiencies will be achieved through reduced maintenance burdens and fewer obstructions.

4.3. Public and Community

- Removal of personal tributes may cause distress to bereaved families.
- Public consultation and sensitive communication will be key to minimising upset.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that councillors:

- 5.1. Agree to adopt the new cemetery regulations as set out in the attachment, covering memorials, benches, and grave decorations.
 - 5.2. Approve the implementation of inspection and compliance procedures to identify unsafe or non-compliant items, including processes for notifying families and arranging removal.
 - 5.3. Endorse a programme of public consultation prior to full enforcement, to give families and the community the opportunity to provide feedback.
 - 5.4. Approve training for cemetery and grounds staff in the new rules and enforcement procedures, with emphasis on sensitivity in dealings with bereaved families.
 - 5.5. Agree a phased enforcement approach, ensuring that existing non-compliant items are addressed gradually, with opportunities for families to bring tributes into compliance.
6. **Wards Affected:** The regulations will be applicable to all individuals and families who visit, maintain, or otherwise use Salisbury City Council cemeteries.

7. **Background Papers:** New Cemetery Regulations All Sites Public Copy August 2025.
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8. **Implications:**

- 8.1. **Financial:** There may be short-term costs associated with staff training, public consultation, and communication materials. In addition, phased enforcement of the regulations may involve expenditure on the removal or securing of unsafe memorials and benches. However, in the longer term the regulations are expected to reduce maintenance costs by standardising memorials and reducing obstructions for grounds staff.
- 8.2. **Personnel:** Cemetery staff will monitor compliance with the new regulations, carrying out regular inspections, and liaising with families where items are found to be unsafe or non-compliant. Staff may also require training to ensure sensitive handling of enforcement.
- 8.3. **Environmental Impact:** By reducing non-standard items and clutter within cemeteries, the new regulations will enable more efficient grounds maintenance and improve the overall appearance of the environment. The regulations also support the creation of a more uniform and dignified landscape, while reducing waste generated from damaged or excessive decorations.
- 8.4. **Equalities Impact:** Clear and consistent regulations will ensure fair treatment of all cemetery users. While some families may feel distressed at the removal of personal tributes, the phased enforcement approach and consultation process are designed to minimise impact. The consistent application of rules will also ensure equitable access to safe, well-maintained cemeteries for all visitors.

Salisbury City Council Cemetery Regulations

Effective – Post Engagement

These Cemetery Regulations are in place to ensure a respectful, safe, and well-maintained environment across all Council-managed cemeteries: The Avenue, London Road, and Devizes Road in Salisbury, Wiltshire.

We kindly ask that all visitors and grave owners follow these guidelines out of consideration for others and the dignity of the space.

Terminology

- **"The Council"**: Salisbury City Council.
- **"The Cemetery"**: Refers to The Avenue, London Road, or Devizes Road Cemeteries.
- **"Cemetery Office"**: The administrative office overseeing all cemeteries.
- **"Memorial"**: Any headstone, kerb* (London Road & Devizes Road only*), monument, cross, or flat stone placed on a grave.

1. Visiting the Cemetery

- Open from sunrise to sunset (dusk).
- Vehicles are not allowed after dusk unless specifically authorised by the Council.
- Speed limit: 5mph.
- No bicycles, skateboards, or similar may be ridden in the cemetery.
- Children under 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Dogs must be on a lead at all times and any fouling must be cleaned up.

Please remember: cemeteries are places of reflection, not recreation.

Contact:

Cemetery Office, Salisbury Crematorium
Barrington Road, Salisbury, SP1 3JB

 01722 333632

 crematorium@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk

 www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk

2. Grave Spaces

Type of Grave	Size	Notes
Adult Grave	2.7m x 1.5m (8'9" x 5'0")	Up to 3 full burials, followed by up to 6 cremated remains interments.
Child's Grave	1.2m x 0.9m (4'0" x 3'0")	For children under 12.
Cremated Remains Plot	London & Devizes Road: 0.61m x 0.61m (24" x 24") The Avenue: 0.46m x 0.46m (18" x 18")	Small Headstone & Flat Stones Flat memorials only.

The Council may temporarily place soil (spoil) on adjacent graves when preparing a burial plot. Spoil will be removed immediately after the service, and the area will be restored.

3. Funerals & Grave Maintenance

- After the burial, the grave will be backfilled and floral tributes placed neatly on top.
- Once the initial tributes have deteriorated or been removed, new tributes must be placed within the footprint of the headstone base only.
- The Council will level and reseed the grave as necessary for up to one year after the burial.

After that, the upkeep becomes the grave owner's responsibility.

4. Flowers, Wreaths & Other Items

We understand that leaving tributes is an important part of remembering loved ones. To ensure safety and respect for all visitors and maintenance staff:

✓ Allowed (within headstone base area):

- Fresh or artificial flowers (not in glass containers)
- Modest personal mementoes that are weather-safe and non-hazardous

✗ Not Allowed:

- Glass containers, oil burners, solar lights, spikes, wind chimes, flags
- Planting of any trees, shrubs, or flowers
- Artificial turf, fencing, kerbs, or gravel
- Benches (these are not permitted anywhere in the cemetery)

Prohibited items will be removed without notice for safety reasons.

All tributes are the responsibility of the grave owner(s). Please dispose of waste using the bins provided.

5. Memorials

Only those who have purchased the Exclusive Right of Burial may install a permanent memorial.

Temporary Markers

- A wooden cross may be placed temporarily until a permanent memorial is installed.
- Temporary markers should be removed within 12 months or once the permanent memorial is in place, whichever comes first.

Memorial Installation Guidelines

- Only one memorial per grave is allowed.
- Memorials must not be installed until at least 6 months after burial (preferably through a winter season), to allow soil to settle.
- All memorials must be installed by a qualified stonemason registered with the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) and must comply with their Code of Practice.
- Work may only be carried out between 8:30am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays), or until sunset, whichever comes sooner.
- No work is permitted during funerals or without Council consent.

Memorial Size Limits: Please note the Avenue Cemetery is a Lawn Cemetery

Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Width	Maximum Length
Full Grave	Headstone: 0.91m (3'0")	0.75m (2'6")	2.04m (6'7")
	Kerb: London Road & Devizes Road <u>Only</u> *	0.75m (2'6")	
Children's Section	0.7m (2'3")	0.61m (2'0")	0.75m (2'6")
Cremated Remains	London Road & Devizes Road <u>Only</u> *: Small Headstone*: 0.7m (2'3")	0.61m (2'0")	0.61m (2'0") 0.46m (1'6")
	Flat Stones*:	0.61m (2'0")	
	The Avenue (Flat Stone <u>Only</u>):	0.46m (1'6")	

- Memorials must include a stainless steel ground anchor system in line with NAMM/BRAMM standards.
- The grave number must be engraved clearly on the reverse lower left corner of the memorial.

Maintenance & Safety

- Memorial upkeep is the responsibility of the grave owner not the Council.
- It is recommended that owners take out memorial insurance.
- The Council conducts routine safety inspections:
 - Unsafe memorials may be supported, laid flat, or removed.
 - If no contact can be made with the grave owner, the Council reserves the right to act.

The Council is not responsible for any damage or loss to memorials. Unauthorised memorials may be removed and costs recovered from the grave owner.

6. Council Rights

Salisbury City Council reserves the right to:

- Update or revise any regulation at any time
- Address situations not specifically covered in this document
- Remove or manage any item, memorial, or structure deemed unsafe, inappropriate, or obstructive
- Temporarily remove fixed memorials to facilitate nearby burials

These regulations are issued under the Council's General Powers of Management as the statutory burial authority.