

FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

CEMETERIES CHARTER FOR THE BEREAVED AND GENERAL PUBLIC

The purpose of this charter is to:

- demonstrate a commitment to improve the Town Council's service by confronting rather than disguising the bereavement and loss experience , and reducing ignorance
- define the rights of every individual who experiences bereavement
- set standards of service related to the burial service, funerals, memorials and cemetery management and thereby provide a clear framework for the working relationship between the Town Council and its grave digging contractor, funeral directors and memorial stonemasons
- recognise that bereavement services are critical to well being of society, that the benefits of a meaningful funeral are immeasurable, influencing both the physical and mental well being of all concerned
- offer the bereaved a greater influence over the arrangement of funerals with the opportunity of controlling costs and offering more satisfaction

To achieve the above objectives and ensure that Farnham Town Council delivers a high level of customer care whilst maintaining and improving service delivery, the following rights for bereaved and related service standards have been identified:

Admission to and conduct in the Town Council's cemeteries

- It is your right to enjoy good access to the Town Council's cemeteries. Accordingly, all the cemeteries shall be open daily from sunrise to sunset. A notice board displaying the general layout of the relevant cemetery and other information will be provided at the main entrance of each cemetery together with related information including the contact details of the Town Council's cemetery administration staff. A detailed plan showing the position and allocation of grave spaces at each cemetery may be seen at the Town Council offices by prior appointment.

- All visitors to the cemetery must behave in a manner which shows respect to the deceased and the bereaved, should not walk on occupied graves and not sit, stand or lean on memorials. Any person behaving in a disorderly or noisy manner may be asked to leave the cemetery.
- No dogs are allowed in the Town Councils cemeteries with the exception of Guide Dogs only.

Burials procedure

- It is your right to have a burial organised and conducted in one of the Town Council's cemeteries in a dignified and orderly manner, supported by competent, professional and caring cemetery staff.
- It is your right to decide the type of religious or secular (i.e. non-religious) format of the funeral service.
- It is your right to choose the type and design of coffin (which must be made of biodegradable materials) within the constraints of availability, regulations and safe materials.
- It is your right to inspect statutory cemetery records which are held at the Town Council offices subject to prior appointment.

Grave choice

- It is your right to purchase a lease of private grave for a period not exceeding 30 years. This "Right of Burial" relates to a grave for one or more burials, and upon which you can place a memorial. A burial fee is payable for this service.
- It is your right to choose to be buried in an unpurchased grave. However, you cannot reserve space for further burials in this type of grave, nor do you have any right to place a memorial on the grave. Farnham Town Council reserves the right to reuse the grave in the future.
- The maintenance of the Grave Plot associated with the Exclusive Right of Burial is the responsibility of the Owner of the Rights.

Baby and infant graves

- It is your right to be offered an individual grave for a baby or an infant.
- It is your right to be able to purchase an adult grave for the burial of a baby or infant, with sufficient depth to allow adult burials.

Memorials

- It is your right to place a memorial on a purchased grave within the constraints of regulations and procedures which have been adopted by Farnham Town Council.
- It is your right and responsibility to maintain a memorial upon a grave during the period of burial rights granted to or transferred you. The memorial cannot be disturbed or moved by third parties during this period without your express permission, unless it poses a safety hazard or to allow for safe access to other graves in which case the Council will make every effort to contact you prior to taking any action.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the memorial is installed in accordance with the Council Cemetery regulations and National Association of Monumental Masons Regulations.
- The maintenance of the memorial is your responsibility as the purchaser of the lease of the grave.
- It is your right to use any stonemason identified in the registration scheme for memorial masons which the Town Council has adopted to carry out work in the Town Council's cemeteries; the purpose of the registration scheme is to assist the Town Council in good management of the cemeteries and promote best practice.

Communications

- It is your right to receive a prompt response to any form of communication within times specified by the Town Council. The Town Council will acknowledge any written communication within five working days and answer within ten working days; any telephone query will be acknowledged within three working days.

- It is your right to be given a table of current cemetery fees and charges upon request. A copy of current cemetery fees and charges (which are subject to annual review) will be posted on all notice boards provided at the cemeteries and the Farnham Town Council website www.farnham.gov.uk

Complaints procedure

- It is your right to use the Town Council's complaints procedure. If you are dissatisfied about any service provided by the Town Council.
- **Level 1:** In the event of a complaint concerning the procedures and service standards relating to the Town Council's cemeteries this should be first reported to the Responsible Officer for cemeteries administration or cemeteries management, who will respond to the complaint and attempt to find a resolution.
- **Level 2:** In the event that this cannot be resolved by the Responsible Officer for cemeteries administration or cemeteries management, the matter will be passed to an independent Officer appointed by the Town Clerk who will investigate the complaint.
- **Level 3:** In the event that your complaint cannot be resolved at Level 2 of the complaints procedure or you wish to appeal against a decision previously taken by the Independent Officer, you have a right to request that your complaint be reviewed by the Town Clerk.
- **Level 4: Appeals** If you wish to appeal against the decision previously taken by the Town Clerk, the appeal will be reported to the Cemeteries Working Group. The decision of the Cemeteries Working Group is final and will be reported to Full Council.

Environmental issues

- It is your right to be made aware of all known environmental issues relating to bereavement services.

Social and community aspects

- It is your right to receive a service that recognises your needs, without unfairness or discrimination irrespective of religious belief, ethnic needs, disability or and other grounds.

Funerals without a funeral director

- It is your right to organise a funeral without the use of funeral director.
- It is your right, as an executor (or next of kin) to be given the body by a mortuary or hospital in order to carry out the funeral.

Maintenance of ground and grave digging

- It is your right to be shown a specified standard of grounds maintenance. Where standards fail to meet the specification, you have a right to complain.

Memorials

- It is your right to obtain independent quotes from stonemason registered with the Council for the manufacture and installation of a memorial

Regulations

- It is your right to be given a copy of cemetery regulations used by the Town Council.
- It is your right to be given a written explanation of the reason why a regulation has been used to restrict or otherwise influence your rights.

Staff and expertise

- It is your right to receive a quality service provided by trained and appropriately qualified staff.

Whilst identifying the above rights, Farnham Town Council seeks customers' co-operation in ensuring that you:

- treat the Town Council's staff with courtesy, respect and dignity

- try to provide the information we ask for to help progress your enquiry or request , or let us know why you can't
- tell us what you think of our services to help us to improve

SERVICE STANDARDS RELATING TO FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S CEMETERIES CHARTER FOR THE BEREAVED AND GENERAL PUBLIC

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>
GENERAL	
Telephone queries are answered	within two working days
Written correspondence is responded to	Acknowledged within five working days Answered within ten working days
Complaints are investigated	Acknowledged within five working days Answered within ten working days
BURIAL	
Burials are arranged	within three clear working days of receipt of all required documentation and information to allow interment on the fourth working day
GRAVE SEARCHES	
Written applications are processed	within ten working days of receipt
GRAVE MAINTENANCE	
Applications are processed	within ten working days
MEMORIAL MANAGEMENT	
Memorial permits are processed	within five working days

CEMETERY GROUNDS MAINTENANCE STANDARDS RELATING TO FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S CEMETERIES CHARTER FOR THE BEREAVED AND GENERAL PUBLIC

In caring for the cemetery grounds, Farnham Town Council aims to achieve the following maintenance standards

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>STANDARD</u>
The Lawn section grass will be cut every (excluding the area around the headstone):	three weeks
The Lawn section will be strimmed every (this is to include the area around the headstone):	five weeks
The large open areas will be cut every:	three weeks
The Traditional areas will be strimmed: (including the area close to, and on the graves)	five times per annum

Grass cutting and strimming is only carried out during the growing season from the start of April to the end of October.

Leaf clearance will commence in November and be completed by the end of March.

All roads within the Cemetery will be swept as and when necessary and a minimum of four times a year.