



COUNTSTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

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Purchasing or Reserving a Plot – Exclusive Rights of Burial

Understanding Your Rights and Choices

We want to support you in making the right choices for you or your loved ones. When you arrange for an **Exclusive Right of Burial**, it means you hold the official care and safekeeping of the plot.

This right allows you to:

- **Choose a final resting place** in a specific, designated plot.
- **Decide who may be interred** within that personal space.
- **Apply to place a memorial** to honour their memory, in line with our guidelines.

Please note that while you hold the exclusive rights to use the plot, the underlying cemetery land remains under the ongoing care and ownership of the Parish Council.

Fees, Charges, and Residency

To keep our cemetery beautifully maintained for everyone, fees vary depending on where your loved one lived. We strive to be as fair and flexible as possible during these changes.

- **Local Residents:** Fees are based on the residency of the first person to be laid to rest.
- **Caring for Non-Resident Loved Ones:** If you live locally but are purchasing a plot for a relative or friend who lived outside Countesthorpe at the time of their passing, non-resident fees will apply.
- **Recent Relocations:** If a resident purchases a plot but a non-resident loved one is interred there within 5 years, the difference between resident and non-resident pricing will be adjusted, along with the standard non-resident interment fees.
- **Moving Away Later in Life:** If you purchased your right of burial while living in Countesthorpe but later moved away, your interment costs will be honoured at the local resident rate.
- **Special Care Circumstances:** If a local resident had to move into a care home outside of the village prior to their passing, we fully recognize them as a resident for all plot purchases and interments.
- **Double Interments (Same Casket):** Two sets of cremated remains placed in a single casket incur one interment fee for residents. Non-residents are subject to a double interment fee.
- **Placement with Full Burials:** When cremated remains are placed in a coffin during a full burial, both the standard burial fee and a casket interment fee will apply.
- **Burial in an Uncasketed Plot:** If cremated remains are placed in a burial plot but are not contained within a casket, the standard casket interment fee will still be required.
- **Oversized Coffins & Caskets:** Any coffin or casket exceeding 36 inches in width will require the purchase of an additional burial plot.
- **Full Fee Details:** To help you plan, our complete and up-to-date schedule of fees is always available on request or can be viewed thoughtfully online via the Countesthorpe Parish Council website.

Managing Plot Spaces

- Most graves are designed to comfortably accommodate two coffins, and caskets of ashes can also be interred within the space (to a maximum of four caskets should there be no interment of a coffin). Please note that to protect the ground, once an ashes casket is placed in a grave or if the plot was originally prepared for just a single coffin, a traditional coffin cannot be placed there later. However, if a traditional burial happens first, up to two caskets of ashes can be added later.
- **Cremation Plot Space:** Our cremation plots can hold two caskets of ashes.
- **Larger Coffins:** If a loved one requires a coffin or casket over 36 inches in width, it will require the purchase of an additional adjacent plot to ensure they rest comfortably without disturbing others.
- **Double Interments:** For local residents, placing two sets of cremated remains in a single casket incurs only one fee. For non-residents, a double interment fee applies.
- **Combining Interments:** If cremated remains are placed inside a coffin for a full burial, both the burial and casket interment fees will apply. For loose ashes placed directly in a burial plot, the standard casket interment fee is required.

Caring for Your Family's Plot and Rights

Securing a resting place brings peace of mind, and we are here to protect your family's wishes for generations to come.

- When you purchase a burial plot, you will receive a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial. This acts as a protective deed for up to 100 years, ensuring your family's private space is preserved. It can also be renewed in the future to keep your loved ones together.
- Keeping in Touch: Because this plot belongs uniquely to your family, please let the Parish Council know if you move or change your name. If the deed holder passes away, we will guide you through transferring these rights to a legal heir or executor so the family's wishes remain protected.
- Protecting Their Peace: Once a loved one is laid to rest, they are left in peace. In accordance with the law, no remains or ashes can be disturbed or moved without an official exhumation licence from the Secretary of State.
- Choosing a Location: We want you to feel comfortable with where your loved one rests. While the Parish Council manages the cemetery layout, you are very welcome to request a specific plot within the current burial area, and we will do our absolute best to accommodate your wishes.
- Returning a Reserved Plot: We know that plans can change over time. If your family ever decides that a reserved, unused plot is no longer needed, the Parish Council is glad to step in and buy it back from you at the original price you paid.
- We kindly ask that you care for your loved one's resting place in a way that is in keeping and respectful to the sensitivity of the cemetery.

Arrangements for purchasing the Exclusive Rights of Burial can be made by contacting the Parish Council Office on 0116 2779518.

Making Arrangements for an Interment and/or Services

Arrangements for interment are arranged through your chosen Funeral Director. Your Funeral Director will communicate with the Parish Council to ensure everything goes smoothly and peacefully on the day of the service, and will follow essential steps and timelines as follows:-

Notice, Timings and Documentation

- **Standard Notice:** They will submit a Notice of Interment to the Parish Council Office at least two working days before the service (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays), along with relevant supporting paperwork; for Cremated Remains – a Cremation Certificate issued by the Crematorium; for burials – a Certificate for Burial (the Green Form) or a Coroner's Order for Burial.
- **Signatures:** The Notice of Interment must be signed by the registered plot owner. If the plot owner themselves is being laid to rest, a close relative is welcome to sign on their behalf.
- **Religious or Customary Needs:** We deeply respect that different faiths and communities have specific burial traditions. If your custom requires a shorter notice period, please raise this with your funeral director so that they can arrange this through the Parish Office so that we can accommodate your needs.
- **Available Times:** Services can be held between 9:00 am and 4.30 pm, Monday to Saturday. To respect our staff and community calendar, burials are generally not held on Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, or Public Holidays. In rare, urgent circumstances where an immediate burial is necessary, we will work with you upon receiving the required medical or legal documentation.
- **Clarity in Communication:** Please note that we cannot officially accept instructions over the telephone. All final arrangements must be submitted in writing.
- **Gentle Note on Infant Loss:** For families navigating the heartbreaking loss of a stillborn child, standard documentation applies if the loss falls within the statutory definitions of the Stillbirth (Definition) Act 1992. For losses prior to the 24th week of pregnancy, we ask for a certificate from a Medical Practitioner or midwife present at the birth.

Preparing the Plot and Markers

Your funeral director will take full responsibility for choosing and managing experienced grave diggers. We hold these professionals to the highest safety and respect standards so that your family and guests are fully protected. Grave diggers are required to strictly ensure:

- **Protecting Resting Places:** When reopening a family grave for a subsequent burial, we promise that any human remains already resting there will be treated with the utmost dignity and left completely undisturbed.
- **Temporary Markers:** Simple wooden crosses are welcomed as a temporary marker following a burial. These will be carefully removed once your permanent stone memorial is ready to be installed.
- **Protection of Neighbours:** Adjacent plots are carefully covered and protected with suitable materials while the earth is moved.
- **Safety and Stability:** The ground is thoroughly checked for hazards, proper shoring is level, and the grave is dug perfectly central and level.

- **Dignified Access:** Safe, easy access and clean grass matting are laid down for everyone attending or officiating the service.
- **Unattended Graves:** Any open plot left unattended, regardless of its size or for even a short moment must be completely and securely boarded over to keep visitors safe.
- **Team Safety:** For deeper excavations (of a depth greater than 3ft), a second safety person will always be present on-site to look out for the working gravedigger, ensuring everyone goes home safely to their families.

Caring and Compassionate Guidance for Families following an interment

We understand that caring for your loved one's final resting place is deeply meaningful, and we want to help you honour their memory in a safe, beautiful space. To keep our cemetery peaceful, accessible, and beautifully maintained for everyone, we ask families to follow these guidelines.

Preparing and Caring for the Plot

- After the burial, our team cares for the grave by restoring it to a beautiful, natural grassed condition.
- Keeping the Space Open: To allow us to tend the grass and keep the surroundings tidy, we kindly ask that no trees, shrubs, rooted plants, or bulbs be planted.
- Preserving the Landscape: To protect our maintenance teams and equipment, please refrain from adding artificial grass, stones, chippings, paving, railings, or chains around the plot.

Tributes, Flowers, and Cherished Items

- **Floral Tributes:** You are welcome to leave flowers and wreaths on new graves. Once they begin to naturally fade, our team will thoughtfully remove and compost them to keep the area tidy.
- **Saving Sentimental Keepsakes:** If you place sentimental ornamental items on a new grave, please reclaim them within four weeks. We will safely hold onto these items for one month so you have time to collect them.

You may wish to refer to the section later in this document on keeping the cemetery as a welcoming place for all, should you be unsure of what tributes you can leave on your loved one's grave/plot.

Scattering Cremated Remains

If you wish to scatter your loved one's ashes in our peaceful, designated area next to the Chapel, we are here to help you coordinate the details.

- **Permission and Records:** To maintain the peace and official history of the grounds, please arrange this with the Parish Council beforehand, provide the Cremation Certificate, and settle the relevant fee.
- **Floral Tributes:** You are welcome to leave flowers and wreaths in the scattering section. To keep the area tidy, our team will remove them once they begin to wilt, though families are always welcome to collect them earlier.
- **Keeping the Space Natural:** To preserve a serene, shared natural environment for all grieving families, personal vases, permanent ornaments, or figures cannot be placed in the scattering area.

Please know that our team is here to support you during this time. If you are unsure about a specific memorial item or container, please reach out to the Parish Council Office - we are always happy to help guide you.

Memorials

Arranging a Memorial

We understand that choosing a lasting tribute for your loved one is a deeply personal and meaningful journey. To help you through this process, we want to ensure everything goes as smoothly as possible.

Before any memorial work begins, your registered mason will need to submit a plan and fee payment to the Parish Council for approval. Please allow at least seven working days so we can carefully review everything together. You can find out if your preferred Stonemason is registered with the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) by using their database at www.namm.org.uk.

How We Can Help Prepare Your Application

To make sure your tribute is securely placed and beautifully prepared, please ensure:

- **Ownership:** The paperwork must be signed by the registered owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial. If your loved one was the owner, please contact the Parish Council office and we will guide you through the process of transferring these rights first.
- **Tribute Details:** Your mason will provide a full description of the materials, dimensions, meaningful inscriptions, and fixing methods.
- **Safety & Care:** To protect everyone who visits, all craftsmanship must meet the safety standards of BS 8415 and the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Working Practice.

Guided Steps for a Lasting Memorial

Countesthorpe Cemetery carefully looks after the grounds so that every resting place remains peaceful. To ensure your memorial is built safely and stands for generations, the Parish Council asks that the work follows these steps:

- **Professional Care:** A registered, qualified memorial mason must handle all the crafting and installation.
- **Prior Approval:** The design, size, and secure ground-anchoring system need to be approved by the Parish Council before work begins.
- **Safety Standards:** The mason must build the memorial in strict accordance with national safety guidelines (NAMM Code of Practice).
- **Respectful Preparation:** The stone must be fully shaped and prepared before it is brought into the cemetery grounds.
- **Hidden Foundations:** To keep the lawns looking neat and natural, foundations should stay hidden beneath the grass whenever possible.
- **Perfect Harmony:** The memorial will be placed in a neat, straight line with the surrounding headstones to maintain the beauty of the row.

So that the Memorial is in keeping with the cemetery, they must fit within the following dimensions:-

Full Burial Memorial:

Memorial Height – 762 mm (30“) Width – 610 mm (24“) Depth – 100 mm (4“)

Base (plinth) Height – 102 mm (4“) Width – 762 mm (30“) Depth – 457 mm (18“)

Memorial maximum overall height including base – 864 mm (34“)

A memorial in the form of a portable iron or stone vase must not exceed 30 cm (12“) in height and occupy a space not exceeding 30 cm (12“) x 30 cm (12“)

Cremation Memorial / combined portable table, vase and base:

Memorial Height – 356 mm (14“)

Width – 356 mm (14“)

Memorial to occupy a space not exceeding 356 mm (14“) by 356 mm (14“)

Helpful Planning Guide & Care Guidelines

- Arranging the Work: To maintain a peaceful environment for all families, memorial work takes place on weekdays between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, avoiding weekends, holidays, or times when another family is laying a loved one to rest.
- Tending to the Grounds: To keep the cemetery beautiful and safe for everyone, masons are asked to protect the surrounding grass and neighboring memorials. They will tidy the area completely once their work is finished, removing any materials, surplus earth or mortar, and tools when work is not in progress. The Stonemason carrying out the works would be responsible for any injury or damage caused as a result of their work done in erecting or repairing a memorial.
- To ensure your tribute is preserved safely, please make sure the design and inscriptions are approved by the Parish Council beforehand. This protects your investment and ensures the memorial meets all local safety care standards.
- Safe Keeping: If a memorial needs to be altered or moved for any reason, please reach out to the Parish Council first for written guidance to ensure it is handled with the utmost care. The Parish Council would reserve the right to remove an unauthorised memorial, which it will retain for 28 days after which it would dispose of the memorial.
- The responsibility for any injury or damage caused in the cemetery as a result of work done in erecting, repairing, altering or removing any memorial will be borne by the person carrying out the work or on whose behalf the work is done.

Removal of a Memorial

If a family grave needs to be reopened for a subsequent interment, we want to help you preserve your existing memorial monument safely.

- **Arranging Removal:** The plot owner is responsible for organising the temporary removal and safe reinstallation of a headstone. To ensure it is handled with expert care, you must use a Registered Memorial Mason who follows the National Association of Memorial Masons' Code of Practice (NAMM).
- **In the Event of an Owner's Passing:** If the registered owner of the plot is the deceased, the memorial can absolutely still be safely removed and put back for the service. However, before any new inscriptions or replacement stones can be added, the official Exclusive Right of Burial will need to be transferred to a living family member. Please contact the Parish Council who would be able to advise you of the process.

Caring for the Memorial

A memorial is a beautiful, lasting connection to those we miss. Because it is so special, keeping it safe and stable remains the heart of our shared responsibility:

- **Ongoing Care:** The owner holds the financial responsibility for keeping the headstone maintained and safe. Should the owner of the plot move, you are advised to notify the Parish Council so that our records can be kept up to date.
- **Safety Reviews:** The Parish Council will periodically check memorials to ensure the cemetery remains a peaceful, safe place for all families.
- **Supportive Adjustments:** If a headstone ever needs attention or does not meet the NAMM standards, or repair to stay secure, we will reach out to you or your stonemason so it can be restored. Should your stonemason not install the memorial to NAMM standards or it does not meet the requirements of the periodic checks, the Parish Council may need to employ another stonemason to remove or correct the memorial and would pass on the cost to your stonemason. Wherever possible the Parish Council will aim to make contact with the owner, however, should there be a risk of danger to our visitors, the Parish Council would need to make arrangements to make the memorial safe.

Remembering Your Loved Ones with a Special Tribute – Memorial Trees and Benches

Choosing a memorial tree or bench in our cemetery is a beautiful, lasting way to honour and celebrate the life of someone special. To help us care for the grounds and ensure every family has a peaceful space to remember their loved ones, we kindly ask you to keep a few guidelines in mind:

- Each tree is planted to honour someone who has passed away.
- To ensure there is room for all families, we are able to welcome up to two trees per family.
- To remain fair to everyone in our community, we are unable to hold or reserve tree plots in advance.
- To keep the setting serene, each tree holds one plaque. If you wish to welcome another loved one's name to the tree in the future, you are welcome to purchase a replacement plaque that brings both names together.
- Once installed, the trees and plaques are safely looked after as the property of the Parish Council, ensuring they are protected and tended to for generations to come.
- Protecting the landscape: If a memorial tree should sadly become diseased, the Council will step in to replace it at no cost to you.
- We kindly ask that no personal items, extra plantings, or mementos be left around the tree or bench. This helps our team safely tend the surrounding grass and keeps the area tidy and serene for all who come to remember someone special.

Keeping the Cemetery as a welcoming place for all

We want our cemetery to be a peaceful, comforting space for everyone. To help us keep these grounds beautiful and serene for you and your loved ones, we kindly ask all visitors to follow these thoughtful guidelines.

Getting Around Comfortably

- **Parking:** To keep the paths calm and safe, please leave visitor cars in the main car park.
- **Accessibility:** Mobility scooters and disabled person's buggies are always welcome inside the grounds to help you reach your loved one's resting place.
- **Tidiness:** Please use the bins provided to dispose of old flowers and litter, helping us keep the area beautiful.

Tributes and Flowers

- **Christmas Remembrances:** Holiday wreaths and tributes bring comfort during the winter. You are welcome to leave them until the second week of February, after which our team will gather them. Any wreaths still in beautiful condition will be kept for up to two months for you.
- **Protecting Everyone:** For the safety of all families and our dedicated staff, we kindly ask that no glass items be left in the cemetery, as broken glass can cause accidental harm. Glass items will be removed immediately for safety.
- **Beautiful, Lasting Alternatives:** We highly recommend using frost-protected ceramics, metal, or durable composite containers to safely hold your floral tributes.
- If any item unintentionally blocks paths or poses a safety risk, our team will respectfully remove it so the area remains safe and serene for all who visit.
- To make sure that the cemetery is a respectful and tidy place to visit, we occasionally need to remove items that are broken, weathered, or extended onto neighbouring resting places. If you have any questions or need guidance on what can be placed on a plot, please reach out to us—we are here to support you.

Creating a Peaceful Environment

A cemetery is a place for quiet reflection, prayer, and remembering. Out of respect for those resting here and others who are grieving, we ask that you:

- Keep a quiet, orderly, and calm presence.
- Avoid playing games, sports, or loud music whether live or recorded (unless you have spoken with the Parish Council first).
- Never disturb a burial service, grave, or memorial.
- Leave all trees, plants, and flowers just as they are for everyone to enjoy.
- Refrain from any business activities or selling goods on the grounds.

Visiting with Your Dog

We know pets offer immense comfort during difficult times. If you bring your dog, please help us keep the grounds clean and respectful by:

- Keeping them securely on a lead.
- Guiding them to stay closely on the main paths and drives.
- Ensuring they do not disturb other visitors who may be grieving.
- Cleaning up after them immediately (as failure to do so is against local laws).

Reserved Rights of the Parish Council

At Countesthorpe Parish Council, we care deeply about providing a peaceful, respectful, and comforting final resting place for your loved ones. While we must maintain official management of the cemetery under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, our primary goal is to support you through these difficult times.

Supporting You and Honouring Your Loved Ones

- Our rules are here to protect the beauty and tranquillity of the cemetery for everyone.
- If any confusion or disagreements happen regarding rules or fees, our Council will step in to help resolve them fairly and finalise a path forward.
- Adapting to Families' Needs: We regularly review and update our guidelines to make sure we are serving our community in the best, most comforting way possible.
- Here for the Unexpected: If a unique situation comes up that isn't covered in our standard booklet, we will look at it personally to find a compassionate solution.

Our Responsibility to You

While we do everything we can to care for our beautiful grounds, the Parish Council cannot take responsibility for any personal injury, or loss and damage to graves and memorials, unless it is directly caused by our team's negligence.

If you have a question, or wish to make an enquiry, please reach out to the Parish Council team directly—we are here to support you.

Contact & Resources

Please reach out to us as at:-

- Countesthorpe Parish Council: Call our office at 0116 2779518 or email us at manager@countesthorpeparishcouncil.co.uk.
- Form Downloads: Find guidance documents on the Parish Council website at www.countesthorpeparishcouncil.co.uk.
- To find a NAMM registered Stonemason, speak to the National Association of Memorial Masons at 01788 542264 or visit their website at www.namm.org.uk.