Dinnington St John's Town Council

Park Avenue Cemetery Policy, Rules and Regulations

Including the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area

May 2026

The Town Council welcomes visitors to its award winning Park Avenue Cemetery in Dinnington which is located in well maintained and cared for grounds. Certain areas around the Cemetery are given over to encourage wildlife to add to the general ambiance and give a feeling of peace and tranquility to those who wish to spend some time there to reflect and remember.

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 This policy sets out the rules, regulations and visitor information for Park Avenue Cemetery, including the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area.

1.2 It applies to all cemetery users, visitors, funeral directors, memorial masons, contractors, grave owners, exclusive right holders and any other person carrying out work or placing items in the cemetery.

1.3 The policy is intended to support respectful use of the cemetery, safe operation, proper record keeping, maintenance of the grounds and protection of the cemetery's natural environment.

2. Ownership, management and legal framework

2.1 Park Avenue Cemetery is owned, managed and maintained by Dinnington St John's Town Council ("the Council").

2.2 The Council operates Park Avenue Cemetery as a burial authority and will manage the cemetery in accordance with applicable legislation, burial-ground requirements, health and safety duties, approved Council policies (including Health and Safety Policy), and any relevant sector guidance.

2.3 This policy is a Council management policy and set of rules. It is not intended to operate as a set of statutory byelaws unless the Council separately resolves to make byelaws and follows the required statutory process.

2.4 The Council may amend this policy, the rules, operational arrangements and charges at any time, particularly to reflect changes in law, guidance, costs, operational requirements or cemetery capacity.

3. Contact details

Town Clerk	Dinnington St John's Town Council 64 Laughton Road Dinnington S25 2PS
Telephone	01909 564169
Email	clerk@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
Cemetery email	Cemetery@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
Cemetery Supervisor	07790 556351

4. Access, visitors and facilities

- The cemetery is available for public visits on any day of the year.
- Visitors are asked to behave respectfully and to comply with this policy and any instructions given by authorised Council staff.
- The public toilet at the cemetery will normally be open only during cemetery staff working hours, 8.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday.
- Water is available from the tap near the office. Visitors should return plastic water bottles to the bins provided after use.
- Car parking is roadside parking on Park Avenue. Approved disabled-persons' motorised chairs and scooters may use the pedestrian-gate access.
- The Works and Cemetery Team maintain other areas of the parish and may not always be in attendance at the cemetery. Written and telephone enquiries will be replied to as soon as practicable.

5. Burial and memorial work times

5.1 Burials, interments and memorial work may take place only at times agreed with the Council in advance.

Period	Normal permitted times
Summer: 1 March to 31 October	9.00am to 3.00pm, Monday to Friday
Winter: 1 November to 29 February	9.00am to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday

5.2 Burial and memorial work is not permitted outside the above times unless specifically authorised by the Council.

6. Interments

- Park Avenue Cemetery is primarily intended for the interment of deceased persons who were resident in Dinnington.
- Each grave in the cemetery is consecrated as required.
- The next available grave space will normally be used for an interment.
- The time, date and arrangements for every interment must be agreed with the Council in advance and confirmed by email to clerk@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk and Cemetery@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
- The Notice of Interment and Certificate for Burial must be delivered to the Council, together with payment of the appropriate fees, at least four days before the interment.
- Interment of cremated remains in a grave or cremation plot, or scattering of cremated remains, is subject to authority from the relevant exclusive right holder where applicable.

7. Exclusive right of burial

- The exclusive right of burial in a grave may be granted at the time of interment or in advance.
- For standard grave spaces, the exclusive right of burial will be granted for a period not exceeding 100 years.
- For the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area, exclusive burial plot rights are granted for 99 years.
- The Council's decision as to the selection and allocation of any grave space is final.
- Upon receipt of a valid application and payment of the appropriate fee, the Council will allocate a grave space and issue a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial.
- The registered owner of the exclusive right of burial may request the interment of members of their family in the grave, provided that the depth of the grave permits.
- Purchased graves may be excavated to a depth allowing up to two interments, according to the purchaser's instruction given at the time of first interment.
- So far as practicable, no grave in which the exclusive right of burial has been purchased will be re-opened without production of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial or written consent of the owner or their legal representative.

8. Fees and charges

8.1 The Council's cemetery charges are set out in Appendix A. Charges are subject to change.

8.2 All relevant fees must be paid before any burial, interment, memorial work or other chargeable cemetery service takes place, unless the Council has agreed otherwise in writing.

8.3 For non-residents of Dinnington, all charges will be doubled unless proof of residency in Dinnington during the 10 years prior to death can be provided. Where such proof is provided, charges will increase by 50% rather than 100%.

8.4 The double charge for non-Dinnington residents will be abated by £300 for Cremation Inclusive Packages to avoid double payment for one memorial stone.

9. Memorials, headstones, benches and memorial work

- Memorials may be installed only where the exclusive right of burial has been purchased.
- An application to erect, remove, replace or alter a memorial must be made in writing to the Council before work begins.
- The application must provide details of the proposed memorial, including size, material and inscription. The memorial may not be erected until written approval has been given.
- Memorial masons are advised to obtain permission before starting work. The Council will not be responsible for losses incurred for work to a memorial that has not been approved.
- All work connected with the erection or fixing of memorials must be approved in advance by the Council. Memorial work will usually be carried out between 8.00am and 3.00pm Monday to Friday when the Cemetery Staff are on site.
- No hewing or dressing of stone is permitted within the cemetery.
- Headstones must be no larger than 3ft / 90cm high by 3ft / 90cm wide and must be secured using an approved fixing method.
- In traditional cemetery areas, any approved kerb or border set must not exceed 12 inches / 30cm in front of the headstone and must not be wider than the headstone. Kerb or border sets are not permitted in the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area.
- Photograph plaques are permitted on headstones.
- Decorative chippings are permitted only within 12 inches / 30cm in front of the headstone.
- Memorial stones for ashes plots may be purchased through Dinnington St John's Town Council.
- Any memorial installed on a grave is the responsibility of the grave owner and must be maintained and kept in good order by the owner.
- If a memorial becomes dangerous, the Council may take whatever action is necessary to make it safe, including removing the memorial if necessary. The grave owner is responsible for all costs incurred by the Council under this rule.
- Memorial benches in the cemetery are the property and responsibility of the purchaser. If a bench falls into disrepair, the Council reserves the right to remove it.
- All cemetery benches must be purchased through Dinnington St John's Town Council to the Council's specification. Bench sites will be advertised on the Council's website as they become available.
- Dinnington St John's Town Council reserves the right to refuse permission for the erection or placing of any memorial.

10. Planting, flowers, wreaths and ornaments

10.1 Traditional cemetery areas

- Flowers and small shrubs may be placed on purchased graves in pots within the permitted area of 12 inches / 30cm in front of the headstone.
- Vases and ornaments, except glass vases or glass ornaments, may be placed at either side of headstone memorials if there is enough space on the concrete plinth, and on the ground in front of the headstone memorial up to 30cm / approximately one foot.

- A small number of ornaments may be placed on graves within the permitted area. Glass and breakable items are not suitable as grave ornaments.
- Trees must not be planted on graves except where authorised as part of the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area.
- Plants which spread beyond the grave border, become oversized or cause a nuisance may be cut back or removed by the Council.
- Dead flowers and wreaths may be removed at the Council's discretion if, in the Council's opinion, they have become unsightly or are falling apart.
- Following an interment, wreaths around the grave will be removed by the Cemetery staff four weeks from the Sunday following the interment, or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- Christmas wreaths may be laid but must be removed by 1 February each year. Any remaining after that date may be removed by Cemetery staff.
- Any person with a special request regarding the disposal of flowers or wreaths should contact the Council.
- Any vases or decorative items placed on graves must be kept within the boundary of the grave. Items placed outside the grave boundary will be removed.
- All litter, dead flowers, cuttings and similar items must be placed in the bins provided.

10.2 Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area

- No vases or ornaments of any description may be placed on graves in the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area.
- Only flowers are permitted to be laid in grave areas after burial.
- At Christmas, ecologically-friendly wreaths may be laid for up to two weeks after Christmas, until 8 January. Any remaining after that date may be removed by Cemetery staff.
- No digging or planting of trees, shrubs or flowers by visitors is permitted. Trees to mark graves will be planted by cemetery staff, normally in October.
- Any items left on or by graves in the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area, other than those permitted by this policy, will be removed by Cemetery staff.

11. Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area

11.1 The Council has designated an area of Park Avenue Cemetery for natural burials. This area is intended to be left, as far as possible, to the natural environment with minimal maintenance.

11.2 The designated natural burial area is behind the hedge separating the main cemetery area from the natural burial area, in Areas M and N on the cemetery plan.

11.3 The Council's intention is that graves in this area are marked with small fruit trees to create an orchard that provides food and habitats for wildlife and may produce fruit for donation to local food banks and primary schools to encourage healthy lifestyles.

11.4 The Council will manage the Natural ('Green') Orchard Burial Area in line with the Association of Natural Burial Grounds Code of Conduct and relevant guidance, so far as applicable to the Council's cemetery operations.

- Plot type: single-depth plots only.
- Burial rights: exclusive burial plot rights for 99 years.
- Gravedigging: requirements will be sub-contracted to a local specialist contractor who complies with current gravedigging requirements.
- Embalming: owing to the processes involved, embalming will not normally be permitted for burials in this area.
- Coffins and shrouds: all coffins and shrouds must be made from environmentally friendly, sustainable and biodegradable material, such as willow, cardboard or other suitable eco-friendly material.
- Memorials: nothing is permitted on the grave except the fruit tree referred to above and a small plaque to commemorate the deceased.
- Site management: the area will be managed broadly as a meadow, with a maximum of two grass cuts per year.
- Environmental management: herbicides, chemicals, fertilisers, baits or any substance that may affect the environment are not permitted in this area. Green waste will be composted and other waste will be disposed of promptly.

- Trees: dead trees will be replaced with identical trees wherever possible. The Council intends the environmental and ecological benefits of the area to remain in place for as long as the cemetery remains open.

11.5 Park Avenue Cemetery is located on Park Avenue, Dinnington, less than 100 yards from the junction of Park Avenue and Nursery Road. The cemetery is accessible by public transport, with bus stops nearby.

12. Visitor conduct and unauthorised activity

- Dogs must be kept on a short lead at all times. Owners must not allow dogs to foul in the cemetery.
- Cycling is not permitted in the cemetery.
- For safety reasons, unauthorised vehicles are not permitted in the cemetery unless they form part of a funeral cortège.
- Approved disabled-persons' motorised chairs and scooters are permitted and may gain access through the pedestrian gate entrance.
- Digging and planting of trees, shrubs or flowers in and around graves is prohibited unless expressly authorised by the Council.
- The Council is not responsible for any loss of, or damage to, headstones, kerb or border sets, memorials, planting, flowers, ornaments or other items placed on graves by owners or visitors.
- Items considered unsuitable by the Council will be removed. Such items may be held by the Cemetery Staff for collection by the donor. Items not collected within one month may be disposed of.

13. Applications, records and inspections

- Details of burials and proposed memorials must be submitted to the Council for approval and the appropriate fees paid before any work takes place. This is usually arranged by funeral directors and memorial companies in conjunction with the Works and Cemetery Team.
- Records of interments, cremation plots and memorials are kept by the Works and Cemetery Team, who will assist with enquiries where possible.
- Periodic inspections and checks are made to ensure memorial stones are safe. The Council will attempt to contact owners to advise of repair work if required.
- The Council will maintain cemetery records and burial documentation in accordance with its retention arrangements and audit requirements.

14. Review and publication

14.1 This policy should be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a change in legislation, sector guidance, cemetery operations, fees, health and safety requirements or Council policy.

14.2 The Council may publish this policy, the current schedule of charges and any visitor summary information on its website and make copies available on request.

Adopted date: 11/05/2026

Minute reference: 19/27 A

Review cycle: Annually

Next review date: May 2027

Appendix A – Schedule of Charges with effect from 1st October 2026

Category	Description	Charge
Burial including exclusive rights – period not to exceed 100 years (includes first interment)		
Age at time of death	Up to 16 years	FREE
	Exceeded 16 years	£1250.00
Burial interments after the first – exclusive rights holder's authority required		
Age at time of death	Up to 16 years	FREE
	Exceeded 16 years	£800.00
Cremation inclusive packages	Cremation plot (any age) – includes plot exclusive right, memorial stone, right to place memorial stone and fitting, first interment and lettering for first interment	£1,750.00
	Cremation kerb plaque and vase with 50-year exclusive right, including right to place fitting and lettering for first interment	£350.00
Interment of cremated remains in grave or cremation plot	Any age, subject to authority from grave or plot exclusive right holder	£200.00
	Scatter cremated remains – any age, subject to authority from grave or plot exclusive right holder	£100.00
Memorials – exclusive rights holder's authority required	Right to place first headstone/memorial including base not exceeding 2ft 6in high	£175.00
	Right to place first headstone/memorial including base over 2ft 6in high but not over 3ft high	£200.00
	Right to place vase not exceeding 12in high	£50.00
	Additional inscription on cremation memorial after first placed	£300.00
	To remove, replace or both any memorial or vase for any reason, including for inscriptions or adding details to the Cemetery Grave Location Map	£80.00
Natural burials	Natural burial including tree and plaque (all burials)	£1,500.00

Non-resident charges: For all non-residents of Dinnington, all charges will be doubled unless proof of residency in Dinnington in the 10 years prior to death can be provided, in which case charges will increase by 50%. The double charge for non-Dinnington residents will be abated by £300 for Cremation Inclusive Packages to avoid double payment for one memorial stone.