



BURIAL GROUND MANAGEMENT POLICY

REVIEWED: May 2026

APPROVAL DATE:

Recreation & Amenities Committee – Tuesday 9 June 2026

Town Council – Tuesday 14 July 2026

REVIEW DATE: May 2027

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Biddulph Town Council currently owns and manages two Burial Grounds

- The Town Burial Ground
- Woodhouse Burial Ground

1.2 The Town Council also undertakes the maintenance of the closed St Lawrence's Churchyard, for which the Town Council receives the interment fees for any grave re-openings that occur within the site.

1.3 The council's appointed 'Registrar of the Burial Grounds' is the Chief Officer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

2.1 This policy aims to ensure the following:

- The Burial Ground, memorials and any activities within the Burial Ground are safe for all users of the site, including visitors, contractors and professionals in the funeral business.
- The environment is pleasant and peaceful in order to show sensitivity and respect for those interred and to support family and friends to reflect and remember their loved one.
- The processes followed to deal with any issues that may arise are fair, transparent and are sensitively and appropriately communicated.

- To manage the limited supply of current burial plots in Biddulph and to ensure the continued availability of burial space within the Council's boundaries.
- That issues that arise are addressed in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

3.1 The legislation that applies to Burial Grounds is extensive and not possible to list in its entirety here. However some of the key legislation is noted below. As a burial authority, Biddulph Town Council acts under the powers and duties granted in the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. The Burial Act 1857 makes it illegal to disturb a grave other than to carry out an authorised exhumation.

3.2 Health and Safety law applies in both the Town Council's responsibility to provide safe working conditions for workers and contractors (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) and the duty to protect visitors from harm (Occupier Liability Act 1957 1984).

3.3 The Town Council has a duty to be inclusive to those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Act 2015, and applies in the Burial Ground in terms of being accessible and accommodating different cultural needs.

FEES

4.1 The Fees for the Burial Grounds are set by Biddulph Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee. The fees are subject to change in each financial year which will be announced no later than 1 March in the preceding financial year.

The fees charged contribute to the fees incurred in running the Burial Ground, including staff time, maintenance work and contracts and safety inspections.

ELIGIBILITY

5.1 As with all burial sites across the country, land is in short-supply and maintenance of a lawned Burial Ground is costly. It is therefore important that space within the Biddulph Burial Grounds is used effectively for the benefit of the residents of the town.

5.2 For this reason, only individuals with a significant connection to Biddulph may be interred within the Town Council owned Burial Grounds. The detail of what constitutes a significant connection is outlined in Appendix 05.

5.3 The Town Council does recognise that a person may have a significant connection to Biddulph that falls outside of these circumstances, and in such cases these will be considered individually by the Chief Officer, and if necessary, the Recreations and Amenities Committee.

GRAVE SPACES

6.1 There are three types of grave spaces currently available at Biddulph Town Council owned Burial Grounds:

- Full Graves - these are full size burial plots, usually dug for two (dependent on ground conditions). Where there is a specific need, and only with the written permission of the Chief Officer or delegated Officer, a grave may be dug for three people. Cremated remains can also be placed in a full-size grave where there has already been one or more burials.
- Half Graves – Half graves can hold up to twelve sets of cremated remains and can be marked with a full size or half size memorial.
- Garden of Remembrance – may hold up to two caskets of cremated remains. Memorials take the form of a stone block and or an additional vase.

INTERMENTS

7.1 Both burials and interment of cremated remains are available at Biddulph Town Council Burial Grounds.

7.2 Any interments at St Lawrence's church yard are administrated by St Lawrence's Church and the Town Council does not have involvement in such arrangements.

7.3 All coffins and caskets used in interments must contain a plaque stating, at minimum, the name of the person interred and either their date of death or age at death. This will be checked at the time of interment against the paperwork submitted. All coffins and cremation ashes caskets must be constructed of wood or material of a biodegradable nature. Metal coffins or those constructed of non biodegradable material are not allowed.

7.4 Given the limited size of the available burial plots, only coffins up to 6'6" x 26" x 16" (198cm x 26cm x 40cm) in size are permitted. The Town Council is unlikely to be able to accommodate any larger size coffins. Where an individual is of a size that cannot be accommodated within a coffin of these dimensions, Funeral Directors should contact the Town Council to enquire about potential options. The Town Council will endeavour to support such an interment, but no guarantee can be given.

7.5 Burials may be conducted either as a first interment in a new full grave space or as a reopening, as described in sections 7.9-7.11.

7.6 Cremated remains may be interred in a new Garden of Remembrance plot or half grave space. They may be placed as a re-opening in all types of grave, providing there is sufficient space. Cremated remains must be placed in a casket with a plaque, and may not be poured or scattered either within graves or anywhere in the Burial Ground.

7.7 Cremated remains may also be interred in a coffin at the same time as a burial. This is permitted providing the following conditions are met:

- The names of both people interred are inscribed on a plaque in the coffin.
- The interment paperwork for both is completed.
- The payment consists of both the appropriate burial fee and the fee for placing cremated remains in an existing grave.

7.8 The paperwork and administrative requirements required of an interment are outlined in Sections 7.12-7.17. The formal paperwork required and payment must be received by the Town Council at least 48 hours in advance of the interment.

FIRST INTERMENT

7.9 Only those that are deemed eligible under the burial eligibility policy (see Appendix 05) may be interred at the Burial Ground. The first interment in a full grave cannot be cremated remains.

REOPENING OF A GRAVE

7.10 A re-opening refers to an interment in a grave that has already had at least one previous interment (either burial or interment of cremated remains). A re-opening may only take place with the written authorisation of the grave manager(s) (see section 9.8) or where the person being interred was the

signatory of the previous interment. In any case, an interment will only be authorised where there is sufficient space and there are no safety concerns.

7.11 Should there be any concern about whether there is a sufficient space for a further interment, the person making the arrangements should seek the advice of a grave digger.

ARRANGEMENT OF INTERMENT

7.12 Interments can be organised by a private individual or by a contractor (such as a funeral director). The organiser must ensure they are aware of the prerequisite documentation as well as their requirement to engage an approved grave digger as described under section 10.2 and 10.3. Individual arrangements of burials are permitted but discouraged due to the requirement to organise appropriate collection and transport and placement of the body, a matter that Biddulph Town Council is unable to assist with or advise on.

7.13 The signatory on the notice of interment must be aware of the responsibilities that will entail their signing of the form (see section 9.5).

7.14 To arrange an interment at one of Biddulph Town Council's Burial Ground sites, the person making the arrangements must phone or email the Town Council to check availability for the required date and time, as an Officer will attend.

7.15 The time that the interment is booked for is the intended time of arrival of the funeral cortege at the Burial Ground. Where the interment does not take place within 20 minutes of this time, a late fee may be charged. If the cortege arrives at the Burial Ground earlier than the booked time, the Funeral Director is not to proceed to the grave or begin the interment without the presence of the Town Council's Officer.

7.16 Interments may only take place in daylight hours and during normal working hours.

7.17 Completed paperwork must be received at least 48 hours in advance of an interment. The paperwork must consist of:

- A fully completed and signed notice of interment.
- The payment/evidence of payment of any fees due.
- One of the appropriate certifications authorising interment:
 - The 'Green Form' containing Part B and Part C of the 'Registrar's Certificate for Burial and Cremation'.

- The Cremation Certificate.
- Confirmation of delivery of a non-viable foetus.
- Certificate of Stillbirth.
- Certificate from the Coroner authorising either a burial or cremation (this must be the correct certificate for the type of interment considered).
- Certificate of non-liability to register.

ALLOCATION OF GRAVES

7.18 The placement of the grave is allocated by the Chief Officer or delegated Officer, and is recorded on the notice of interment either at the time of booking (for re-openings interments in reserved plots) or two working days before the interment (for new plots). Allocation of new graves will usually be the next in row from the previous. If an individual, family or friend has a particular preference regarding grave location, this will be taken in to consideration, but the Town Council cannot guarantee to meet that request.

ROLES DURING INTERMENTS

7.19 Interments will be attended by an Officer of the Town Council who will review the name plaque and burial plot and check that all paperwork matches in order to sign the burial records. The Officer is also present in case there are any problems.

7.20 The Town Council Officer will also ensure that the depth measurements for the grave are obtained and recorded.

7.21 It is understood that families and friends may wish to partake in the duties of the burial and family members may act as pallbearers. However, in order to ensure the safety of all users of the Burial Ground, no individual other than those working as the contracted individual/company authorised to work at the Burial Ground may participate in grave digging or lowering the coffin.

RESERVATION OF GRAVE SPACES

8.1 Biddulph Town Council does not offer an option to purchase plots or reserve graves for future use. However, the Town Council will, of course, honour plot reservations made when such a scheme previously operated. It should be noted that the reservation fee paid does not form part of the payment of the interment fee or any other fees related to the interment or memorial of a person in the Burial Ground.

RIGHTS OF BURIAL

9.1 Biddulph Town Council does not offer exclusive rights of burial, rather operating under implied rights of burial with stringent measures in place to ensure that responsibilities and methods of authorisation for future interments are made clear.

9.2 The person who signs the initial notice of interment form becomes the 'Grave Manager' – the person that can authorise memorials or further interments, and is also responsible for the maintenance of the grave (for instance addressing any memorial safety concerns). All individuals signing a notice of interment must ensure they are aware of the rights and responsibilities of being a Grave Manager and the rules and regulations they are required to adhere to.

9.3 Biddulph Town Council is happy to accept multiple Grave Managers. This can be achieved by either all signatories signing the notice of interment or via a letter of authorisation signed by the Grave Manager. It must be clear whether all signatories are required to authorise changes to the grave, or whether any individual declared can make changes.

9.4 Where an issue is identified at the grave, such as a repair, the responsibility will still fall upon all Grave Managers to ensure that the issue is resolved.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GRAVE MANAGER

9.5 Grave Managers are responsible for ensuring the grave is maintained tidily and to a good standard, that no unauthorised changes are made to the grave and identified repair issues are carried out. What constitutes a good standard is outlined in the rules and regulations of the Burial Ground (Appendix 06). It should be noted that this includes the financial cost of making good any repairs required or safety concerns.

9.6 Grave Managers must update the Town Council with any changes to their address or contact details in order to receive up to date information.

RIGHTS OF A GRAVE MANAGER

9.7 Providing there is sufficient space within the grave, the Grave Manager (or any one of the Grave Managers) has the right to be interred in the burial plot in the event of their death.

9.8 The written consent of the Grave Manager(s) is required in order for the Town Council to authorise any further interment (except where the deceased is the previous Grave Manager) and to authorise any memorial changes.

9.9 In the event of the death of the sole signatory, where they are interred within Biddulph Burial Grounds, the person(s) who sign(s) the deceased's notice of interment will become the 'Grave Manager.'

CHANGES TO A GRAVE MANAGER

9.10 Biddulph Town Council understand that there may be occasions where a change in Grave Manager may be required. This can be achieved by both the current Grave Manager and the intended Grave Manager providing a signed letter to agreeing the transfer of grave management rights and responsibilities. This transfer of responsibilities should not be assumed completed until written confirmation from the Town Council is received.

GRAVE DIGGING

10.1 The Town Council does not employ or instruct grave diggers, a grave digger for an interment must be appointed or instructed by the Funeral Director, the person arranging the interment, or another individual acting on behalf of the family.

10.2 However, in the interest of the safety of the Burial Ground, only gravediggers that are authorised by Biddulph Town Council to do so may dig or inter in the Burial Ground.

10.3 Authorisation will only be granted upon receipt of public liability insurance documents, and a signed agreement to the terms and conditions of working in the Burial Ground. (see Appendix 02).

GRAVE DIGGER RESPONSIBILITIES

10.4 Grave diggers must follow the ICCM Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries and must ensure the safety of all staff, contractors and visitors to the Burial Grounds as a result of their work. Grave diggers must provide any additional documentation required by the Town Council upon request. This may include, but is not limited to, risk assessments, method statements, and evidence of competency in any machinery used.

10.5 It is the grave digger's responsibility to ensure they are aware of the grave they are digging and to enquire with the Town Council should they have any queries on the grave.

10.6 Grave diggers must ensure they have the appropriate safety gear. This includes appropriate footwear and clothing and all other personal protective equipment deemed necessary in the grave digger's risk assessment.

GENERAL GRAVE DIGGING REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

10.7 Prior to excavation, grave diggers must ensure they are aware of the correct grave to be dug. Any queries with regard to the correct location should be directed to the Town Council.

10.8 No grave may be dug at the Burial Grounds without the permission of Biddulph Town Council. Small mechanical diggers may be used with the permission of the Chief Officer at Woodhouse Burial Ground. Where access to a grave plot is not appropriate with a mechanical digger, the grave will be dug by hand with the minimum of disturbance to the surrounding graves. Adjacent plots are to be protected, with a suitable material, from soil removed from the grave. Topsoil/Turf will be kept for replacing at the top and not used for back-filling the lower part of the grave.

10.9 The grave must not be dug any earlier than 48 hours prior to the interment without the prior permission of the Town Council. The dug grave must be supervised or adequately boarded at all times, and appropriately guarded, as to prevent the risk of slip, trips and falls.

10.10 The requirements relating to the depth of grave required (as outlined in section 10.12- 10.15) must be adhered to at all times. Any difficulties should be reported to the Town Council and the appropriate Funeral Director immediately.

10.11 The actual grave depth dug must be reported to the Town Council Officer in attendance at the Burial Ground. Should no Officer be able to attend the interment in question, the Grave Digger is required to report the depth dug by either phone or in writing.

10.12 Vehicles taken into the Burial Grounds are to remain on the path and must not be parked on the grass. Should any damage be caused this must be remedied by the Grave Digger within 14 days.

10.13 Before an interment, grave surrounds will be covered with grass mats. Webbing for lowering the surface biers will be made available for use by the Funeral Director.

10.14 Graves are to be backfilled immediately after the mourners have left the graveside. The site is to be left clean, tidy and safe after an interment. Floral tributes are to be gathered and placed on the finished grave. Should there be any damage or disturbance to a grave it must be reported to the Council and repaired immediately.

10.15 Spoil from the graves is to be placed in the area designated by the Chief Officer, or removed from site.

10.16 All Grave Diggers working in the Burial Grounds must be covered by £5 million Public Liability Insurance, evidence of which will be submitted to the Town Council on an annual basis.

GRAVE DIGGING DEPTHS

10.12 As a standard, all full graves must be dug for at least two (at least 6 feet deep).

10.13 Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 provides the following minimum measurements to be adhered to at the time of interment:

- The coffin placed in a re-opened grave must be separated from any coffin previously interred by a layer of earth measuring at least 6 inches (15cm) thick.
- No part of any coffin interred may be less than 3 feet (91cm) below the ground level of the grave and any area immediately adjoining the grave.
- Given the type of soil at Biddulph Town Burial Ground, it is not suitable to reduce the minimum burial depths to less than 3ft below ground levels, as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977.

10.14 Taking into consideration the above points, and the assumed coffin depth of 1'3" 38 cm (which may well increase), the following minimum depth for graving digging is given below. It is strongly recommended that the grave is dug deeper than the minimum depth, as far as reasonably possible, in order to ensure that contingency against future unknown factors is built in.

Dug for 1	4'3"	1.37m
Dug for 2	6'0"	1.83m
Dug for 3 (only permitted with the authorisation of the Chief Officer)	7'9"	2.36m

10.15 When conducting a re-opening, it is possible that a shallow grave may be encountered and there is limited opportunity to resolve the issue. In this instance it is essential that the Officers of the Town Council are immediately informed. The Town Council Officers will help look for possible alternatives.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

11.1 Only Funeral Directors who have signed the terms and conditions sited in Appendix 1 will be granted permission to carry out interments at the sites.

11.2 All Funeral Directors are required to provide to the Town Council annually and also on receipt of any specific request from the Town Council the following documentation:

- Full risk assessments and method statement showing how work will be undertaken and what measures will be taken to minimise the risk of personal injury or damage to property. These must cover all aspects of work the Funeral Director is likely to undertake, including any activities within the Burial Grounds that are associated with the funeral service and all issues relating to vehicle access and movements within the Burial Grounds.
- A copy of their incident reporting mechanisms and procedures in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).
- A copy of their Health and Safety policy and codes of practice.
- A copy of their Public and Employee Liability insurance with at least £5 million cover. Copies also to be provided to the Town Council upon policy renewal.
- Or any other document requested by the Town Council.

11.3 Funeral Directors acting on behalf of families and friends interring at the Burial Grounds must ensure that the family are provided a copy of, and are aware of, the rules and regulations of the Burial Grounds, as well as this policy.

11.4 The Funeral Directors must also ensure that signatories are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in section 9.5-9.9.

11.5 In the instance that the signatory is not the next of kin of the deceased, the Funeral Directors must have made all reasonable steps to ensure that the next of kin is aware of the implication of another individual signing the Notice of Interment.

MEMORIALS

12.1 Memorials may only be placed, amended or replaced with the written permission of the Town Council, which can be applied for using the 'Application for Permission to Introduce a Memorial into the Burial Grounds' form.' This will only be granted where the Memorial Mason in question has registered to work with Biddulph Town Council.

12.2 The appropriate fee must be included with the 'Application for Permission to Introduce a Memorial into the Burial Grounds' application. Permission to place a memorial will only be given where the form is signed by both an approved Memorial Mason and the Grave Manager (as outlined in section 9.2).

12.3 Sizes of memorials are as follows:

Block and Vase:

Block - 41cm (16") x 15cm (6") x 10cm (4")

Vase - 15cm (6") x 15cm (6") x 15cm (6")

Full Size Headstone: 90cm (36") in total height from ground to the top of the headstone (including the slab stone), 75cm (30") in width, 10cm (4") in depth, and that the size of the slabstone shall not exceed 105cm (42") x 60cm (24")

Half Size Headstone: 54cm (21") in height, 41cm (16") in width, 8cm (3") depth, and that the size of the slabstone shall not exceed 41cm (18"). (24") in total height from ground to the top of the headstone.

Memorials for first interments, or where the Grave Manager is being interred cannot be processed or approved by the Town Council until the interment paperwork is received. This is due to the need to ensure that the Grave Manager has authorised the memorial. The grave number must always be engraved onto new memorials to assist with identification.

12.4 Temporary wooden cross memorials (not exceeding 600mm in height) should be removed following installation of a permanent memorial.

MEMORIAL MASONS

12.5 Only Memorial Masons who are registered under the Memorial Mason Registration Scheme will be authorised to work within the Town Council owned Burial Grounds. This scheme does not apply to St Lawrence's Churchyard, for which all queries must be issued to the church directly. Memorial Masons are required to apply to the Registration Scheme annually, and provide the following documentation:

- A copy of their Public and Employee Liability Insurance with at least £5 million cover. Copies also to be provided to the Town Council upon policy renewal.
- Proof of current membership of the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) or The British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) and therefore compliance with BS 8415. This is significant guidance and Biddulph Town Council will only permit compliant organisations to work within its sites.

12.6 The full rules and regulations of the Memorial Mason's Registration Scheme are outlined in Appendix 03.

12.7 Memorial Masons must ensure that no stone or memorial is placed or amended without the written permission of the Town Council. Proof of submission of paperwork and/or payment is not sufficient.

12.8 Where an application for a memorial has been received but the interment paperwork is outstanding, the Town Council will usually await the interment paperwork before authorising.

NEW OR REPLACEMENT MEMORIALS

12.9 For the memorial to be approved, it must fall within the maximum permitted dimensions outlined in the 'Application for Permission to Introduce a Memorial into the Burial Grounds' form.

12.10 The memorial must also be in keeping with the overall environment at the Burial Ground with regard to colour and lettering. Photo plaques are permitted. Approval of memorial applications will be at the discretion of Biddulph Town Council.

AMENDMENTS TO MEMORIAL

12.11 Any amendments such as additional inscription or regarding the lettering must be applied for using the same 'Application for Permission to Introduce a

Memorial into the Burial Grounds' form. There is a small paperwork fee associated with approving inscriptions. Where the work being done is restorative only (for example regarding lettering), this will not attract a fee.

MEMORIALS WITHOUT INTERMENTS

12.12 Biddulph Town Council will not usually permit a memorial to be placed without an interment being arranged. However, a person not interred in the Burial Ground may be remembered on an existing memorial, providing the wording does not imply that that individual is interred at the site.

12.13 Where a family wish to place a memorial with the intention to inter at a later date, this will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Officer and if necessary, the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

MEMORIAL SAFETY

12.14 Though uncommon, there have been a number of serious injuries (including fatalities) to members of the public in UK cemeteries caused by falling memorials. In addition to only permitting Memorial Masons to work in the Burial Ground where their competency is assessed via the Memorial Mason's Registration Scheme, Biddulph Town Council also arranges safety testing of all memorials within all its managed Burial Grounds at least once every five years.

12.15 The memorial safety testing is carried out by a contractor who is procured according to the Financial Regulations and the Procurement policies in place at Biddulph Town Council. As part of the memorial safety testing, the contractor carries out a visual inspection of each memorial, followed by the 'hand test', where a force is applied to the top of the headstone to identify any potential movement, and whether any action is required to improve the safety of the memorial.

12.16 As a result of the memorial testing, a memorial may be considered either safe (where no further action is required for five years or unless a specific need is identified prior to the next inspection), or unsafe.

12.17 Safety issues may also be identified outside formal safety assessments, either by Burial Ground Users, Contractors providing a service at the Burial Ground, or Officers working for the Town Council. All safety concerns regarding memorials at the Burial Ground must be directed to the Town Council, who dependent on risk, will identify the next steps to take.

12.18 The action taken when a memorial is deemed unsafe, depends on the risk it presents to other Burial Ground users. Where there is an immediate risk to the safety of the Burial Ground users, there is no choice but to lay the memorial down flat. However it is noted that this can be incredibly upsetting to the loved ones of those remembered in the memorial, and this will only be done when absolutely necessary. Where a memorial has been laid flat, the Town Council will write to the Grave Manager on the most up to date contact information held, as well as leave a letter on the grave. This will explain why the action has been taken and what work must be undertaken to make the memorial safe.

12.19 Where the assessor identifies that there is an issue with the memorial that needs addressing, but it does not present an immediate risk of falling, the Town Council will write to the Grave Manager at the address most recently provided, requesting that the repair be carried out and specifying a date by which this work must be completed. Where there is doubt as to whether the address continues to be occupied by the Grave Manager, the Town Council may elect to instead leave the letter on the memorial in question.

12.20 Should the required work not be carried out within the time frame requested, the Town Council will consider what is the most appropriate next step to take, depending on the risk presented and any other known details of the case.

ENVIRONMENT AND GRAVE STANDARDS

13.1 In order to maintain the overall clean, tidy, safe and well managed environment at the Burial Ground for all users to enjoy and reflect, there are a number of standards that all Burial Ground users are required to adhere to:

- All plastic wrapping or cellophane must be removed from flowers or any other grave ornaments prior to their placement and either placed in a bin or removed from the site. Plastic and silk flowers are discouraged. There are 2 waste bins at the Town Burial Ground site and 2 at Woodhouse Burial Ground. All waste is taken to a recycling centre in Newcastle Under Lyme, where all recyclables are segregated.
- No bottles, cans or other containers of alcohol may be left on graves or in any area of the Burial Ground.
- No planting of trees, bushes, flowers or any other plants may take place in the Burial Ground without the written authorisation of the Town Council.

- Any grave ornaments must be in good condition, not present a safety risk (such as broken glass or electrical items) and must not be offensive, smelly or upsetting to other Burial Ground users.
- Dying flowers or plants, discolored wreaths and broken items should not be left on the grave.

13.2 The Burial Grounds (except the Garden of Remembrance) are lawned cemeteries, which means the graves need to remain clear of obstructions which prevent the maintenance of the lawn. For this reason, the following apply:

- No vase, pot or container of any kind may be sunk into the soil on any grave.
- A small vase or plant may be placed near the headstone to keep the grave free for mowing. No items may be placed other than on the base of the headstone.
- Fresh flowers and wreaths may be laid on a grave after interment where they can remain for up to three months.
- No bushes, bulbs or plants may be placed in the soil without the express written permission of the Town Council.
- No kerbs, railings and non-turfed areas of full or half grave spaces are permitted without the written permission of the Town Council. Written permission will only be granted where ground conditions prevent a well-maintained lawn area.
- Artificial grass is not permitted.

13.3 The Town Council adopted a 3 year 'Caring for our Environment Plan' in January 2025. Our aim is to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Our priorities, in relation to the Burial Grounds, include:

- Promote sustainable planting, e.g. greater use of perennials.
- Continue to complete tree planting in line with the Town Council's Tree Strategy.
- Manage Town Council green spaces in a way that promotes wildlife, e.g. in relation to cutting, waste removal and weedkiller usage.

Our grounds maintenance management is flexible and encourages the enhancement of wildlife in the Burial Grounds.

THE REMOVAL OF ITEMS

13.4 The Town Council may remove items from graves without notice, where it is causing a significant disruption to other Burial Ground users or the overall

environment of the Burial Ground. Items removed will usually be stored for a minimum of two months to allow the Grave Manager the opportunity to collect. Where the items are perishable, broken or in a poor state of repair, the Town Council will be required to dispose of these items immediately.

13.5 Where the Town Council has written or notified a Grave Manager that an item needs to be removed, a deadline will be provided. Should the item not be removed by this date, the Town Council will arrange removal and disposal of the item. The cost of doing so may be charged to the Grave Manager.

13.6 It should also be noted that Christmas Wreaths are removed from graves at the end of January.

BENCHES

14.1 Benches may not be placed in the Burial Ground without the written permission of the Town Council. Due to the limited space available in the Town Council owned Burial Grounds it is not possible to grant a bench for each request made, or grant permission for a memorial bench to be placed in perpetuity. For this reason, memorial bench applications will only be considered in line with the Memorial Bench procedure outlined in Appendices 04a and 04b.

14.2 Unauthorised benches are liable to be removed without notice.

MAINTENANCE OF BURIAL GROUNDS

GRASS CUTTING

15.1 The maintenance of the Burial Grounds, including the cutting of grass is the responsibility of the Town Council. Maintenance is carried out by a grounds contractor.

15.2 Grass cutting of used grave areas will usually take place at least twice a month during the grass growing months. Sections of the Burial Ground which are not in use may be allowed to grow to support and enhance local wildlife over summer months.

15.3 Any concerns about grass cutting should be directed to the Town Council.

UNEVEN GROUND AND GRAVES

15.3 Due to the movement of soil, it is common that the ground on grave areas may sink and become uneven. The grave will be topped up as necessary as the ground settles. Where the ground is sunken to an extent that it poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of Burial Ground users, the Town Council will arrange for this to be rectified.

15.4 In all other cases, an annual levelling of graves will be undertaken, following which the grave will be returfed. A sign will be placed in the Burial Ground when this will be under taken.

15.5 Graves are usually turfed between October and March, prior to any turf being laid the ground must be allowed to settle. This may take takes up to six months. We will not normally turf during the summer months, instead we wait until September/October when weather conditions are more suitable, and the turfing is likely to be more successful.

WINTER MANAGEMENT

15.6 The winter management of the Burial Ground is covered in the Town Council's 'Severe Winter Weather Management Policy.'

15.7 It should be noted that the Burial Ground is unsupervised and users are required to make their own assessment of whether the weather and ground conditions allow them to safely use the Burial Ground before entering the site.

EXHUMATIONS

16.1 An exhumation or disinterment refers to the removal of human remains from the ground. An exhumation may be required or requested for a number of reasons including moving the remains to a different location, for scientific or forensic examination or to carry out further groundwork, for instance to deepen the grave to allow for further interments.

16.2 It is unlawful for an exhumation to take place without obtaining the necessary permissions. In the instance of the Biddulph Town Council owned Burial Grounds, lawful permission may only be obtained via a license applied for through the Ministry of Justice.

16.3 To apply for an exhumation, the applicant needs to fill out and sign Part A of the 'Application for a license for the removal of buried human remains (including cremated remains) in England and Wales.' This form is available

from <https://www.gov.uk>. Once completed, the form must be signed by the Grave Manager (if they are not the applicant), and submitted to Biddulph Town Council.

16.4 Biddulph Town Council will complete Part B of the application and submit it to the Ministry of Justice. This process may incur a charge.

16.5 Once a license is received, the arrangements for the exhumation to take place, in accordance with the license, may commence.

16.6 The applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with the exhumation and any re-interment, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

16.7 The process to be followed includes the below:

- The Town Council informs the local Environmental Health team. The Environmental Health team may choose not to attend where the exhumation is of cremated remains, but they must be present for the exhumation of a buried person.
- A date and time is arranged for all those due to be in attendance, which includes a grave digger. The exhumation must take place early in the morning to allow for maximum privacy.
- A risk assessment and method statement is required from the grave digger prior to the exhumation taking place.
- An Officer of the Town Council must be present for the exhumation to ensure that the conditions of the licenses are followed and that:
 - a) The correct grave is opened.
 - b) The plot is appropriately screened for privacy.
 - c) The work is carried out in a sensitive and respectful manner.
 - d) Adequate health and safety measures are in place and adhered to.
 - e) The name plate(s) on the casket (s) match those on the license.
 - f) All requests and measures stipulated by the Environmental Health Officer are carried out.
 - g) All conditions of the exhumation license are met.

16.8 Following an exhumation, the Town Council's Burial Register and Burial Plot Plans will be updated to reflect the disinterment, and any re-interment will be recorded in the usual way.

16.9 Exhumations at the consecrated churchyard at St Lawrence's will follow a different process. Such exhumations are managed by St Lawrence's Church and any queries regarding the matter should be conducted to the church office.

APPENDIX 01 – FUNERAL DIRECTORS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A1.1 Only Funeral Directors who have signed the terms and conditions of working in the Biddulph Town Council owned Burial Grounds will be granted permission to carry out interments at the sites.

A1.2 All Funeral Directors are required to provide to the Town Council annually and also on receipt of any specific request from the Town Council the following documentation:

- Full risk assessments and method statement showing how work will be undertaken and what measures will be taken to minimise the risk of personal injury or damage to property. These must cover all aspects of work the Funeral Director is likely to undertake, including any activities within the cemetery that are associated with the funeral service and all issues relating to vehicle access and movements with the Burial Grounds.
- A copy of their incident reporting mechanisms and procedures in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).
- A copy of their Health and Safety policy and codes of practice.
- A copy of their Public and Employee Liability insurance with at least £5 million cover. Copies also to be provided to the Town Council upon policy renewal.
- Or any other document requested by the Town Council.

A1.3 The Town Council may undertake spot checks without prior notice to ensure compliance with their policy and procedures. Any Funeral Director or any other person found to be in contravention thereof may be prohibited from working at the Burial Grounds and shall not be entitled to any recompense whatsoever.

A1.4 Funeral Directors acting on behalf of families and friends interring at the Burial Grounds must ensure that the family are provided a copy of, and are aware of, the rules and regulations of the Burial Grounds as well as this policy.

A1.5 The Funeral Directors must also ensure that signatories of the Notice of Interment are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in section 9 of the attached policy. In the instance that the signatory is not the next of kin, the Funeral Directors must have made all reasonable steps to ensure that the next of kin is aware of the implication of another individual signing the Notice of Interment and thus becoming the Grave Manager.

A1.6 Penalties:

Stage 1

Any breach of the Funeral Directors terms and conditions will result in a first written warning, issued by the Registrar to the Funeral Director concerned. This written warning will remain on record for a period of 18 months. If during this period of time the breach is corrected and if no further breach of the terms and conditions occurs during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 2

If during the course of the 18 month period, there is a further breach of the rules, or the breach which resulted in the issue of the first written warning is not corrected, a final written warning will then be issued, which will remain on record for a period of three years. Once again, assuming the breach is corrected, and if no further breaches of the rules occur during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 3

If during the course of the three years following a final written warning, there is a further breach of the terms or conditions, or a failure to correct any previous breach of the same, the Funeral Director concerned will be forbidden to carry out any work within the Town Burial Ground for a period of two years.

Stage 4

If a Funeral Director, who has returned from a period of exclusion, breaches the rules in any way during the 18 months following their return, the Funeral Director shall then be banned from carrying out any work within the Town Burial Ground. Their return shall be by application to Biddulph Town Council, following a minimum exclusion period of three years.

Depending on the seriousness of the breach of the Scheme, Biddulph Town Council will retain the ability to miss any stage of the penalty procedure, going directly to the next stage. For instance, if the first breach of rules is serious enough the Funeral Director involved may immediately receive a final written warning that will remain on record for a period of three years. More serious breaches will be considered as gross misconduct and may result in an immediate ban from the Town's Burial Grounds.

A1.7 Gross Misconduct

Certain circumstances shall be considered as gross misconduct, which will result in the Funeral Director being immediately banned from the Town Burial Ground for a period of two years. In such circumstances Biddulph Town Council shall advise other local authorities of any gross misconduct by a Funeral Director.

The following are examples of situations that will be considered to be gross misconduct. This is not an exhaustive list, and Biddulph Town Council will make a final decision as to whether or not the situation can be regarded as gross misconduct:

- Carrying out an interment that had not been approved by the Registrar.
- Refusal to correct an error regarding an interment when notified of the issue by the Registrar.
- Abusive or aggressive behaviour to the Registrar, Town Council Officers or members of the general public.

A1.8 Appeals

Any Funeral Director who is aggrieved by any decision taken against them, will in the first instance be entitled to appeal against the decision to Biddulph Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee, a further appeal may then be made to Biddulph Town Council. The Decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

APPENDIX 02 – GRAVE DIGGING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A2.1 Graves may only be dug at Biddulph Town Burial Ground or Woodhouse Burial Ground by contractors who have signed the terms and conditions below and agree to adhere to all the specifications set out in section 10 in the attached policy.

A2.2 Grave diggers and contractors carrying out work at Biddulph Town Council owned Burial Grounds must comply with all legislative requirements and provide to the Town Council copies of their policies, risk assessments, method statements, safe systems of work, staff training records, COSHH assessments, insurance certificates or any other document requested by the Town Council prior to undertaking any work on site.

A2.3 The Town Council may undertake spot checks without prior notice to ensure compliance with their policy and procedures. Any contractor or any other person found to be in contravention thereof may be prohibited from working at the Burial Grounds and shall not be entitled to any recompense whatsoever.

A2.4 Penalties:

Stage 1

Any breach of the grave digging terms and conditions will result in a first written warning, issued by the Registrar to the grave digger concerned. This written warning will remain on record for a period of 18 months. If during this period of time, the breach is corrected and if no further breach of the terms and conditions occurs during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 2

If during the course of the 18 month period there is a further breach of the rules, or the breach which resulted in the issue of the first written warning is not corrected, a final written warning will then be issued, which will remain on record for a period of three years. Once again, assuming the breach is corrected, and if no further breaches of the rules occur during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 3

If during the course of the three years following a final written warning, there is a further breach of the terms and conditions or a failure to correct any previous breach of the same, the grave digger concerned will be forbidden to carry out any work within the Town Burial Ground for a period of two years.

Stage 4

If a grave digger, who has returned from a period of exclusion, breaches the rules in any way during the 18 months following their return, the grave digger shall be banned from carrying out any work within the Town Burial Ground or Woodhouse Burial Ground. Their return shall be by application to Biddulph Town Council, following a minimum exclusion period of three years.

Depending on the seriousness of the breach of the scheme, Biddulph Town Council will retain the ability to miss any stage of the penalty procedure, going directly to the next stage. For instance, if the first breach of rules is serious enough the grave digger involved may immediately receive a final written warning, that will remain on record for a period of three years. More serious breaches will be considered as gross misconduct and may result in an immediate ban from the Town Council owned Burial Grounds.

A2.5 Gross Misconduct

Certain circumstances shall be considered as gross misconduct, which will result in the grave digger being immediately banned from the Town Council's Burial Grounds for a period of two years. In such circumstances Biddulph Town Council shall advise other local authorities of any gross misconduct by a grave digger.

The following are examples of situations that will be considered to be gross misconduct. This not an exhaustive list, and Biddulph Town Council will make a final decision as to whether or not the situation can be regarded as gross misconduct:

- Preparing a grave without the authorisation of the Town Council.
- Providing false information regarding the depth of grave dug.
- Refusal to correct an error in grave preparation when requested by the Town Council.
- Abusive or aggressive behavior to the Registrar, Town Council Officers or members of the general public.

A2.6 Appeals

Any grave digger who is aggrieved by any decision taken against them, will in the first instance be entitled to appeal against the decision to Biddulph Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee, a further appeal may then be made to Biddulph Town Council. The Decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

APPENDIX 03 - MEMORIAL MASONS RULES AND REGULATIONS

A3.1 Introduction

This Scheme applies to both of the Town Council's Burial Grounds. Only Memorial Masons who have been approved by the Registrar and who have agreed to be bound by the terms of this scheme shall be registered to work in the Town Burial Grounds. This Scheme not only applies to the fixing of new memorials, but also to any work carried out on existing memorials and/or their underwork. This scheme sets out the rules that will apply to Memorial Masons, together with the penalties that might be expected if these rules are breached. If a Memorial Mason signs this form and meets the registration requirements set out below, their name, firm or company, or organisation shall be entered in the Biddulph Town Council's Register.

A3.2 Registration requirements

In order for a Memorial Mason to be registered under the Memorial Masons Registration Scheme the following requirements must be satisfied:

- Insurance – every Memorial Mason shall be insured for public liability to the value of £5,000,000 and shall produce evidence of such insurance to the Registrar.
- Experience and Qualification – Memorial Masons shall be required to prove to the satisfaction of the Registrar that all their staff are suitably qualified and competent to carry out the necessary work within the Town Burial Ground. Ideally, this will be achieved by obtaining a qualification from a national accreditation scheme.
- Discipline and Workmanship – every Memorial Mason who agrees to be bound by the terms of this scheme undertakes to Biddulph Town Council that they have not been barred from carrying out work in any other cemetery within the previous two years and confirms that they will comply with all statutory requirements, the Burial Ground regulations, the Memorial Registration Scheme and the current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) Code of Working Practice.

A3.3 Application to erect or carry out work to a memorial

All memorials to be installed in the Town Burial Ground and all work to existing memorials must first be approved by the Registrar following receipt of an application form provided by the Registrar and completed by the Memorial Mason. All applicants shall include full details of the memorial to be installed or the work to be carried out to an existing memorial and in the former case shall indicate the size of memorial, material to be used, the inscription and full installation details, including the method of fixing the memorial to the

foundation. All work will be in accordance with the current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) Code of Working Practice. Upon approval of the application the Registrar, a permit to erect or carry out works to a memorial will be issued to the Memorial Mason by the Registrar.

The permit shall state in the case of new memorials that the memorial is subject to a five yearly inspection which will be arranged by the Registrar. Subject to the memorial being inspected and being found safe, the inspection period may then be extended. This condition will form part of the permit.

A3.4 Erection of (or works carried out to) a memorial

No work shall commence until the Registrar issues the permit to the Memorial Mason, it will be assumed that work will commence and be completed within three months of the date listed on the permit.

The memorial shall be installed or the work shall take place as indicated on the application form. No variation to the details on the original application will be permitted; if a variation is required then the Memorial Mason shall submit an amended application form for approval by the Registrar who shall, if satisfied, then issue a further permit. All work undertaken on site will be in accordance with the permit, as well as with the detail submitted on the application form and/or any amended application form and the current NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) Code of Working Practice.

A3.5 Inspection of work

The Registrar will inspect all work carried out by the Memorial Masons. The Authorised Officer may from time to time instruct a Memorial Mason to remove and re-fix a memorial they have erected or worked on, so that fixing methods etc can be checked. Whatever the findings of these inspections, the Memorial Mason will carry out this work free of charge.

Notice that this work may be carried out at the Registrar's discretion, is noted in the current rules and regulations and further approval from the applicant would not be sought. Where work is considered to be unacceptable, for whatever reason, the Registrar will instruct the Memorial Mason to return to bring the memorial up to the appropriate standard. Depending on the severity of any defects found the disciplinary procedure may be invoked.

A3.6 Workmanship guarantees and insurance

All work carried out by a Memorial Mason shall be covered by a workmanship guarantee that will guarantee against poor workmanship in respect of

materials and construction for a period of ten years. The Memorial Mason shall issue this guarantee to the Grave Manager with a copy supplied to the Registrar when requested.

Advice shall be provided to the Grave Manager by the Memorial Mason on the insurance of Memorials against accidental damage, or acts of theft or vandalism. Details shall also be provided on any security marking of memorials. This advice shall be contained within the workmanship guarantee.

A3.7 Penalties:

Stage 1

Any breach of the Memorial Registration Scheme will result in a first written warning, issued by the Registrar to the Memorial Mason concerned. This written warning will remain on record for a period of 18 months. If during this period of time the breach is corrected and if no further breach of the Registration Scheme occurs during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 2

If during the course of the 18 month period there is a further breach of the rules, or the breach which resulted in the issue of the first written warning is not corrected, a final written warning will then be issued, which will remain on record for a period of three years. Once again, assuming the breach is corrected, and if no further breaches of the rules occur during this time, the warning will be removed from the records.

Stage 3

If during the course of the three years following a final written warning, there is a further breach of the scheme or a failure to correct any previous breach of the scheme, the Memorial Mason concerned will be forbidden to carry out any work within the Town Burial Ground for a period of two years.

Stage 4

If a Memorial Mason, who has returned from a period of exclusion, breaches the rules in any way during the 18 months following their return, the Memorial Mason shall then be banned from carrying out any work within the Town Burial Ground or Woodhouse Burial Ground. Their return shall be by application to Biddulph Town Council, following a minimum exclusion period of three years.

Depending on the seriousness of the breach of the scheme, Biddulph Town Council will retain the ability to miss any stage of the penalty procedure, going directly to the next stage. For instance, if the first breach of rules is serious enough the Memorial Mason involved may immediately receive a final written warning that will remain on record for a period of three years. More serious

breaches will be considered as gross misconduct and may result in an immediate ban from the Town Council's Burial Grounds.

A3.8 Gross Misconduct

Certain circumstances shall be considered as gross misconduct, which will result in the Memorial Mason being immediately banned from the Town Council's Burial Grounds for a period of two years. In such circumstances Biddulph Town Council shall advise other local authorities of any gross misconduct by a Memorial Mason.

The following are examples of situations that will be considered to be gross misconduct. This not an exhaustive list, and Biddulph Town Council will make a final decision as to whether or not the situation can be regarded as gross misconduct:

- Installation or carrying out work to a memorial that had not been approved by the Registrar.
- Refusal to correct an error in the installation of a memorial, when notified by the Registrar.
- Abusive or aggressive behaviour to the Registrar, Town Council Officers or members of the general public.

A3.9 Appeals

Any Memorial Mason who is aggrieved by any decision taken against them, will in the first instance be entitled to appeal against the decision to Biddulph Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee, a further appeal may then be made to Biddulph Town Council. The Decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

A3.10 Definitions

- 'Memorial' means a headstone or other marker, or monument erected above a grave space.
- 'Memorial Mason' means an individual company or organisation concerned with the production, erection and/or maintenance of a memorial.
- 'Permit' means the document marked permit and issued by the Registrar to a Memorial Mason in order to allow a memorial to be erected or work to take place in respect of an existing memorial.
- 'Registrar' means the Chief Officer of Biddulph Town Council.
- 'Town Burial Ground' means the Burial Ground situated adjacent to St Lawrence's Church Yard (and the extension which is accessed from Woodhouse Lane) in Biddulph.

- 'Town Burial Ground Regulations' means those regulations which are approved by Biddulph Town Council, and which govern the use and operation of the Town Burial Ground.

APPENDIX 04a – Memorial Benches in the Burial Ground

A4.1 Biddulph Town Council wishes to ensure that friends and relatives of those interred within the Town and Woodhouse Burial Grounds are able to apply for lasting memorials to their loved ones, now, and in the future.

A4.2 In 2014, Biddulph Town Council opened the Woodhouse Burial Ground. Areas of hard-standing were created for the installation of memorial benches.

A4.3 In 2017 the Council resolved that all memorial benches should be high quality benches sourced from local suppliers and should be shared by a number of applicants to ensure the option to install a memorial bench was not cost prohibitive.

After considering feedback, the policy was updated in June 2025. There are areas in the burial grounds where a memorial bench can be bought in its entirety by one family, and others where people can buy a plaque. In both instances, the Council supplies the memorial bench, to a specific quality and design, (a central station seat, with two cast iron ends and hardwood slats) as shown in the photograph below, but applicants can either pay a donation for the memorial bench and one fixed plaque – i.e. the full £1,600 cost to purchase and install, or pay a donation of £360 to install a plaque on the bench – the bench could be shared with up to four other applicants. This policy applies to both the Town and Woodhouse Burial Grounds.

Please note, this policy deals exclusively with the installation of memorial benches. It may be possible to install planters or other memorials in communal areas. This is at the discretion of the Chief Officer. Please contact the Chief Officer to discuss options available.



OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

A4.4 This policy has been produced with the following guiding principles:

- To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to install a memorial bench. The policy recognises that the provision of a seat as a memorial provides a tribute to a loved one, and is a benefit to the community in which they lived.
- To be measurable, clear and easily understood by residents.
- To balance the contrasting needs of a variety of users.
- To ensure that the high-quality appearance of the Burial Grounds is maintained.
- To establish responsibility for the maintenance, repair and replacement of memorial benches.

A4.5 The policy will ensure that memorial benches:

- Have permission from the next of kin.
- Have a common appearance, style and size and are positioned in an appropriate place.
- Will not cause offence to others.

A4.6 It is the intention that the policy only covers broad common issues and is not meant to be exhaustive. The content of this policy will be considered regularly, to meet changing circumstances. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval. Specific requests outside this policy may be considered by the Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee.

A4.7 This policy will be made available to the general public and all applicants for memorial plaques will be issued with a copy.

GENERAL

A4.8 Applications for memorial benches and/or plaques on memorial benches must be made by the next of kin (or be approved by the next of kin) of an individual interred in either the Town Burial Ground or Woodhouse Burial Ground.

A4.9 Applications can be made for individuals or couples. It is recommended that consideration be given to whether a plaque should be for a couple or for the individuals that were part of that couple. Applications will not be approved for a couple and then separate plaques for the individuals (i.e. three plaques).

A4.10 Only one application may be made per individual or couple. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the option to provide a memorial is available to a wide range of people. Therefore, multiple applications in memory of the same individual will not be granted.

A4.11 If the applicant's donation is for the memorial bench in full (£1,600), one memorial plaque shall be fitted to the bench. If the donation is a bench is to be shared, and the donation (£360) is a part payment, up to five memorial plaques shall be fitted to each bench. The bench will be purchased and the plaques engraved and installed as and when required.

A4.12 Plaques shall be fitted to the upper most lathe of the back of the bench. The inscription on the plaque shall not exceed 100 letters (including spaces). For example, "In (Loving) Memory of" the name of the person, recognition of public office (if appropriate) and their dates of birth and death. The approval of the wording is at the discretion of the Chief Officer.

A4.13 The Town Council aims to ensure that memorial benches have a common appearance, style and size and are appropriate for that location. The Town Council will source and install benches and will make the final decision about the location of the bench. If the next location for a bench is not in the same location as the grave of a loved one, the Town Council will discuss this with the applicant(s).

A4.14 Benches installed prior to this policy will continue to be the responsibility of the owner. Replacement of benches installed previously is not permitted. All new memorial benches will be subject to this policy.

A4.15 Any new memorial benches that are not purchased through the Town Council will be removed to a safe compound. The owner will be contacted and removal will be necessary.

A4.16 No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench. These shall be removed without reference to the original applicant(s).

A4.17 The bench remains the property of Biddulph Town Council. Payment received from the applicant(s) is treated as a donation.

A4.18 Any individual visiting the Burial Grounds is permitted to sit on memorial benches. These are installed for the benefit of visitors to the site, and are not solely for the use of applicants.

A4.19 The Town Council will not grant applications for memorial benches to pets.

A4.20 The Town Council will keep a record of applicants and their contact details in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. It's the responsibility of the applicant(s) to provide the Registrar/Chief Officer with updated contact details in writing.

MAINTENANCE

A4.20 The Town Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the benches that are purchased through this policy and will maintain benches to an adequate standard. No maintenance of any kind should be undertaken by the applicant(s), their family or their representatives.

A4.21 The Town Council will maintain each memorial bench for a period of ten years. This will include any preservation, treatment and repair works. It is expected that any memorial bench will have a serviceable life of ten years. After a period of ten years the Town Council will contact the applicant(s) of the seat to ascertain the future of the bench, such as:

- A) Removal and the return of any plaque to the applicant(s) or their family.
- B) Re-siting the plaque on a different memorial bench (if required).

A4.22 After the ten year period, subject to agreement with the Town Council, families may wish to pay for a further period of sponsorship if the bench is still in an acceptable condition or they can sponsor a new seat to replace the old. If a new bench is purchased a new ten year agreement must be raised. The fees for any extensions or replacement will be based on the Council's approved schedule of charges applicable at that time.

A4.23 If the family cannot be contacted after the ten year period the Council may remove the bench or allow other memorial plaques to be placed on it.

A4.24 The Town Council accepts no replacement liability for a bench that is considered by the Town Council to be unsafe and to have reached the end of its useful life. The Town Council reserves the right to remove any memorial

benches that have been damaged and are in the view of the Town Council beyond economical repair. In this event, the applicant(s) will be informed. Any inscribed plaques may be collected from the Town Hall by the applicant(s). Although, if not collected within 3 months plaques will be disposed of.

A4.25 The Town Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial benches from vandals, third parties or whilst routine maintenance is being carried out.

FEES

A4.24 This scheme is not designed to provide an income for the Town Council. The cost of the provision of memorial benches and plaques has been kept as low as possible to ensure that it is not cost-prohibitive for individuals and families.

A4.25 Costs are as follows:

Memorial Bench and One Plaque:

Provision and installation of 3-seat bench	£1340.00
1 plaque engraved and installed	£50.00
Contribution to ongoing maintenance for 10 years	£210.00
Total cost	£1600.00

Share in a Memorial Bench:

Provision and installation of 3-seat bench	£1340.00
5 plaques engraved and installed	£250.00
Contribution to ongoing maintenance for 10 years	£210.00
Total cost	£1800.00
Price for memorial bench and plaque per application	£360.00

A4.26 Payment is required with every completed application form. Payment is non-refundable.

A4.27 Prices are subject to review.

APPENDIX 04b - APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A PLAQUE ONTO A MEMORIAL BENCH

Date of application

Applicant details:

Full name and title	
Address	
Email address	
Telephone number	
Name of individual(s) to be remembered on the plaque	
Preferred location of memorial bench	

Please notify us of any change of name or address so we can contact you if we need to.

Inscription for plaque:

The inscription should be restricted to 100 letters, including spaces.

For example, *'In (Loving) Memory of the name of the person, recognition of public office (if appropriate) and the dates of birth and death'*.

I enclose my cheque payment of £1600.00 / £360.00 (*please circle*)
(Payable to Biddulph Town Council) or

I have made a BACS payment of £1600.00 / £360.00 (*please circle*) to
Biddulph Town Council
(Unity Account Number 20491893, Sort Code 60 83 01)

Data Protection Act:

Please confirm your consent below. You can grant consent to any or all of the purposes listed. You can find out more about how we use your data from our 'Privacy Notice' which is available from our website www.biddulph.co.uk or from Biddulph Town Hall.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the Town Council.

- We may contact you to keep you informed about what is going on in the Town Council's area or other local authority areas including news, events, meetings, clubs, groups and activities. These communications may also sometimes appear on our website, or in printed or electronic form (including social media).
- We may contact you about groups and activities you may be interested in participating in.
- We may use your name and photo in our newsletters, bulletins or on our website, or our social media accounts (for example our Facebook page or X (previously known as Twitter) account).

I apply for consent to introduce this memorial into the Burial Ground and declare that all the statements to be inscribed on the memorial (for example names and dates) are accurate.

I have read and understand Biddulph Town Council's Policy on memorial benches.

I am the next of kin of the individual(s) named on the plaque.

Signed: Date:

Print:

For Office Use Only:

Application (including correct fee) Received:

Memorial Ordered:

Memorial Installed:

Expiry of Memorial:

APPENDIX 05 – Eligibility for Interment in the Burial Ground.

INTRODUCTION

A5.1 Biddulph Town Council manages two burial sites and carries out the maintenance of the St Lawrence’s Church closed Burial Ground. As with all burial sites across the country, land is in short-supply and maintenance of a lawned Burial Ground is costly. It is therefore important that space is used effectively for the benefit of the residents of the town.

A5.2 Biddulph Town Council is flexible and each application for burial including the burial of cremated remains is considered on a case-by-case basis. However, it is important to note that priority will always be given to the needs of residents of the town.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

A5.3 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in relation to how eligibility for burial in Biddulph will be determined, and to ensure there is transparency with regard to this decision-making.

PROVISIONS

A5.4 Persons meeting the eligibility criteria are:

- A person for whom clear documentary evidence is provided showing that they were a current resident of the town;
- A person for whom clear documentary evidence is provided showing that they were on the Electoral Roll of Biddulph, current as at the date of death;
- A child, at least one of whose parents was living in a dwelling within the Biddulph boundaries, current as at the date of the child’s death; or,
- A close relative (e.g. mother, father, sibling or child) is a current resident of the town, using the criteria from a) above, or is buried in the Burial Grounds already;
- A person who had lived most of their life in Biddulph, but had spent the latter part in a nursing/residential home out of the town.

Biddulph Town Council recognises that residential and nursing care provision within the town is limited. However, residency in a care facility outside the town will not, in itself, establish eligibility for resident burial fees where the deceased spent the majority of their life outside Biddulph.

Individuals in these circumstances may still qualify for burial if they meet any of the eligibility criteria set out above. Where eligibility is established solely through such criteria and the deceased is otherwise considered to have been

resident outside the town, the applicable out-of-area burial fee will be charged.

A5.6 Where no evidence is provided, the application will normally be rejected. However, an appeal can be submitted to the Town Council's Recreation and Amenities Committee, if required.

A5.7 For the burial of other non-residents, which may cover those who have lived here in the past or have had a very close connection with the town, the permission of the Registrar/Chief Officer is required.

A5.8 Funeral Directors MUST confirm the status of the deceased prior to arranging any funeral or interment arrangements.

A5.9 Current residents of the town or a child will normally be charged the 'Biddulph Resident' fee. Those not resident at the time of death, may be permitted burial within the sites, but may be charged the rates for 'Staffordshire Moorlands resident' or the 'out of area' charge.

APPENDIX 06 – RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE BURIAL GROUND

To ensure the Burial Grounds provide a safe, comfortable and well-maintained space for people to reflect and remember loved ones, all visitors and users of the Burial Grounds are required to adhere to the rules below.

1. No dogs are permitted within the Burial Grounds (with the exception of assistance dogs. Assistance dog owners are responsible for cleaning up and the appropriate disposal of any fouling. Dogs must be kept on a lead).
2. No ashes are permitted to be scattered at the Burial Grounds. Ashes in caskets may be interred with the written permission of the Town Council.
3. Only individuals approved by the Town Council are permitted to build a grave, use grave digging equipment or erect memorials and only at the plot where permission has been granted.
4. All memorials must be approved by the Town Council prior to placement. Unauthorised memorials are subject to removal by the Town Council without notice. Temporary wooden cross memorials should be removed following installation of a permanent memorial.
5. The selection of any grave space shall be subject to the approval of the Town Burial Ground Registrar. The Registrar's decision in respect of the allocation of the grave space shall be final.
6. Anyone acting as a bearer during an interment does so at their own risk and only professional undertakers may participate in lowering the coffin. The Town Council accepts no responsibility for any resulting accident or injury to a bearer howsoever caused.
7. Plastic packaging or cellophane must be removed from any arrangements or flowers laid on graves. Plastic and silk flowers are discouraged. The Town Council reserves the right to remove any non-biodegradable material from the Burial Ground. Bottles, cans or other containers of alcohol must not be left on graves or any area of the Burial Ground. The consumption of alcohol in the Burial Ground is prohibited.
8. Wreaths and fresh flowers may only be laid direct on any grave for a maximum of three months following interment. After this period, a small vase

or plant may be placed at the headstone, but the grave area must be left clear for mowing. Additional items are likely to be removed without notice.

9. Kerbs, railings or other forms of surrounds may only be placed with the written permission of the Town Council. This permission may only be granted where the ground conditions prevent lawned or turfed graves. Artificial grass is not permitted.
10. No vase, pot or container of any kind may be sunk into the soil on any grave, or placed in chippings.
11. In the Garden of Remembrance, only one vase may be placed per plot.
12. No tree or shrub shall be planted in the Burial Ground without the permission of the Town Council. Bulbs, plants and tress shall not be planted in the soil of any grave. Over time, tree or shrub roots could undermine the foundation of a memorial thereby affecting its stability. If planted, the Town Council reserves the right to remove such trees or shrubs without notice.
13. Grave Managers or anyone else tending a grave are not permitted to use any chemical herbicide or pesticide within the Burial Ground.
14. No bench may be placed without the written permission of the Town Council. Written permission will usually be granted for a time-limited period only, as per the Memorial Bench policy.
15. The Town Council accepts no responsibility for the condition of any memorial, grave, headstone or monument within the Burial Ground. The Town Council accepts no responsibility for making good any damage caused to monuments, gravestones or graves.
16. All users of the Burial Ground are required to take reasonable steps to ensure their own health and safety. While efforts will be made to minimise any risks, the Burial Grounds are not supervised, and users of the Burial Grounds must assess whether it is safe for them to enter, particularly during icy weather or when the ground is very slippery.
17. The Town Council is committed to delivering a high standard of service to the bereaved. The Town Council operates a complaints procedure. In the event of any dissatisfaction, a complaint should be made to the Registrar/Chief Officer.