

Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council

Memorial Management and Safety Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the way in which Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council manage the installation and safety of memorial headstones and tablets at Hengoed Cemetery. The policy is aimed at:

- Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council and its employees
- Memorial Masons
- Grave owners

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place a legal duty on the Council to assess the risks from cemetery structures and work activities and to ensure that the risks are managed to ensure the safety of its employees, contractors and visitors to Hengoed Cemetery.

2. Responsibilities of Grave Owners

- a. The grave owner is responsible for ensuring that they inform the Parish Council of any changes to their contact address, telephone number or email address, enabling the Parish Council to easily contact them should an issue with their grave or memorial arise.
- b. The grave owner is responsible for maintaining the memorial in a good condition.
- c. The grave owner is responsible for arranging for any defects or stability issues that are identified during the Parish Council's memorial testing process to be corrected. All re-installment work must be carried out by suitably qualified memorial masons to BS8415:2018.
- d. If grave owners do not arrange for any defects or stability issues to be addressed, they will be responsible for re-imbursing the Parish Council for any charges that the Council incurs in addressing the issues.
- e. The grave owner is advised to consider insuring any memorial.

3. Responsibilities of Memorial Masons

- a. Memorial masons are legally liable for the work they carry out and should ensure that memorials are erected safely and in accordance with the latest standards.
- b. Memorials must be installed in accordance with the BRAMMⁱ Blue Book or NAMNⁱⁱ Code of Working practice to ensure compliance with British Standard BS8415:2018.
- c. After the installation of a memorial, Memorial masons must complete and return a declaration confirming that the design, construction, and installation of the memorial meets the requirements of BS8415:2018.

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- d. New memorials must be permanently inscribed with the grave number before they are installed. Existing memorials, without a grave number inscription, removed for additional inscriptions must be permanently inscribed with the grave number before they are re-installed.

4. Unauthorised memorials

- a. An unauthorised memorial is defined as a headstone or tablet installed without a permit or any of the unpermitted items in the Cemetery rules and regulations. The Cemetery rules and regulations are available on the Parish Council website or by contacting the Parish Clerk.
- b. When an unauthorised memorial is first identified in the cemetery, the Parish Council will contact the Memorial Mason if known.
 - i. If the Memorial Mason can be contacted and a visual inspection of the headstone suggests that it does meet the required specifications, the Memorial Mason will be required to submit a retrospective application for a permit.
 - ii. The fee for retrospective applications is double the standard fee.
 - iii. If the information on the application does meet the required specifications and the Memorial Mason makes a declaration that the memorial has been installed in accordance with BS8415:2018, a retrospective permit will be issued.
 - iv. If the information on the application confirms that the headstone does not meet the required specifications, or the Memorial Mason will not make a declaration that installation has been carried out in accordance with BS8415:2018, the Memorial Mason will be required to remove the memorial within 3 months.
 - v. If the memorial is not removed within 3 months, the Parish Council will arrange for the memorial to be removed and stored and will recover the removal and storage costs from the Memorial Mason.
- c. If the matter cannot be resolved by contacting the Memorial Mason, the Parish Council will write to the registered grave owner asking them to contact the Parish Council. A month will be allowed for a response.
- d. If no response is received from the grave owner, a notice will be placed on the memorial requesting that anyone visiting the grave makes contact the Parish Council. Three months will be allowed for a response.
- e. The Parish Council may also place an article in the Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Roundabout Magazine asking for family members to make contact.

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- f. If no contact is received three months after the notice being placed on the memorial, the Parish Council will arrange for the memorial to be removed and stored and will recover the removal and storage costs from the grave owner.

5. Memorial inspection & testing – frequency

- a. All memorials will be inspected & tested at least every 5 years.
- b. Any memorials that are assessed to be a greater risk will be inspected on a more frequent basis as determined by their individual risk assessment.
- c. All memorials were inspected in January 2020. Memorials in Qtrs 1 & 2 will be inspected in 2023; Memorials in Qtrs 3 & 4 will be inspected in 2024. Thereafter a different Quarter will be tested each year on a rolling programme, commencing with Qtr 1 in 2025.

6. Memorial inspection & testing – training

- a. Any person involved in memorial inspection and testing must have received appropriate training.
- b. Evidence of training will be kept on file by the Parish Clerk.

7. Memorial inspection & testing – process

- a. A digital photograph will be taken of the memorial.
- b. A visual inspection of the memorial will be carried out covering the following issues:
 - i. Are joints intact?
 - ii. Are the foundations (where evident) leaning?
 - iii. What are the ground conditions like?
 - iv. Is it a hard or soft stone?
 - v. Is there any intrusion by vegetation?
 - vi. Are faults or cracks present?
- c. A hand test will then be carried out on the memorial by standing to one side of the memorial and applying a firm but steady pressure at the apex of the memorial in different directions to determine if the headstone is loose. Force must not exceed 25kg.
- d. A mechanical force measuring device may be used on memorials measuring between 625mm and 1500mm where there is uncertainty over the results of a hand test.

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- e. When a memorial passes the visual and hand tests, it will be re-inspected again within 5 years.
- f. Where movement is found but the memorial appears safe or can resist a force of 25kg it will be re-inspected every 12 months. The grave owner will be contacted as it is likely that the memorial may deteriorate further.
- g. See Section 10 for the process to be followed when an inspection determines that a memorial is dangerous or unsafe.

8. Memorial inspection & testing – record keeping

- a. A record will be maintained of each inspection of every memorial. See [Appendix A](#) for the memorial testing form that will be used during the test.
- b. The photograph, the date of the inspection and the results of the memorial test will be entered onto the Council's Cemetery Management system.

9. Dangerous or unsafe memorials

- a. A dangerous or unsafe memorial is defined as one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with the exertion of a force of 25kg.
- b. A memorial that moves under pressure does not necessarily pose a danger and should be judged against the definition in 9(a).
- c. When an inspection identifies an unsafe memorial:
 - i. A warning notice will be placed on the memorial
 - ii. The memorial will be made temporarily safe using a temporary support or a cordon will be placed around the memorial.
 - iii. Cordons should cover the radius of the fall of the memorial so that it lands within the cordoned area if it does fall.
 - iv. Any temporary support will be a sturdy stake driven vertically into the ground behind the memorial and secured with appropriate banding.
 - v. the grave owner will be contacted with details of the problem and asked to make arrangements for the memorial to be made permanently safe by an appropriately qualified memorial mason.
 - vi. If the grave owner cannot be contacted, the Council will make arrangements for the memorial to be made permanently safe.
 - vii. The memorial must be made permanently safe within 18 months of the date of the inspection.

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- viii. In cases where the grave owner cannot be contacted or has not made appropriate arrangement for the memorial to be made permanently safe, the Council may make arrangements for the memorial to be laid flat.

- d. The Council is not obliged to spend excessive amounts of public money on repairing private property and is only obliged to make memorials safe. In the event that the Council does incur expenditure in making memorials safe, these costs will be recovered from the grave owner or the memorial mason (as appropriate). In the event that the costs cannot be recovered from the grave owner or the memorial mason, details will be kept on the grave record and an attempt made to recover the charges when any correspondence is received regarding the grave.

10. Communication – inspections

- a. The Parish Council will take the following steps to publicise forthcoming inspections at least one month before the proposed inspection date:
 - i. Notices on Parish and Cemetery noticeboards
 - ii. Notices on the Cemetery gates
 - iii. Notice on the Parish Council website
 - iv. Notice on the Parish Council social media accounts
 - v. Notice will be placed in any forthcoming editions of the Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Roundabout magazine.
 - vi. Letters may be sent to registered grave owners.

- b. The communication will include information about the inspection process that will be carried out, why it needs to be carried out and how it will be carried out.

11. Communication – Memorial Management and Safety policy (this policy)

- a. This policy will be issued to grave owners when an application to erect a new headstone or to add an additional inscription to a headstone is received by the Parish Council.

- b. This policy will be published on the Parish Council website.

- c. The existence and availability of this policy will be included in a notice on the Cemetery noticeboard.

ⁱ British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons

ⁱⁱ National Association of Memorial Masons

