

CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: THE CABINET

DATE: 14 OCTOBER 2004

Report Title: General Conditions for Cemeteries and General Conditions for Woodland Burials

Summary of Report: To consider revised conditions.

Recommendations: To approve the conditions.

Contact Officer: Lyn Davies (Tel: 01492 575299); E-mail lyn.davies@conwy.gov.uk

Background Papers	
Environmental Statement	This report does not contravene the Council's Agenda 21 policies.
Crime & Disorder Act, 1998	This report does not contravene the Council's Crime & Disorder Strategy.
Financial Implications	
Personnel Implications	
The Human Rights Act, 1998	This report has been audited for potential breaches of Articles in the European Convention on Human Rights. Any breach or breaches, and any justification for such breach or breaches, are included in the report itself or in the addendum to the report.

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REPORT TO: THE CABINET
DATE: 14 OCTOBER 2004
SUBJECT: GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR CEMETERIES AND WOODLAND BURIALS

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Conwy County Borough Council is responsible for 11 cemeteries:

Bron y Nant Cemetery, Colwyn Bay
Llangwstennin Cemetery, Mochdre
Llanrhos Cemetery, Llandudno
Great Orme Cemetery, Llandudno
St Agnes Road Cemetery, Conwy
St Gwynans Cemetery, Dwygyfylchi
Tan y Foel Cemetery, Penmaenmawr
Erw Feiriol Cemetery, Llanfairfechan
Rhandir Hedd Cemetery, Llanfairfechan
Cae Melwr Cemetery, Llanrwst
Erw Hedd Cemetery, Betws y Coed

1.2 The Cemetery Conditions have not been updated for many years, and in some instances there do not appear to be any conditions in place.

2. CEMETERY REGULATIONS

2.1 Over the years there have been many changes in the cemeteries and five new areas of 'Lawn Cemetery' have been created for which there are currently no conditions. Whilst there is no need for lengthy, over-elaborate regulations there is a need for concise guidelines which ensure that the cemeteries are maintained in an orderly condition. The attached Cemetery Conditions (Appendix A) satisfy this need and will apply to all cemeteries administered by Conwy County Borough Council.

3. WOODLAND BURIAL

3.1 In order to meet the growing demand for a more natural and organic funeral Conwy County Borough Council has created a 'woodland burial' site at Llanrhos Cemetery in Llandudno where full interments and the interment of ashes may be carried out in a woodland setting. Further sites will be established at Rhandir Hedd Cemetery and Tan y Foel Cemetery. There are currently no conditions, the attached guidelines (Appendix B) satisfy that need.

4. PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY PANEL

4.1 Principal Scrutiny Panel of the 5 July, 2004 resolved that, following some title changes which have been made, the Conditions be recommended for approval by Cabinet.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That the General Conditions for Cemeteries and General Conditions for Woodland Burial be approved.



GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR CEMETERIES

The cemeteries covered by these conditions are:

Bron-y-Nant, Colwyn Bay
Llangwstennin
Llanrhos, Llandudno
Great Orme, Llandudno
St Agnes Road, Conwy
St Gwynans, Dwygyfylchi
Tan-y-Foel, Penmaenmawr
Erw Feiriol, Llanfairfechan
Rhandir Hedd, Llanfairfechan
Cae Melwr, Llanrwst
Erw Hedd, Betws-y-Coed

GENERAL CEMETERY CONDITIONS

Conditions made on _____ by Conwy County Borough Council for the use and management of the County's Cemeteries.

Definitions

In these Regulations:

- “*Grave Space*” means the area of land in which a grave has been, or will be, excavated for the interment of bodies or the cremated remains of such persons therein.
- “*Grave Space Number*” means the number allocated to a grave space by the Council.
- “*Lawn Cemetery*” is a cemetery where kerb sets, normally used for delineating each grave, are replaced by uninterrupted sweeps of grass which are mown regularly.
- “*Memorial Vase*” means a suitable purpose made flower container not exceeding 8 inches in length and 6 inches in depth and having a fitted perforated lid of a diameter not exceeding 5 inches.

1. General Conditions

- 1.1 A plan of each Cemetery together with the positions of all grave spaces is deposited at the Cemetery Office at Bron y Nant Crematorium, Colwyn Bay, (Telephone 01492 544677). These plans may be inspected on Monday - Friday during normal office opening hours.
- 1.2 Floral tributes or wreaths may be placed on a grave space immediately after an interment as part of the funeral arrangements. They will be removed after a period of 21 days or when they become unsightly.
- 1.3 All dogs, excepting guide dogs, are prohibited from entering the cemetery unless they are in transit on a public footpath or right of way in which instance they must be kept on a lead. Dog owners using a footpath within a cemetery are reminded that this a sacred place and are requested to pick up, and to hygienically dispose of their dog's excrement off-site.

2. Lawn Cemeteries

- 2.1 In those cemeteries designated as lawn cemeteries, i.e.

New sections at Bron-y-Nant, Colwyn Bay
Llanrhos, Llandudno
Tan-y-Foel, Penmaenmawr
New Section at Rhandir Hedd, Llanfairfechan
New Section at Erw Feiriol, Llanrwst
New Section at Erw Hedd, Betws y Coed

- 2.2 No grave or grave mound shall be raised above the level of the adjoining ground and as soon as is practicable after each burial or interment the grave space shall be made level with the adjacent ground.
- 2.3 After the grave space has been made level with the adjacent ground it will be grassed or turfed over by the Council and thereafter maintained by them at their expense.
- 2.4 No memorial, border stone, footstone or other structure, plant or article shall be permitted on the grave space except:
- (i) One headstone erected in a central position at the head, facing the grave space, and placed on a paved or concrete foundation.
 - (ii) A Memorial Vase placed on the foundation of the headstone
- 2.5 The only exception to this rule is that in the section of Llanrhos Lawn Cemetery reserved for children's burials, a stone and a kerb set of the parent's choice will be allowed.
- 2.6 No plant, tree, shrub or other floral tribute of a permanently rooted nature shall be placed within the vicinity of any graves except where the Council may create a continuous flower bed, at right angles to the long axis of the grave, surrounding and joining each headstone. Where so created the beds will be planted and maintained by the Council. With the consent of the deed-holder small herbaceous plants may be planted by members of the public. No large woody plants will be allowed.

3. Interment of Cremated Remains

- 3.1 No ashes or remains of deceased persons whose bodies have been cremated shall be scattered in any Cemetery.
- 3.2 An appropriate container for cremated remains containing the cremated remains may be interred in a grave space where the exclusive right of burial has been granted.

4. Headstones

- 4.1 Written permission must be obtained from the Cemetery Office for the fixing of any headstone. A fee will be charged for this service. No headstone erection work should be carried out before the appropriate permission is granted.
- 4.2 No hewing or dressing of stones will be permitted in the cemetery. Stonemasons will be expected to make good any damage caused to the turf in the execution of their duties.
- 4.3 Every headstone placed on a grave in any part of the Cemetery shall comply with the following measurements and dimensions:
- (i) Height above the level of the foundation not to exceed 1.1meters (3'6"). Such height to include any base of the headstone.
 - (ii) Width – not exceeding 900mm (3').
 - (iii) Thickness – not less than 75mm (3") and not more than 230mm (9").
 - (iv) Width of base – not to exceed 450mm (18").

- 4.4 Be inscribed permanently in letters not less than 25mm (1") in length, with the names, ages and dates of death of the persons interred in the grave. The grave space number and section number shall be similarly inscribed on the reverse side of the headstone.
- 4.5 Be constructed from natural stone.
- 4.6 Be firmly secured to a foundation which itself shall be firmly secured. All fixings should be to not less than the minimum standards recommended by the National Association of Memorial Masons. A copy of this standard may also be inspected at the Cemetery Office.
- 4.7 Be maintained at all times in proper repair and in a clean condition.
- 4.8 Inspection of Headstones
- (i) From time to time headstones will be inspected, in accordance with recommendations currently in force, to ensure that they are stable and well secured.
 - (ii) If following inspection a headstone is found to be unstable it will be temporarily secured, by non-destructive means, to ensure the safety of cemetery users.
 - (iii) An attempt will be made to contact the owner of the gravespace at their last known address and notification will be given that the problem must be rectified within a period of three calendar months.
 - (iv) If either the owner cannot be contacted, or if no remedial action to the headstone is undertaken within three months, then the Council will arrange for the headstone to be laid flat on the gravespace.

5. Woodland Burials

- 5.1 Separate conditions apply to Woodland Burials.

6. Amendments

- 6.1 The Council reserves the right from time to time to make such amendments to the Conditions as they may consider necessary.



General Conditions For Woodland Burials

Introduction

In order to meet the growing demand for a more natural and organic funeral Conwy County Borough Council has created a 'woodland burial' site at Llanrhos Cemetery in Llandudno where full interments and the interment of ashes may be carried out in a woodland setting.

A young Silver Birch tree will be planted, and maintained by the Council, at the head of each grave plot shortly after the interment takes place. The tree will prevent the grave being reused and the burial site will remain undisturbed forever as part of the natural woodland. The young Silver Birch trees will mature and form a woodland which will eventually provide a wildlife habitat giving food and shelter for local wildlife.

Maintenance

The woodland area will be managed in sympathy with nature, as one of the Parks Biodiversity Sites. The grass will be mown once a year with the arisings being left on site to mulch down into the soil, and the area will be left to develop as a natural woodland.

Headstones

This is not a traditional cemetery, it is a place where graves become part of the landscape. No headstones will be allowed within the Woodland Burial Site, and any vases of flowers, statues or other artificial objects will be removed.

Flowers

Cut flowers will not normally be allowed, the only exception to this is those left on the grave at the time of interment. These may only be simple tied bunches of bare stemmed flowers with no cellophane or decorative wrapping, they will be removed when the flowers start to look unsightly.

Suitable native wild flowers or bulbs may be planted on the grave plot following consultation with the Parks Manager who is responsible for the site.

Coffins

Only biodegradable coffins of an organic material will be permitted ensuring that the woodland burial area remains as natural as possible. For this reason the coffin must be made of natural timber, cardboard, or woven grass. No plastic or metal handles or inserts should be used. The same conditions also apply to cremated remains caskets.

Graves

All grave plots in the woodland area will be for one interment only. It will not be possible to pre-reserve graves but it is planned that adequate space for woodland burials will be provided in this cemetery and in other local authority owned cemeteries where space permits.

Each grave (including Ashes plots) is marked with a unique number, which is attached to a stout wooden stake and carefully recorded on a detailed plan kept in the Cemetery Office at Bron y Nant Crematorium in Mochdre.

Recording

After the burial has taken place, all the details are recorded in the Burial Register for the Cemetery, which is a legal requirement, and a deed giving exclusive right of interment will be issued to the next of kin or executor.

Funeral Arrangements

When a burial takes place the arrangements are at the discretion of the family of the deceased. Funerals may be organised in the traditional way, using a Funeral Director, with a service followed by committal.

Alternatively the family may wish to purchase the grave and order the excavation of the grave through the Cemetery Office at Bron y Nant Crematorium and then make the remaining arrangements themselves, conducting their own ceremony at the graveside.

The keyword is flexibility, and provided all conditions are met, most things are possible.

Fees

The fees current at the time may be found by contacting the Cemetery Office at Bron y Nant Crematorium Tel : 01492 544677.