

Operations & Amenities Committee

To: Committee Members

Cllrs Goodman (Chairperson) Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Hitchin, Johnson & Maslen

Copies: County Councillors (not a Town Councillor) – S Ferguson, K Prentice, G Seeff & S Taylor
District Councillors (not a Town Councillor) – L Davenport-Ray, S Ferguson, A Jennings, M Pickering, I Taylor, S Taylor & G Welton
Town Councillors (not a member of this committee)
Local Press, Town Council Website & Noticeboard

Agenda for the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** to be held on **9th July 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and made available to the public. Your participation in the meeting indicates your consent to being included in these recordings.

Public Participation

There will be a 10-minute session before the meeting to allow any resident to address the committee on any matter appearing on the agenda for this meeting.

Members of the Operations & Amenities committee are hereby summoned to attend this meeting to consider the following business.

C Robson
Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

To receive and accept Councillor's apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

To receive from Councillors declarations as to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests along with the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item.

3. Minutes

Members to approve the minutes of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 11th June 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Attachment 1

4. Action List

To receive a summary and status of ongoing actions and resolutions.

Attachment 2

5. Local Highways Improvement Bids 2024-25

To receive and note an update on non-complex Local Highway Improvement Bids submitted in January 2024.

Attachment 3



To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk on a Complex Local Highway Improvement Bid submitted for dropped kerbs in St Neots Town Centre.

6. Forget-Me-Not Memorial Garden

To receive and note a report from the Council's Senior Administrator on the funding of memorial plaques for the Forget-Me-Not Memorial Garden.

Attachment 4

7. Burial Regulations

To receive and consider for recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee revised Burial Regulations for St Neots Town Council's cemeteries.

i) St Neots Lawn Cemetery Regulations

Attachment 5

ii) Cemetery Regulations –St Neots Old & New, Eynesbury, Eaton Socon

Attachment 6

8. Memorial Bench and Tree Policy

To receive and consider for recommendation to the Finance and Governance Committee an updated Memorial Bench policy.

Attachment 7

9. Allotments

To receive, consider and provide comment on points received from an allotment holder.

Attachment 8

10. Brickhills Play Park

To receive an update report on the Brickhills Play area see-saw and public bench installation.

Attachment 9

11. Tree Maintenance Policy

To receive and consider a draft tree maintenance policy which will advise officers and residents on the Council's approach to tree management.

Attachment 10

12. Date of next meeting

To note that the date of the next Operations and Amenities committee meeting will be 10th September 2024.

C Robson
Town Clerk

Operations & Amenities Committee

Present: Cllrs Goodman (Chairperson), Bolanz, Chapman, Collins, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Hitchin and Johnson

In attendance: Town Clerk, Operations Manager

Absent: Cllr Maslen

Minutes of the meeting of the **Operations & Amenities committee** held on **Tuesday 11th June** at 7.15pm in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

ACTIONS

012 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

Admin

013 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

014 Election of Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

Admin

RESOLVED that Councillor Chapman be elected as Deputy Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee for the 2024-25 council year.

015 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Operations and Amenities Committee held on 21st May 2024 as a true and accurate record.

016 Working Group

Members received and noted a list of existing Working Groups and Membership for those Working Groups that report into the Operations and Amenities Committee.

It was noted that Cllr Dunford should be listed as a member of the Moores Walk Garden Working Group.

RESOLVED that Cllr S Smith be appointed to the LHI and SID Working Group.

017 Action list

Members received the committee action list. The following key updates were received;

Moore's Walk Garden

Work was due to start in August 2024. The later date is to increase the chances of a successful planting scheme. Horticulturalist due to come back to Working Group with more specifics on plants chosen.

Public Toilets

Work on the new changing places toilet was scheduled to be completed by mid-July 2024. However, the Clerk was awaiting formal confirmation from HDC. The Clerk is in contact with Access in St Neots and has updated them on the status of the project.

The Operations Manager informed the committee the works to redecorate the exterior of south street toilets were due to take place the week of 23rd June 2024.

Brickhills Bench installation

It was noted that this needs progressing and the Operations Manager would pursue further surfacing quotes.

Jubilee Trees

A Member asked if the trees ordered could be planted around play parks. The Clerk confirmed that the trees had been ordered for a particular location which was already agreed.

018 Local Highways Improvement Bids 2024-25

Members received and noted an update from Cambridgeshire County Council on a complex LHI bid submitted for St Neots town centre. The application, supported by the County Council Ward Member, focused on creating better accessible routes to key locations in the town through dropped kerbs, markings and pavement improvements. A feasibility report on the bid had now been carried out and scoring was due to take place in June. A representative of St Neots Town Council was invited to attend to speak in support of the bid.

It was agreed that Cllr Johnson would attend the panel scoring to speak on the application on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr
Johnson

019 Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre

- i) Members received a report from the Town Clerk asking for confirmation that a pedestrian gate be included in a planning application to be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council to surface the trackway and parking area at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community building. The gate would be in the boundary fencing with Duck Lane.

RESOLVED that the council include the creation of a pedestrian access gate in the boundary fence between Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre and Duck Lane.

- ii) Members received and considered an initial draft lease with the Mans Cave for a building at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre. The Clerk informed Members that he was awaiting a rental valuation for the property.

Members raised the following points;

A clause prohibiting drinking of alcohol on the premises without prior permission should be included.

A three-year break should be included in the lease.

The Clerk should progress with obtaining a valuation of the property to ensure a true rental value can be established. While it was acknowledged the tenant would be a community group the Council had to truly reflect the value of its asset and the support that was being given to any tenant if a lower rent is agreed.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk obtains a rental valuation for the buildings at the Steve Van de Kerkhove Community Centre at a maximum cost of £950.

020 Public Toilets

Members received and considered Heads of Terms for new leases to be agreed with Huntingdonshire District Council for the lease of public toilets at Riverside and Tebbutts Road.

Members raised some concerns over a full repairing lease and what contributes HDC might make towards repair and maintenance under a new lease. The provisions under the existing lease should be kept, whereby the amount incurred by the Town Council would be limited.

A lease of 20 years was thought to be potentially too long, but with a break clause of 10 years would be acceptable. Access for maintaining toilets should be included, particularly for SNTC vehicles to park without charge in adjacent HDC car parks.

The Clerk noted Members comments and would go back to HDC with a view to bring forward a draft proposed lease to the July committee meeting.

021 Play Park Inspections

Members received and noted an updated play park inspection document and the works which were underway to address issues or recommendations raised.

Members requested that making safe a wooden plank at Bevington play area be made a priority.

022 Cemetery Land

Members received and noted a verbal update from the Town Clerk.

The Clerk informed Members that he had heard back from Highways England with regard to potential future cemetery land for St Neots. The Clerk has been advised that Highways England seek to limit land taken to deliver schemes as much as possible. In the unlikely event that any land is found to be surplus at the end of the scheme, it'll firstly be offered back to the original landowner, which is required by law.

In regard to the A428 works, as compound land is not needed after the scheme has been delivered, these areas have been leased. This means that on this occasion they are not able to assist with our request, however they will keep a record of our enquiry should there be any surplus land that the original landowners don't want back. While this is unlikely, it is possible. The project team expects to be more informed of the possibility of this by the time they open the new road to road users.

023 Strategic Priorities

Members received a report from the Town Clerk and considered the strategic priorities of the committee which they wished to see the focus of resource over coming years. Members agreed with the priorities set out in the report, but also spoke in favour of adding the museum building repair to the priorities and highlighting heritage investment, potentially supported by a heritage strategy. The wider view of investing in all SNTC owned properties in the long terms was also highlighted.

Members discussed a WW2 pill box and taking ownership of this should the opportunity arise.

Highlighted committee priorities;

Cemetery Land

Identifying and securing new cemetery land

Operations Depot

Clarifying medium to long term operations depot requirements and securing better depot provision.

Play Park Investment

Finalising and agreeing forward planning investment for SNTC sites. Including new provision and increased accessible play.

Jubilee Garden

Improving and enhancing the community space and the heritage it links to.

Local Highways Improvement Bids

Developing a strong process for the identification, evaluation, and submission of Local Highway Improvement Bids.

Changing Places Toilet

Completing the provision of a Riverside Changing Places toilet.

Museum Building

Repair and maintenance of the Museum building inline with heritage building survey recommendations.

Heritage

Establishing a heritage strategy for the Council's approach to its sites and heritage information.

024 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next Operations and Amenities Committee would be on 9th July 2024 at 7.15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL ACTION LIST 2024/25

The following Action List summarises outstanding resolutions and activities that are ongoing from the last Council and the current Council. The Town Clerk would like to continue to develop the Action List into a Committee Action Plan which sets out the project/improvement works the committee will be carrying out each year.

OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE					
Minute	Project	Objective	STATUS	Responsibility	Timescales
Highways					
035/36 – 23-34	LHI Applications 2023/24	To submit LHI Applications for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosshall Road, • Luke Street • Hogsden Leys 	<p>Hogsden Leys Completed.</p> <p>Crosshall Road Consultation showed majority in favour of proposed scheme. Scheme decision sits under the delegated authority of the County Council Ward Member and Traffic Manager. Scheme likely to be approved but points which arose through the consultation are being further considered as part of adapting the scheme.</p> <p>Luke Street Consultation being held.</p>	1) Highways Authority	Consultation and CCC Process Ongoing
075-23-24	LHI Applications 2024/25	To agree the 2024/25 LHI submissions and instruct the Clerk to make the applications ahead of the 12 th of January deadline	The Committee previously considered and agreed recommendations from the Working Group on the four applications the Council would submit for the 2024/25 bidding round. This recommendation was agreed by the Full Council and applications were submitted.	1) Working Group 2) Ops & Amenities 3) Town Clerk	On Agenda

AGENDA ITEM 4

ATTACHMENT 2

	Eaton Socon Highways Petition	To establish a meeting between Ward Members, CCC Ward Cllr and representatives of the petitioner to better understand concerns.	School (petitioner) approach to agree a date for site meeting. Requested that this take place after school Easter holidays. Suitable date all parties can make still to be confirmed.	1) Town Clerk 2) Ward Members	Ongoing
Environment					
018-22-23	Queen's Jubilee Tree Planting	Apply for 5 trees from Queens Jubilee. Liaise with CCC on permissions for species & planting.	Cllrs Chapman progressing discussions on the proposed trees and were to report back to the Council accordingly. Funds available for purchase of trees. Planting to be done in partnership with HDC in Autumn planting season. Trees pre-ordered.	1) Cllrs Chapman 2) Ops Manager	Autumn 2024
Play, Sport and Wellbeing					
050-23-24	Inclusive Play Parks	Improving accessibility of SNTC Play Parks via installing wheelchair accessible play equipment at Brickhills/Henbrook Play Area.	Works for the main installation have now been completed. Costs for an inclusive seesaw and associated equipment were approved by Full Council on 28/05/24. An order has now been placed for the works. Improvements to the adjacent parking area from HDC. Awaiting further updates from HDC. – No update at time of meeting.	1) Working Group 2) Ops Manager 3) Town Clerk	ON AGENDA
050 – 23-24	Play Park Strategy	Undertake a play park review and bring forward a draft strategy document on management and investment in play areas.	Play Park assessment completed, and results considered by the Committee. Priorities for the Play Park strategy agreed. Newly formed working group met to provide some guidance around priorities. Clerk to complete updated strategy for sign off by Working Group ahead of presenting to the Committee. Working group to meet and consider next steps for priorities identified.	1) Town Clerk 2) Ops Manager 3) O&A Committee 4) Working Group	2 nd Quarter 2024-25

AGENDA ITEM 4

ATTACHMENT 2

Building Maintenance/Management					
065-22-23	Public Toilets	Schedule and undertaking of repair work required for public toilets.	Riverside toilet refurbishment managed by Huntingdonshire District Council. Works include creating a Changing Places toilet, refurbishment of all toilets, roof & drainage improvements, and PV panels.	1) HDC 2) Contractor 3) Town Clerk	July 2024
			Completion date still awaited from HDC.		
			Works to improve South Street toilet doors, ceilings, re-rendering part of the porch way, repainting, and repainting railings were completed 22/23 June 2024. Members requested this work be done to help improve the street scene.	1) Ops Manager 2) Contractor	Completed
104-23-24	Museum Building Survey	Undertake a survey of the museum building to establish condition and required works.	Initial historic building condition survey completed. Due to difficulties in establishing costs and phasing options the Council agreed to issue a tender for a preferred partner. Soon to be appointed Project Delivery Manager to lead on project.	1) Town Clerk 2) Museum Trustees	2 nd Quarter 2024-25
047-23-24	HDC Moores Walk Land	Town Clerk to investigate options for improving community land owned by HDC in front of the United Reform Church.	Confirmed that HDC have a £20k budget to undertake works to improve the community space. SNTC to lead on works agreed by a Working Group. HDC have approved plans and a preferred quotation. Meeting of working group and contractor held and agreed work to be carried out in August 2024. Work to start on 17th August 2024.	1) Town Clerk 2) HDC Parks and Open Spaces 3) Operations Manager	August 2024
105-23-24	SVDK Eynesbury Community Hub	Deferred agreement on improved access until further comments put forward by Members and amended quotes sought.	Amended quotations were sought for tarmac and resin solutions. New quotations were recommended and approved by Council to tarmac the area. The Planning Authority have informed the Council they require a full planning application to be submitted for the work. Planning application and supporting documents being drawn up.	1) Ops Manager	2 nd Quarter 2024-25

AGENDA ITEM 4

ATTACHMENT 2

	Jubilee Garden Improvements	Priority maintenance improvements to be brought forward by Operations Team. Wider improvements to be further considered by Working Group.	Report brought forward highlighting key priority maintenance works for Operations Manager to bring forward, including commemorative signage. Further points for wider enhancements of the garden to be further considered by the Working Group and brought forward.	1) Ops Manager 2) Working Group	Ongoing
Legal					
065-22-23	Public Toilet Leases	To negotiate and renew leases with HDC for public toilets at Riverside and Tebbutts Road	10-year leases for the public toilets have expired. HDC have agreed to continue the lease on a rolling basis while the project to refurbish toilet at Riverside is progressed. Heads of Terms for a 20-year lease have been issued and agreed by both parties. Draft lease copy awaited from HDC legal.	1) Town Clerk 2) HDC	September 2024 (Draft leases for review)
Strategy					
065-23-24	Depot Provision	To review and bring forward potential options on future provision of the Council depot based on current and future needs.	The lease for the depot building requires renewing in October 2024. Additional revenue funds have been allowed in the 2024/25 budget to increase depot capacity. Options to be reviewed and brought forward to the committee.	1) Town Clerk 2) Operations Manager	Ongoing
094-23-24	Cemetery Land	To review and bring forward a report on the lifespan of St Neots Cemeteries and consider options for addressing future need.	The likely life span of the Council's cemeteries means that the Council needs to start thinking about future burial provision and whether it looks at acquiring more land for the purpose of cemeteries. Officers working on review of land/sites. National Highways confirmed they were not able to provide land for use.	1) Town Clerk 2) Operations Manager 3) Senior Administrator	Ongoing

O&A = Operation and Amenities Committee **Ops Manager** = Ian Webb, Operations Manager **Clerk** = Chris Robson, Town Clerk **Wrk Grp** = Working Group

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES
Date:	9 th JULY 2024
Title:	LOCAL HIGHWAYS IMPROVMENT BIDS – 2024-25
Contact Officer:	TOWN CLERK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Councillors with communication from Cambridgeshire County Council on non-complex Local Highways Improvement applications. **(APPENDIX A)**
- 1.2 To remind Members of those LHI applications submitted for the 2024-25 application window.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the committee notes the information provided in the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council submitted four Local Highways Improvement (LHI) bids in January 2024. The applications are currently being considered and scored by Cambridgeshire County Council to determine their feasibility and if they will score sufficiently to move to the next stage.
- 3.2 The Local Highways Improvement (LHI) programme covers all districts in Cambridgeshire and invites any groups or organisations that represent the local community to apply for funding. The Council is able to submit one bid per County Council ward to each annual bidding window. The schemes are delivered by the County Council on a joint funded basis and applicants can apply for funding of up to either £25,000 for complex projects or £10,000 for non-complex projects, as a contribution to successful schemes. The applicant is expected to provide a minimum contribution of 10% towards the total scheme cost.

AGENDA ITEM 5

ATTACHMENT 3

4. Information

4.1 The Council submitted the following applications for the 2024-25 LHI round;

Ward	Location	Bid Type	Issue	Solutions	Status
The Eatons	Duloe Road Crossshall road	Non-Complex	Speeding along entrance roads into the town (Crossshall and Duloe)	<p>Buffer zone signage between the junction of Crossshall Road and Monarch Road and under the A1 bypass.</p> <p>Creation of a 40pmh zone in the relevant stretch of road.</p> <p>Buffer zone to be created on the Bedfordshire side of the underpass which could be progressed with BBC if a scheme goes ahead.</p> <p>Potential for signage indicating change in speed limits with a bit more notice.</p>	<p>Scoring currently being finalised.</p> <p>Decision by panel expected in September 2024.</p>
Eynesbury	Andrew Road Caernarvon Road	Non-Complex	Speeding	Installation of two Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS),	<p>Scoring currently being finalised.</p> <p>Decision by panel expected in September 2024.</p>
East and Gransden	Station Square, Kester Way Intersection of Roads leading to Dramsell Rise	Non-Complex	Safety issues arising from lack of clear signage and direction	Installation of give-way markings and signs at both locations.	<p>Scoring currently being finalised.</p> <p>Decision by panel expected in September 2024.</p>
Priory Park and Little Paxton	Town Centre	Complex	Poor access routes for people with mobility issues (especially wheelchair users)	<p>Creating a navigable route from Riverside, Priory Centre, Waitrose and Tebbutts Road car parks to the Market Square and High Street.</p> <p>Mainly through dropped kerbs.</p>	Scoring panel met and considered application. Outcome awaited.

					<p>Likely that not all measures within the proposal will be supported.</p> <p>Request for improved pavement surfacing has not been taken forward as CCC advise this is a highway maintenance issue.</p>
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5. Financial Implications

5.1 The table below summarises the status of Highway Improvement Budgets

2024-25 Revenue Budget	£40,000
Earmarked Reserves	£98,009
Total Budget	£138,009
2023-24 Schemes	
Luke Street	£9,350.00 (SNTC Portion of Cost)
Crosshall Road	£34,632.54 (SNTC Portion of Cost)
Remaining Available Budget	£94,026.46
2024-25 Schemes	
Town Centre	£20,000 (SNTC Proportion of Cost)
Duloe & Crosshall Road	TBC
Andrew and Caernovon Road	TBC
Station Square and Intersections	TBC

6. Legal Powers

6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

APPENDIX A

From: [Local Projects](#)
To: [Local Projects](#)
Subject: Local Highway Improvement (LHI) 2024/25 - Update
Date: 18 June 2024 14:25:48
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear applicants,

I hope this email finds you well.

I wanted to reach out to you all and update you regarding your applications for the 24/25 LHI funding round.

Officers are currently finalising the scoring of your non-complex applications and undertaking moderation to ensure these are consistent, and we have the final two member panels for Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City planned next week for the complex LHI projects.

The recommended delivery programme for this funding round will then be taken to Septembers Highways & Transport committee meeting for approval. I appreciate this is later than previously indicated to some applicants on their panel day, unfortunately the lead in times for our committee process have necessitated this change.

Should you have any questions regarding your application in the meantime, please reach out via return email.

Kind Regards,

Michael Martin

Senior Project Manager

Design & Delivery
Project Delivery



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ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES
Date:	1st July 2024
Title:	FORGET-ME-NOT GARDEN MEMORIAL PLAQUES
Contact Officer/S:	OPERATIONS MANAGER/ SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the memorial plaques for the garden.
- 1.2 To seek the Operations and Amenities Committee on a recommendation to the Council on the future provision of plaques.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee recommend to the Finance and Governance Committee that the Council continue to offer free memorial plaques for the Forget-Me-Not Memorial Garden in the future financial years and that the Council consider and budget for the provision of plaques as part of the 2025-26 budget setting process.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Forget-Me-Not Garden was created in St Neots New Cemetery following a resolution by the Council to renovate an existing area within the cemetery as a dedicated baby loss memorial garden. The garden was opened in October 2023.
- 3.2 As part of the initial project planning and engagement with local businesses, Co-operative Funeral Services offered to provide memorial plaques free of charge. The Council approved and published a policy and regulations for the memorial garden which included the provision of free memorial plaques to applicants.

4. Information

- 4.1 Three memorial plaque applications were received and processed earlier this year. On receipt of the completed plaques, the working group were concerned that the chrome finish, which is highly reflective, would make it difficult to read the inscription. The working group also had concerns about the longevity of this type of plaque provided. Officers approached Co-operative Funeral services, who had generously provided the plaques to enquire if they were able to provide a different finish, which unfortunately they are not able to do.
- 4.2 Officers contacted the applicants to inform them of the concerns with the current style plaque and to reassure them that these concerns were being addressed. Applicants were advised that the plaques would be replaced with a new style plaque once an alternative was sourced and a decision by the working group had been reached. All applicants were very understanding and happy to wait.
- 4.3 A local business which provides plaques for Huntingdonshire District Council, including memorial benches, is able to provide alternative options for memorial plaques at a cost of £35 (including engraving).

AGENDA ITEM 6

ATTACHMENT 4

4.4 Urban and Civic/Wintringham have generously donated £450 towards the cost of purchasing plaques this financial year, along with AJ Mills Stone Mason who have donated funds for three plaques.

4.5 To date we have received 14 enquiries for a memorial plaque for the garden, 7 of these have submitted applications which are currently being processed using the existing available funding. The current secured funding will provide 15 memorial plaques.

5. Future Provision

5.1 The Council's policy for the Memorial Garden states that plaques will be provided free of charge. This was based on the generous offer from Cooperative Funeral Services. However, as the plaques which are available are not suitable the Council is having to source appropriate plaques at a cost. The generous donations of local organisations will cover the current plaque applications.

5.2 However, the Council will need to consider future provision and whether it amends its policy to reflect the cost of the memorial plaques for future years, or if it looks to continue to provide free plaques and the costs associated with these.

Option 1 – The Council amends its policy to include that future applications for memorial plaques will be required to fund the cost of £35 for the installation of a plaque.

Option 2 – That the Council continue to offer free memorial plaques in future years in line with the current policy and include funding provision within the 2025-26 budget.

Option 3 – That the Council continue to offer free memorial plaques in future years in line with the current policy and that the Working Group look to secure external grant funding on an annual basis to support these costs. That the Council acknowledge there is a risk funding will not be able to be secured through external donations.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The current available funding sourced by Officers is £525. The funding was sourced as a short-term solution to be able to continue to offer families plaques at no cost in line with the policy at the time they made an application. This funding will provide 15 plaques to families who have suffered the loss of a little one.

6.2 The cost of a brushed stainless-steel plaque with inscription is currently £35.

6.3 Officers predict, given the number of applications received to date, that the available funding will be sufficient to provide plaques for the 2024/2025 financial year.

6.4 Currently no budget has been allocated by the Council to provide the memorial plaques free of charge to applicants for future financial years. If the Council were to do this it would need to consider budgeting £525 in future budgets.

APPENDIX A



ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

FORGET-ME-NOT GARDEN REGULATIONS

The Forget-Me-Not Garden is a designated baby loss memorial garden located within St Neots New Cemetery in St Neots. The garden has seating, landscaping, and planting for residents and visitors to the cemetery to use as a tranquil place to remember the little ones that touched their hearts and lives.

To ensure the area is well maintained and accessible for all visitors, no floral tributes or other items are permitted in or around the garden. Shrubs, trees, or any type of plants may not be planted in the garden. The area will be maintained by the St Neots Town Council staff who have been instructed to remove and dispose of any unauthorised plaques, flowers, plants, and other items placed in the garden.

The rules relating to memorial plaques are to be observed. A copy of these rules and guidelines are posted on the Cemetery notice board, St Neots Town Council Website and are also available from the Council Offices.

Forget-Me-Not Garden Memorial Plaque Criteria

Applications for memorial plaques for remembering little ones in the Forget-Me-Not Garden located in St Neots New Cemetery can be submitted if the following criteria is met:

- The applicant must be a current resident of St Neots or applying on behalf of a current resident of St Neots. Proof of residency must be submitted with the application form.
- The applicant must sign the application form to confirm they have read and understood the Forget-Me-Not Garden regulations.
- The age limit for memorial plaques of lost little ones is from conception to 1 year old.

Forget-Me-Not Garden Memorial Plaques

1. Memorials are provided by means of a plaque affixed to the wooden structures in the garden. The Council will affix memorial plaques on the wooden areas of the garden including the oak sleepers and pergola. These may include the internal roof beams and structure leg supports and wherever the Council may decide in future.
2. All memorials must be arranged through the Council office. St Neots Town Council work in partnership with local businesses to provide memorial plaques with approved inscriptions free of charge. Memorial plaques will subsequently be fixed by the Council.
3. Memorial plaques will be affixed in the next available space on the memorial plaque layout plan. Specific location requests for memorial plaques cannot be considered.

4. The Council reserves the right to refuse any inscription which in its opinion is deemed unsuitable. If the inscription is not in English, an English translation must accompany the application.
5. Memorial plaque inscriptions can have up to 3 lines with a maximum of 30 characters including spaces in any line inclusive of any inscriptions not in English.
6. The Council does not accept any responsibility for the theft of, damage to or deterioration of the plaque.
7. The right to affix a memorial plaque in the Forget-Me-Not Garden is granted for a period of 50 years.
8. Renewal can be made prior to the expiry of the period above on. It is the applicant's responsibility to make application for renewal three months before the expiry date.
9. If the right to affix a memorial is not renewed, then the plaque may be removed from the memorial garden and retained in the office for three months and can be claimed during this time. If not claimed, the plaque will be disposed of.
10. Any unauthorised memorial plaques will be removed. The cost of removal and any required repair works will be recovered from the person responsible.

Generally

The burial authority has adopted these rules to ensure that the long-term maintenance of the memorial garden can be properly and efficiently undertaken to maintain the feelings of serenity and dignity as benefits a memorial garden of this type.

These regulations may be subject to change. Please check with the Town Council offices or see the cemetery notice board.

Forget-Me-Not Garden Memorial Plaque Size

Memorial plaques are silver in colour and made of rust proof chrome effect material.

Memorial Plaque Size:

L=4" x H=2.5"

Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots,
Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH
Telephone: 01480 388911
email: enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk
web: www.stneots-tc.gov.uk



St Neots
Town Council



ST NEOTS LAWN CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS 2024

The purpose of this document is to set out St Neots Town Council Cemetery Rules and Regulations which apply to the provision of the Cemetery services.

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1. Terms of Reference

In this document, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall have the meanings given to them below:

- “Cemetery” means the Cemeteries for which St Neots Town Council is the Burial Authority.
- “Exclusive Right of Burial” means an exclusive right of burial granted in accordance with Rule 7.1.
- “Deed Holder” means the person or persons who have been granted an exclusive right of burial.
- “Right of Burial” means an Exclusive Right of Burial granted in accordance with Rule 10.
- “Interment” means the burial of a body or cremated remains.
- “Memorial” means an object serving as a remembrance and for the purposes of these rules include a headstone, flat memorial tablet, wooden grave markers, temporary grave markers and those memorials permitted under Rule 10
- “Memorial Rules and Regulations” means those rules set out under Rule 10 of this document.
- “Operations Manager” means the person employed by the Council to manage the cemeteries.
- “Operations Team” means the persons employed by the Council to manage the operational requirements for the cemeteries.
- “Register of Burials” means a register of all burials in a cemetery kept and maintained by the Council.
- “Rules and Regulations” means St Neots Town Council rules and regulations for the Lawn Cemetery as set out in this document.
- “Table of Fees” means the list of fees and charges for goods and services provided by St Neots Town Council.
- “Cemeteries Admin/Burial Officer” means the person employed by the Council to manage the cemeteries administration.
- “The Clerk” means the person holding the office of Clerk to the Council or any person appointed by the Council to act on their behalf.
- “The Council” means St Neots Town Council.
- “The Council Office” means the office at St Neots Town Council, The Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH.

2. Cemetery Rules and Regulations

All local authority managed cemeteries are subject to standards and conditions known as Cemetery Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations are designed to inform all cemetery users of the aspects of the management of the cemeteries and the requirements applicable to them.

These Rules and Regulations should be read in conjunction with the statutory requirements contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local

Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 1977 as amended) together with any other relevant legislation that governs this service.

Under LACO 1977 Order, St Neots Town Council is the Burial Authority for the parish of St Neots.

St Neots Town Council (“the Council”) reserves the right to alter, add to, or amend the Cemetery Rules and Regulations from time to time as necessary.

St Neots Town Council does operate other cemeteries for which different Rules and Regulations apply. For further information regarding the other cemeteries please contact the Cemetery Office.

If you need help in interpreting the Rules and Regulations, please contact the Council Office.

3. Burial Authority

The Burial Authority is St Neots Town Council located at Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

All enquiries regarding St Neots Town cemeteries should be made to the Council Offices.

Postal enquiries: Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Telephone enquiries: 01480 388 911

Email enquiries: enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk

Burial Law (Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977) states that none of the following can take place without the written permission of the Burial Authority (Council)

- Burials
- Interment of Ashes
- Scattering of Ashes (Not permitted in our cemeteries)
- Exhumations
- Installation or fixing of a memorial, kerb edge, trees, plants, seats or benches
- Adding an inscription to a memorial
- Renovation of a memorial
- Removal and/or replacement of a memorial.

4. Our Cemetery

The cemetery to which these Rules and Regulations apply is located at:

- St Neots Lawn - Cemetery Road, St Neots, PE19 2BX. [\(click for map\)](#)

St Neots Lawn Cemetery is a designated lawn cemetery, which means that all graves have flat grass surfaces and only headstone or flat tablet type memorials are permitted.

No flower vases may be placed on or around the grave other than in a receptacle approved by the Council as part of a permanent memorial. Shrub, trees and bushes etc may not be planted in the grave and other than Rule 9.5 flowers should be placed only within receptacles that form part of the memorial itself. In the Lawn Cemetery, St Neots Town Council aims to provide a dignified setting, free from any fencing or vases around the memorial stones.

This will keep the area well maintained for the benefit of all visitors to the Cemetery. The burial authority has adopted these regulations in order to ensure that the long-term maintenance of the Cemetery can be properly and efficiently undertaken in order to maintain the feelings of serenity and dignity as benefits Cemeteries of this type.

Our Cemeteries also play host to a variety of wildlife and are key to maximising biodiversity in and around St Neots. As such, our rules ensure sympathetic consideration is given to wildlife, whilst also considering the environmental impact of any activities within our Cemeteries

Such rules are for the long-term care of all grave spaces perhaps for long after those who initially were responsible for such care are able to continue that obligation.

4.1 Cemetery Opening Hours

Other than as set out to the contrary in this Rules and Regulations or in exceptional circumstances, the cemetery is open to visitors every day of the year including weekends and public holidays.

4.2 Cemetery Sections

St Neots Lawn Cemetery provides grave choices for the bereaved.

It is strongly recommended that anyone considering a burial at this cemetery, read and understand the grave choices available to them before making a final decision.

Our cemetery has sections available for:

- Full burial
- Baby section (full burial up to an included 1 year of age).
- Interment of cremated remains

A plan/map of the various sections are available by contacting the Council Offices.

4.3 Conduct in the Cemetery

Children under the age of 12 shall not be permitted in the cemetery unless in the charge of a responsible adult.

All persons must conduct themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner and must

keep to the pathways unless visiting a grave and must not:

- Create any disturbance or nuisance.
- Play loud music (whether live or recorded).
- Interfere with any burial taking place in the cemetery.
- Interfere with any grave, stone or other memorial or floral tribute.
- Play any game or sport in the cemetery.
- Ride a bicycle or use any other recreational equipment.
- Enter the cemetery when it is closed to the public.
- Deposit litter or spent floral tributes other than in the receptacles provided for such purposes.
- Organise or be part of any gathering, other than for the purpose of interment or remembrance.

Any person who contravenes the above shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine as laid out in Article 19 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

In addition, it is an offence under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 to destroy or damage any property (including statues, monuments, memorials, railings or fences) belonging to another within the cemetery.

All persons entering a cemetery will be subject to the Rules and Regulations set out in this document. The Council reserves the right to eject or have ejected from the cemeteries any person who acts in a manner which is deemed by the Council to constitute inappropriate behaviour.

Any unapproved notices will be removed.

Any person found picking or damaging shrubs, trees or flowers in the Cemetery may be prosecuted.

No person, other than an officer of the Council, or a person so authorised by or on behalf of the Council, shall enter or remain in the Cemetery when it is closed to the public.

4.4 Vehicles in the Cemetery

All vehicles not connected with the excavation and maintenance of graves, funeral cortege or the erection or maintenance of memorials, shall not be permitted in the cemetery.

The use of bicycles, e-bicycles, skateboards, roller-blades, roller-skates, scooters and e-scooters are prohibited in the cemeteries.

The Council reserves the right to seek compensation for any damage done by vehicles to graves/memorial/benches or the cemetery (e.g. damage to turf).

4.5 Dogs in the Cemetery

Dogs are not allowed in the Cemeteries unless on a short lead. Owners or persons for the time being in charge of a dog who allow it to foul the Cemetery must clean up any dog faeces and dispose of it in a litter or dog bin away from the site. Failure to clean up after your dog may result in a fine or prosecution.

4.6 Maintenance of Cemetery Grounds

Maintenance of the grounds (e.g. grass cutting, spraying, leaf and litter clearing, upkeep of trees, shrubs, flower beds and hedges) will be carried out by the Council at a frequency determined by the Council. The Council has the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrub, tree, plant or flowers that has become unsightly, overgrown or dangerous and to spray around graves in any area of the cemetery.

The Council reserves the right to place soil or any other material onto a grave space in the cemetery (whether occupied or not) when carrying out maintenance works. Any soil or material placed will be removed and the area re-instated as soon as possible after the work has taken place.

4.7 Removal of floral arrangements and other items from graves

All large floral tributes placed on a grave space following an interment will be removed and disposed of 14 days after the funeral.

The Council has the right to remove items from graves which have perished; pose a hazard; encroach on an adjacent grave space; or have not been authorised and dispose of such items without prior reference to the Deed Holder. This includes flowers, wreaths, weeds, plants, balloons, rubbish, fencing, border edging, glass objects, other decorations and unauthorised items placed on a grave (for further information see section on Memorials).

The cemetery is home to an abundance of wildlife some of which may damage floral tributes. The Council therefore cannot accept responsibility for tributes left displayed in any of its grounds.

The removal of seasonal floral tributes/memorabilia from all areas will commence four weeks after any event (e.g. Christmas Day – removal will begin after 22nd January).

4.8 Water

Water is available for tending graves in the cemetery.

Water containers are not permitted to be left on grave or ashes plots.

Containers may be removed by the Operations Team if these interfere with the maintenance of the cemetery.

4.9 Ballons

Balloons and the releasing of balloons is not permitted in the cemetery to prevent harm to wildlife and the wider environment. It is understandable that you will wish to remember your loved ones in a special way, so you may wish to consider alternatives such as blowing bubbles in the sunlight, scattering petals into the river, planting a tree or shrub in your garden, wildflower seed bombing in your garden, gathering together by jam jar lanterns, or taking a walk through their favourite outdoor spaces.

6. Fees

Various fees and charges are applicable in relation to the cemetery. The Council reviews its fees and charges annually.

Anyone intending to use the cemeteries services is advised to obtain an up-to-date copy of the fees and charges which will be supplied on request.

There are no restrictions on who can be interred within the cemetery provided by this Council; however, the Council has a Scale of Charges which outlines the difference in costs as follows: -

- Resident Fees – apply if the deceased was a St Neots resident or within 3 years of death.
- Former Resident Fees - apply if the deceased lived within St Neots but not within the last 3 years of death.
- Non-Resident fees – apply if the deceased lived outside St Neots.

A copy of the current fees is available on St Neots Town Council website:

[CEMETERIES & BURIALS / St Neots Town Council \(stneots-tc.gov.uk\)](https://www.stneots-tc.gov.uk/CEMETERIES%20&%20BURIALS)

7. Purchasing a Grave

Requests to purchase a grave should be made through the cemetery office. This can be done at the time a funeral is arranged. Purchasing a grave in advance is not permitted.

Purchasing of a grave space will only be allowed in rotation.

7.1 Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial

After a grave is purchased, the Exclusive right of Burial will be granted for a period

of 100 years beginning with the date upon which the grant is made and upon such terms and conditions as the Council deems appropriate.

The fee for an Exclusive Right of Burial is set out in the Table of Fees.

St Neots Town Council retains ownership of the land at all times.

After a grave is purchased, the Council will issue a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial (the Deed) to the purchaser.

The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is a legal document. It does not give ownership of the actual land but allows the Deed Holder to:

- Be buried into the grave if space is available (including cremated remains).
- Authorise further burials into the grave where space is available.
- Place an inscribed memorial onto the grave subject to the Council's regulations on memorials.
- Give permission for additional inscription(s) to be made onto an existing memorial subject to the Council's regulations on memorials.

The Council recommends a maximum of four people hold the Rights to the Exclusive Right of Burial. Please note all owners must give written consent for future interments and memorial applications on the purchased plot.

The holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial may surrender their right at any time in respect of the grave or grave space where the said right has not been exercised (i.e. where no burial has taken place and/or no memorial has been placed on the grave).

If there is more than one holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial, all holders must agree to surrender their right. In all cases the fee repayable will be that of the original fee paid to purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial.

The Deed Holder may transfer the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial during their lifetime to another individual on completion of an Assignment Form and payment of the required fee.

Where a Deed Holder is deceased, and other family members wish to arrange a further burial into the grave space (or install a memorial, add an additional inscription or clean and renovate the memorial) the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will need to be transferred and payment of appropriate fees, before the grave can be further re-opened (or any memorial erected onto the grave or any existing memorial repaired, altered or removed).

Further advice on how this may be possible can be obtained from the Council Office. Depending on individual circumstances, the transfer may require the consent of other family members. If the relevant consents are withheld the ownership cannot be transferred and no further burial will be allowed. Only the next of kin reaching an agreement between themselves can resolve this.

It is the responsibility of the Deed Holder to advise the Council of any change of address.

7.2 Public Graves

A public grave is an unpurchased grave where no Exclusive Right of Burial exists. There is usually no family connection with those buried in this type of grave. No memorial rights exist for a public grave therefore no headstone or memorial can be placed on it without the consent of the Council.

8. Arranging an Interment

All arrangements for an interment must first be made to the Council Office either by telephone, email or in person and confirmed in writing as soon as possible thereafter using the Council's specified form referred to in 8.1 below.

Coffins, caskets and urns for burial must be made from suitable bio-degradable materials such as wood, wicker, cane, bamboo, wool, cardboard etc... and the coffin must be suitably secured.

Wherever possible embalming should not take place if burial is planned at our cemetery due to the impact the process poses to the environment.

A shroud burial is permitted so long as an appropriate board is positioned underneath the deceased for safe lowering into the grave.

8.1 Notice of Interment

Interment requests must be made on the official Notice of Interment application form supplied by the Council and must be delivered to the Council's Office at least five (5) working days prior to the interment. Email copies of the specified form are acceptable.

The forms are available by request or can be downloaded from the Council's website. The details provided on the form must be clear and complete. In the case of a second interment the Notice of Interment application form should be signed by the Deed Holder (except where the deceased is the Deed Holder) and the Deed produced with the Notice of Interment.

The Council will determine the appropriate fees to be paid for the funeral, which must be paid fully in advance unless an alternative arrangement is in place. Payment can be made by BACS, by card payments over the phone or in person or cheques.

The Council reserves the right to delay or cancel any interment where, in its opinion, ownership of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is disputed.

Coffin sizes should be detailed on the Notice of Interment application form. If these are not known at the time of giving notice, they may be supplied later in writing to the cemetery admin. The Council shall not accept liability for any coffin sizes given other than in writing.

If an existing grave is required to be re-opened for the purposes of an interment the person responsible for the funeral shall ensure that before the grave is reopened a completed Notice of Disclaimer form is provided to the Council by the grave owner or if deceased, their representative and if so required by the Council the existing memorial or gravestone and any base, kerbstone and foundation is removed from the Cemetery and delivered to the premises of a registered Memorial Mason. Failure to do so may result in the postponement or cancellation of the interment.

Times of Interment

Interments can take place on any weekday (other than a public holiday).

April to September Bookings

Body

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.00pm

Ashes

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.30pm

October to March Bookings

Body

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm

Ashes

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.30pm

At the discretion of the Town Clerk Interments outside of the above hours may be available by special arrangement and will incur extra fees

The time stated in the Notice of Interment application form is the time the funeral cortege must be at the cemetery.

The Council reserve the right to refuse to accept a notice of interment in special circumstances.

In the event of a confirmed booked interment being cancelled after work on the preparation of the grave has commenced, the Council reserve the right to retain a part of or whole interment fee.

The Council accepts no liability for the consequences arising from the loss or delay in delivery of any notice, Orders or other document sent to the Council by email or post.

8.2 Disposal Certificates

No interment can take place unless the Council has first received the appropriate certification. This is:

- A 'Certificate of Disposal' issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, or
- An 'Order for Burial' issued by the coroner, or
- A 'Certificate of Cremation' issued by the crematorium

This documentation must be submitted to the Council before the interment can take place. Failure to provide the necessary documentation may result in the delay of the interment until the appropriate certification can be produced.

A scanned copy of the document(s) should be sent by email in advance to the Council.

8.3 Religious ceremony

A burial can take place with or without a religious service or ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bereaved family or funeral director to arrange for a Minister, Clergy or other authorised person to officiate at the burial. Any authorised person may officiate at an interment providing the ceremony is conducted with decorum.

8.4 Alterations to funeral arrangements

No alteration to a notice of interment is permitted unless:

- (i) a written request for any such alteration has been submitted to the Council Office and:
- (ii) Such alteration has been agreed by the Clerk/Operations Manager.

Any additional expense incurred by the Council as a result of incorrect information having been supplied will be charged to the person making the application.

9. Graves

Interments will only be allowed in designated areas previously laid out for burial. These areas are identified on the cemetery plans held by the cemetery office.

9.1 Allocation of Graves

When purchasing a grave at the time of death a person will be allocated the next available space. (Normally the next grave space "following on" from the previous interment).

The use of the plot at time of need is subject to ground suitability and weather conditions, for instance if digging becomes unsuitable due to high water table or other factors outside of our control. However, every effort will be made to accommodate family wishes where this is possible.

9.2 Excavations

A grave shall be of sufficient width and length to admit a coffin to the size specified

on the notice of interment. Where possible, a member of the Operations Team will arrange with the funeral service provider to check the coffin measurements before grave preparation starts.

It is the responsibility of the person making the funeral arrangements to provide accurate measurements of the coffin size to ensure the correct size grave is prepared.

The Council reserves the right of passage over all graves and to place on a grave, excavated material from a neighbouring grave (whether or not contained in a soil box) the right to remove headstones and in exceptional circumstances to move material and equipment, including mechanical diggers etc. over graves. However, in undertaking such work, the Council will always exercise due care and afford the level of dignity to the operation which would be expected in a cemetery environment. In addition, the Council will make good any damage that may be done during such work.

Where a temporary wooden marker (cross or stake) is placed on a new grave, the Council has the right to remove the marker if it deteriorates to a poor condition or when a memorial is erected on the grave.

9.3 Type and depth of graves

The types of graves available at the cemetery are lawn, cremated remains and infant graves. Below is an explanation of each type: -

Lawn Graves permits a memorial headstone only. A lawn grave does not permit any planting, kerbs, edging or mounding on the grave or within the grave space. This type of grave can accommodate up to two coffins and up to six cremated remains.

Cremated Remains Graves are for the burial of cremated remains only. A flat tablet memorial is permitted. This type of plot can accommodate two cremated remains.

Baby Graves are reserved for the burial of infants under the age of one year, however, should parents prefer an alternative grave in another burial section, which will enable them to be buried in the future with their child the Council will try and accommodate their needs as long as their requirements are outlined at the time of booking. An infant grave can be purchased for the burial of infant/child cremated remains. Graves in this section will accommodate one burial only.

For any oversized grave, the Council has the right to charge for two grave spaces to facilitate the interment.

Graves shall be excavated to a minimum depth of:

- (i) 6 feet 4 inches (1930 mm) deep (double depth)

- (ii) 4 feet 6 inches (1370 mm) deep (single depth)

Ashes plots can hold up to two caskets and shall be excavated to a minimum depth of:

- (i) 1 foot 6 inches (450 mm)

Scattering of ashes is not permitted in the cemetery.

Funeral Service Providers must carry appropriate insurance, have in place a health and safety policy and comply with other statutory requirements. They must ensure that any contractors employed by them also comply with this requirement.

Funeral Service Providers shall at all times provide sufficient bearers for the carrying and lowering of the coffin into the grave.

Anyone acting as a bearer during an interment does so at their own risk and the Council will accept no responsibility for any resulting accident or injury to a bearer howsoever caused unless such injury is caused by the Council's negligence.

9.4 Re-Instatement

Following the burial taking place, the grave will be filled in and, when the ground has settled, it will be seeded so that the level of the top of the grave corresponds with the level of the surface.

For the interment of cremated remains, the grave will be filled in and a marker slab with a centre hole will be placed on the plot.

Requests for personal involvement during the backfilling process will be considered upon request and should be notified to the Council prior to the burial taking place. Any personal involvement agreed to will be undertaken under the supervision of the Council.

Anyone taking part in backfilling of a grave does so at their own risk and the Council will accept no responsibility for any resulting accident or injury to a person howsoever caused unless such injury is caused by the Council's negligence.

After an interment has taken place, the soil will continue to settle for approximately 9 - 12 months, or longer, depending on the soil conditions.

Graves can also settle unexpectedly during adverse weather and if this happens arrangements will be made to level the grave as soon as possible.

9.5 Items placed on a grave

The Council will not be liable for any loss, damage, theft or vandalism of any item (including memorials) placed onto a grave however caused.

Anything added to a memorial/memorial tablet or grave not permitted under these regulations can be removed without notice by the Council. This includes items in

disrepair or broken. Items will be removed by staff of St Neots Town Council and either disposed of (if broken) or placed in the wooden structure situated in the Lawn Cemetery. Items remaining in the wooden structure will be disposed of periodically throughout the year and if the structure becomes full.

Council staff may remove articles from a grave, without prior consent from the Deed Holder, which, in their opinion, are likely to cause risk, damage or offence or which may interfere with the Council's maintenance of the site.

The following items are not allowed to be placed onto graves and if found will be removed: -

- Unauthorised memorials
- Unauthorised kerb edgings
- Unauthorised trees and plants
- Artificial grass
- Flower vases which are not integral to the memorial headstone
- Glass items or breakable containers
- Stone chippings on graves
- Wire / plastic fencing
- Lantern stands with a pointed top
- Balloons
- string/rope lights

To protect the character of the cemetery and avoid attractions that might encourage undesirable visitors during the hours of darkness, as a general principle solar lamps are permitted but limited to two lamps on any one grave and should be positioned on the plinth of the headstone and should not exceed 30 cm in height.

9.6 Tributes

Floral tributes placed on a grave or ashes plot at the time of the interment, Religious Festivals, significant dates and anniversaries can remain for a period of 14 days. The Council reserves the right to remove any wreaths, flowers flower holders or other receptacles which remain on any grave or ashes plot after 14 days and once seeded. We encourage plastic-and-wire-free tributes where possible to facilitate the composting of flowers.

Please remove all cellophane, plastic wrappings, string, elastic bands or ties before placing flowers in the permitted flower holders.

Tributes may be placed on the base of a permitted memorial or on the concrete beam of a grave with the following restrictions:

- Items must sit within the boundary (the base/plinth) of the permitted memorial and not protrude/overhang onto the grass.
- Items must be made of unbreakable materials, for example, outdoor frost proof pots.

- Items must not be placed on the concrete beam if a permitted memorial has been installed.
- Items placed on the concrete beam of a grave in use, where there is no permitted memorial installed, must not exceed the maximum permitted width of 910mm (3 feet) and depth of 300mm (1 foot) and must not protrude/overhang onto the grass.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed once a permitted memorial has been installed.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed if broken.
- Tributes are permitted on grave spaces that are in use which have not been seeded. Any items placed on the earth must be frost proof and unbreakable and be removed once seeded.

Tributes may be placed on a permitted memorial tablet or on the marker slab of an ashes plot with the following restrictions:

- Items must sit within the perimeter of the marker slab or permitted memorial tablet and not protrude/overhang onto the grass.
- Items must be made of unbreakable materials, for example, outdoor frost proof pots.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed once a permitted memorial has been installed.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed if broken.

10. Memorials

Unless specified these rules apply to graves and ashes plots.

A Deed Holder may apply to the Council to install a memorial following an interment. There is no requirement to allow the ground to settle in the Lawn Cemetery.

Memorials remain the ownership of the grave owner for the duration of the ownership of the grave. The maintenance, repair and safety of the memorial remain the responsibility of the grave owner. It is recognised that many memorials require a considerable financial investment. ***It is strongly recommended that all memorials are insured against accidental damage or vandalism.*** Memorial insurance is available and can be sourced independently or through your memorial masons.

The Council cannot accept any responsibility for the condition of any memorial. The Council cannot accept any responsibility for any damage caused to memorials or graves unless caused by the Council's own negligence.

Memorials are only permitted on graves for which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been acquired and on the application of the deed-holder. A memorial may not be erected on a grave prior to the first interment. Mourners' flowers may be placed on top of the grave after a funeral has taken place. They must not be placed on adjacent or other nearby graves and will be removed by the Council and placed in a more suitable area of the cemetery.

A fee will be charged for the erection of a headstone, tablet memorial, an added inscription, repair or other change.

The brass plaque/wooden cross that is placed on the grave by Funeral Service Providers is considered to be a temporary memorial and should be removed by the stonemason when a permanent memorial is in place.

Permission to maintain a memorial above a grave shall remain for a period **not exceeding 50 years** from the date of burial, after which the owner at the time must apply for an extended period. Failure to obtain permission from the Council could result in the removal of the Memorial subject to Article 10(1), (5) and (7) of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and any cost incurred by the Council shall be met by the grave owner.

Granted memorial permits will expire two years from the date of approval (unless the memorial is erected) and a new application must then be submitted to and approved by the Council.

Any unauthorised memorials are subject to removal by the Council without notice and the cost of removal and disposal shall be charged to the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial or other responsible person.

Memorial headstones must be marked with the grave number on the rear of the memorial.

10. Application to install a memorial

Only stonemasons that have been approved by the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) or British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) will be permitted to install or undertake fixing work on memorials within the St Neots Lawn Cemetery. The stonemason will be required to supply to the cemetery office a copy of their NAMM or BRAMM certification, together with evidence of their Public Liability Insurance for a minimum value of £5million before any permission will be issued by the Council.

An "Application for a Memoria Permit" should be submitted in writing on the appropriate form supplied by the Council, which includes;

- Grave/plot reference number
- A sketch and/or design of the proposed memorial
- The exact dimensions
- The wording and layout of any inscription
- Method statement to include chemicals used for cleaning a memorial
- Signed by the holder/s of the Exclusive Right of Burial

Memorial Masons must not start to make a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial until all details (including sizes) have been submitted to the Council and approval has been granted in writing.

Memorial Masons who start to make or add an inscription to an existing memorial

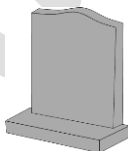

prior to being granted approval does so at their own risk.

Stonemasons, or other persons engaged in erecting a memorial, must perform the work in accordance with these regulations. All stonemasons must be registered with the Town Council. Headstones/plaques must be prepared ready for fixing before being taken into the Cemetery.

All memorials installed or refixed must be fixed in accordance with British Standard 8415.


10. Memorial Sizes

Lawn memorials on graves maybe headstones, books, hearts or other shapes as appropriate.

Section	Memorial Type Permitted		Example	
A, B	A headstone can be installed at the head of the grave space. The remainder of the grave space is seeded.			
Maximum Measurements permitted	Height of Headstone (including base/plinth)	Width of memorial (including base/plinth)	Depth (including base/plinth)	Thickness of headstone
	40" (1000mm)	36" (914mm)	12" (305mm)	4" (102mm)
Planting	Not Permitted			
Additional Items Permitted	Vases must be securely fixed to the base and form an integral part of the overall memorial and must be clearly stated on the memorial application.			

Lawn memorials on ashes plots maybe flat with any integrated vase at least 2" (50mm) from the edge.

Section	Memorial Type Permitted	Example
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Cremated Remains	Flat horizontal tablet			
Maximum Measurements permitted	Height	Width	Depth	Overall Plot Size
	2" (20mm)	18" (457mm)	18" (457mm)	18" x 18"
Planting	Not Permitted			
Additional Items Permitted	Vases must form an integral part of the overall memorial and must be clearly stated on the memorial application.			

10. Memorial Materials

To encourage greater artistic input and reflect the individuality and spirit of the deceased and/or local community, memorials must be constructed from natural stone, slate, granite, sandstone or wooden temporary markers. The Council encourages the use of locally sourced materials to reduce the negative aspect of the carbon footprint relating to distance of travel.

10. Inscriptions

Stonemasons should not start work on a memorial until approval has been granted in writing by the Council.

The Council reserves the right to refuse permission for a memorial where, in its opinion, the proposed inscription could cause offence or is deemed unsuitable.

10. Installing a memorial

The Council has authority to refuse to allow any person to undertake work in the cemetery unless a notice is produced giving the written permission of the Council for such work to be carried out.

Prior to carrying out any work in the cemetery, memorial masons must contact the Operations Manager or Council office to make an appointment. Masons should also provide the permit number given on their memorial works permit.

No memorial shall be installed or placed on a grave without the presence of a member of the Operations Team.

All memorials and materials must be carried into the cemetery in a way that does not cause damage to roads, walkways or grass areas.

A memorial may only be erected on a burial or cremated remains plot within the

cemetery in accordance with the current regulations in force at the time of application.

All memorials installed or refixed must be fixed in accordance with British Standard 8415.

Masons or other persons employed in fixing, painting or restoring memorials will be required to remove any debris, tools and clean up the ground carefully after completing their work. They will be held responsible for any damage caused by them to either the ground or memorials erected within the cemetery and will be charged according to the cost of such damage.

Memorial masons must ensure that the grave and the area around the grave is left in a clean and tidy condition to the satisfaction of the Council.

All memorials, or materials for fixing memorials into position, admitted into the cemetery or permitted to be erected therein shall be so conveyed, erected, remain and removed at the owner's risk and the Council shall not be held responsible for any damage or breakage occurring to, or loss of any such materials howsoever caused.

Any employee or subcontractor of a memorial mason firm breaching any applicable cemetery rule will render themselves liable to such action as the Council thinks necessary to prevent further breaches, including disqualification.

If any memorial fitting or other work to be carried out is in violation of these rules, the memorial or work may be removed at any time by the Council, without notice, at the cost or expense of the person responsible and suitable enforcement action will be taken by the council against those in breach of these rules.

The fixing of memorials is not allowed on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays. Erectors or masons are requested to note that no incidental work will be permitted in the cemetery after 3.30pm, unless agreed otherwise with the Operations Manager.

A signed copy of the memorial permit must be sent to the Council within 7 days of the Memorial Mason completing work in St Neots Lawn Cemetery to confirm the memorial has been fixed in accordance with BS8415 and NAMM Working Code of Practice.

Basic cleaning/washing down and non-specialist cleaning of a memorial may be undertaken by any person with the permission of the owner/their families/heirs. Only the use of a water and standard household dish soap is permitted to prevent any health risk to the public or harm to the environment and wildlife.

10. Removing a memorial

No memorial shall be removed from the cemetery without the permission of the Deed Holder or their representative and without the Council being informed of the whereabouts of the memorial.

When a memorial/kerb/edging is to be removed to allow a second burial to take place it is the responsibility of the Deed Holder or their agent to remove the memorial at their own risk and expense prior to the burial taking place. Removal of the memorial must take place within four working days prior to the booking.

The Council reserves the right to:

- Remove without notice, any unauthorised monument, memorial, stone, kerb, edging, tree, shrub, plant or item erected or placed in the cemetery in contravention of these regulations or where, in its opinion, items reach a condition that could be a health and safety risk.
- Remove a memorial headstone/kerb/edging from a grave to allow for adjacent graves to be excavated. As soon as the funeral has taken place the headstone will be fully re-instated by the Council.

10. Memorial safety

Memorials remain in the ownership of the Deed Holder or their family and must be kept in good repair. Any repairs will be at the expense of the Deed Holder if the memorial needs repairing to a safe condition.

If the Deed Holder cannot be contacted, the council reserves the right to make safe or remove any memorial that is allowed to fall into disrepair or become unsightly or dangerous. The Council will seek reimbursement from the owner or the successor in title for the whole of the costs of these works.

The Council undertakes a program of memorial inspections and has the right to lay down or remove (without notice) memorials it believes to be unsafe. Every effort will be made to contact the Deed Holder if this happens to advise them of the action taken and request repairs be carried out. Notice will be sent to the Deed Holder at their last recorded address and a notice placed onto the memorial.

If a memorial is not repaired by an approved memorial mason after notification has been sent to the Deed Holder, the Council has the right to remove the memorial from the grave space.

11. Exhumation

Once a body or cremated remains have been buried, they can only be removed with permission from the cemetery office and a license granted by the Ministry of Justice. In the case of consecrated ground, consent from the Church of England (called a faculty) will also be required.

Please note exhumation is a complicated legal procedure and the first step in attempting to arrange an exhumation is to contact the cemetery manager who will be able to provide support and assistance.

Any disturbance of human remains is deemed to be an exhumation.

12. Cemetery Records

As soon as is reasonably practicable after a grave has been purchased, or after an interment has taken place, details will be recorded in the burial registers held by the Council and, in the case of new graves, the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will be sent to the purchaser.

The burial registers and cemetery plans may be viewed by the public by prior appointment with the Council office. Searches of the registers and copies of entries may be made for a fee as laid down in the Council's scale of charges and within the confines of the General Data Protections Regulations.

13. Complaints Procedure

Council Complaints procedure - We aim to provide the highest standards with the resources available, however, if for any reason you feel these standards have not been met, we would welcome your complaint (in writing) in an effort to:

- Put things right for you.
- Make sure we do not make the same mistake again.
- Improve the service for everyone.
- If we are unable to resolve your complaint informally, you can lodge a formal complaint in writing to the Town Clerk.

The cemetery staff are required to carry out the burial and grounds maintenance activities in a caring and careful manner. If an incident occurs whilst carrying out their duties, they are required to report it.

Alternatively, if you have reason to think damage has been caused as a result of the operations to either a memorial or item on a grave, please report the matter either by telephone or email to the Council office.

St Neots Town Council Complaints Policy can be found on our website:

[Documents and Policies / St Neots Town Council \(stneots-tc.gov.uk\)](https://www.stneots-tc.gov.uk/Documents-and-Policies/)

14. **Application of the Rules and Regulations to Graves in existence prior to the coming into force of the Policy Document.**

St Neots Town Council acknowledge that there may be some graves within the Cemetery which were already in existence prior to the coming into force of this document and which will not comply with the Rules and Regulations set out in this document. In some circumstances the Council reserves the right to use its discretion to waive some or all of these Rules with respect to such graves on the condition that such graves are well kept and maintained by the owners of the graves and/or their families/next of kin.

DRAFT



St Neots
Town Council



CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS 2024

Eaton Socon, Eynesbury, St Neots New, St Neots Old Cemeteries

The purpose of this document is to set out St Neots Town Council Cemetery Rules and Regulations which apply to the provision of the Cemetery services.

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1. Terms of Reference

In this document, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall have the meanings given to them below:

- “Cemetery” means the Cemeteries for which St Neots Town Council is the Burial Authority.
- “Exclusive Right of Burial” means an exclusive right of burial granted in accordance with Rule 7.1.
- “Deed Holder” means the person or persons who have been granted an exclusive right of burial.
- “Right of Burial” means an Exclusive Right of Burial granted in accordance with Rule 10.
- “Interment” means the burial of a body or cremated remains.
- “Memorial” means an object serving as a remembrance and for the purposes of these rules include a headstone, flat memorial tablet, wooden grave markers, temporary grave markers and those memorials permitted under Rule 10
- “Memorial Rules and Regulations” means those rules set out under Rule 10 of this document.
- “Operations Manager” means the person employed by the Council to manage the cemeteries.
- “Operations Team” means the persons employed by the Council to manage the operational requirements for the cemeteries.
- “Register of Burials” means a register of all burials in a cemetery kept and maintained by the Council.
- “Rules and Regulations” means St Neots Town Council rules and regulations for Eaton Socon, Eynesbury Old and New and St Neots Old and New cemeteries as set out in this document.
- “Table of Fees” means the list of fees and charges for goods and services provided by St Neots Town Council.
- “Cemeteries Admin/Burial Officer” means the person employed by the Council to manage the cemeteries administration.
- “The Clerk” means the person holding the office of Clerk to the Council or any person appointed by the Council to act on their behalf.
- “The Council” means St Neots Town Council.
- “The Council Office” means the office at St Neots Town Council, The Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH.

2. Cemetery Rules and Regulations

All local authority managed cemeteries are subject to standards and conditions known as Cemetery Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations are designed to inform all cemetery users of the aspects of the management of the cemeteries and the requirements applicable to them.

These Rules and Regulations should be read in conjunction with the statutory requirements contained within the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 1977 as amended) together with any other relevant legislation that governs this service.

Under LACO 1977 Order, St Neots Town Council is the Burial Authority for the parish of St Neots.

St Neots Town Council (“the Council”) reserves the right to alter, add to, or amend the Cemetery Rules and Regulations from time to time as necessary.

St Neots Town Council does operate other cemeteries for which different Rules and Regulations apply. For further information regarding the other cemeteries please contact the Cemetery Office.

If you need help in interpreting the Rules and Regulations, please contact the Council Office.

3. Burial Authority

The Burial Authority is St Neots Town Council located at Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

All enquiries regarding St Neots Town cemeteries should be made to the Council Offices.

Postal enquiries: Council Offices, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Telephone enquiries: 01480 388 911

Email enquiries: enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk

Burial Law (Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977) states that none of the following can take place without the written permission of the Burial Authority (Council)

- Burials
- Interment of Ashes
- Scattering of Ashes (Not permitted in our cemeteries)
- Exhumations
- Installation or fixing of a memorial, kerb edge, trees, plants, seats or benches
- Adding an inscription to a memorial
- Renovation of a memorial
- Removal and/or replacement of a memorial.

4. Our Cemeteries

The cemetery to which these Rules and Regulations apply are located at:

- St Neots (New) – Cemetery Road, St Neots ([click for map](#))
- St Neots (Old) – Cemetery Road, St Neots ([click for map](#))
- Eynesbury – Howitts Lane, Eynesbury ([click for map](#))
- Eynesbury (Old) - School Lane, Eynesbury, St Neots ([click for map](#))
- Eaton Socon – Little End Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots ([click for map](#))

The cemeteries listed above are traditional cemeteries, which means that all graves have either flat grass surfaces and headstone, footstone, kerb sets, cover slabs or wedge and flat tablet type memorials are permitted.

Shrub, trees and bushes etc may not be planted in the grave and flowers should be placed only within receptacles that form part of the memorial itself or within the boundaries of kerb set memorial.

Our Cemeteries also play host to a variety of wildlife and are key to maximising biodiversity in and around St Neots. As such, our rules ensure sympathetic consideration is given to

wildlife, whilst also considering the environmental impact of any activities within our Cemeteries.

Such rules are for the long-term care of all grave spaces perhaps for long after those who initially were responsible for such care are able to continue that obligation.

4.1 Cemetery Opening Hours

Other than as set out to the contrary in this Rules and Regulations or in exceptional circumstances, the cemeteries are open to visitors every day of the year including weekends and public holidays.

4.2 Cemetery Sections

The cemeteries provide grave choices for the bereaved. Some of our cemeteries are closed which means grave choice are not possible.

It is strongly recommended that anyone considering a burial at our cemeteries, read and understand the grave choices available to them before making a final decision.

Our cemeteries have the following sections available:

- St Neots (New) Closed
Burial- pre-purchased/re-open only
Interment of cremated remains - pre-purchased/re-open only
- St Neots (Old) Closed
Burial - pre-purchased/re-open only
Interment of cremated remains - pre-purchased/re-open only
- Eynesbury (New)
Burial – single depth only (limited availability)
Interment of cremated remains (limited availability)
- Eynesbury (Old) Closed
Burial - pre-purchased/re-open only
Interment of cremated remains - pre-purchased/re-open only
- Eaton Socon
Burial - pre-purchased/re-open only
Interment of cremated remains

A plan/map of the various sections are available by contacting the Council Offices.

4.3 Conduct in the Cemetery

Children under the age of 12 shall not be permitted in the Cemetery unless in the charge of a responsible adult.

All persons must conduct themselves in a decent, quiet and orderly manner and must keep to the pathways unless visiting a grave and must not:

- Create any disturbance or nuisance.
- Play loud music (whether live or recorded).

- Interfere with any burial taking place in the cemetery.
- Interfere with any grave, stone or other memorial or floral tribute.
- Play any game or sport in the cemetery.
- Ride a bicycle or use any other recreational equipment.
- Enter the cemetery when it is closed to the public.
- Deposit litter or spent floral tributes other than in the receptacles provided for such purposes.
- Organise or be part of any gathering, other than for the purpose of interment or remembrance.

Any person who contravenes the above shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine as laid out in Article 19 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.

In addition, it is an offence under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 to destroy or damage any property (including statues, monuments, memorials, railings or fences) belonging to another within the cemetery.

All persons entering a cemetery will be subject to the Rules and Regulations set out in this document. The Council reserves the right to eject or have ejected from the cemeteries any person who acts in a manner which is deemed by the Council to constitute inappropriate behaviour.

Any unapproved notices will be removed.

Any person found picking or damaging shrubs, trees or flowers in the Cemetery may be prosecuted.

No person, other than an officer of the Council, or a person so authorised by or on behalf of the Council, shall enter or remain in the Cemetery when it is closed to the public

4.4 Vehicles in the Cemetery

All vehicles not connected with the excavation and maintenance of graves, funeral cortege or the erection or maintenance of memorials, shall not be permitted in the cemetery. The use of bicycles, e-bicycles, skateboards, roller-blades, roller-skates, scooters and e-scooters are prohibited in the cemeteries.

The Council reserves the right to seek compensation for any damage done by vehicles to graves/memorial/benches or the cemetery (e.g. damage to turf).

4.5 Dogs in the Cemetery

Dogs are not allowed in the Cemeteries unless on a short lead. Owners or persons for the time being in charge of a dog who allow it to foul the Cemeteries must clean up any dog faeces and dispose of it in a litter or dog bin away from the site. Failure to clean up after your dog may result in a fine or prosecution.

4.6 Maintenance of Cemetery Grounds

Maintenance of the grounds (e.g. grass cutting, spraying, leaf and litter clearing, upkeep of trees, shrubs, flower beds and hedges) will be carried out by the Council at a frequency determined by the Council. The Council has the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrub, tree, plant or flowers that has become unsightly, overgrown or dangerous and to spray around graves in any area of the cemeteries.

The Council reserves the right to place soil or any other material onto a grave space in the cemeteries (whether occupied or not) when carrying out maintenance works. Any soil or material placed will be removed and the area re-instated as soon as possible after the work has taken place.

4.7 Removal of floral arrangements and other items from graves

All large floral tributes placed on a grave space following an interment will be removed and disposed of 14 days after the funeral.

The Council has the right to remove items from graves which have perished; pose a hazard; encroach on an adjacent grave space; or have not been authorised and dispose of such items without prior reference to the Deed Holder. This includes balloons, rubbish, fencing, border edging, glass objects, other decorations and unauthorised items placed on a grave (for further information see section on Memorials).

The cemetery is home to an abundance of wildlife some of which may damage floral tributes. The Council therefore cannot accept responsibility for tributes left displayed in any of its grounds.

The removal of seasonal floral tributes/memorabilia from all areas will commence four weeks after any event (e.g. Christmas Day – removal will begin after 22nd January).

4.8 Water

Water is available for tending graves in the cemetery.

Water containers are not permitted to be left on grave or ashes plots.

Containers may be removed by the Operations Team if these interfere with the maintenance of the cemeteries.

4.9 Ballons

Balloons and the releasing of balloons is not permitted in our cemeteries to prevent harm to wildlife and the wider environment. It is understandable that you will wish to remember your loved ones in a special way, so you may wish to consider alternatives such as blowing bubbles in the sunlight, scattering petals into the river, planting a tree or shrub in your garden, wildflower seed bombing in your garden, gathering together by jam jar lanterns, or taking a walk through their favourite outdoor spaces.

5. Fees

Various fees and charges are applicable in relation to the cemeteries. The Council reviews its fees and charges annually.

Anyone intending to use the cemeteries services is advised to obtain an up-to-date copy of the fees and charges which will be supplied on request.

There are no restrictions on who can be interred within the cemeteries provided by this Council;

however, the Council has a Scale of Charges which outlines the difference in costs as follows: -

- Resident Fees – apply if the deceased was a St Neots resident or within 3 years of death.
- Former Resident Fees - apply if the deceased lived within St Neots but not within the last 3 years of death.
- Non-Resident fees – apply if the deceased lived outside St Neots.

A copy of the current fees is available on St Neots Town Council website:

[CEMETERIES & BURIALS | St Neots Town Council \(stneots-tc.gov.uk\)](http://stneots-tc.gov.uk)

6. Purchasing a Grave

Requests to purchase a grave should be made through the cemetery office. This can be done at the time a funeral is arranged. Purchasing a grave in advance is not permitted.

Purchasing of a grave space will only be allowed in rotation.

6.1 Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial

After a grave is purchased, the Exclusive right of Burial will be granted for a period of 100 years beginning with the date upon which the grant is made and upon such terms and conditions as the Council deems appropriate.

The fee for an Exclusive Right of Burial is set out in the Table of Fees.

St Neots Town Council retains ownership of the land at all times.

After a grave is purchased, the Council will issue a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial (the Deed) to the purchaser.

The Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is a legal document. It does not give ownership of the actual land but allows the Deed Holder to:

- Be buried into the grave if space is available (including cremated remains).
- Authorise further burials into the grave where space is available.
- Place an inscribed memorial onto the grave subject to the Council's regulations on memorials.
- Give permission for additional inscription(s) to be made onto an existing memorial subject to the Council's regulations on memorials.

The Council recommends a maximum of four people hold the Rights to the Exclusive Right of Burial. Please note all owners must give written consent for future interments and memorial applications on the purchased plot.

The holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial may surrender their right at any time in respect of the grave or grave space where the said right has not been exercised (i.e. where no burial has taken place and/or no memorial has been placed on the grave).

If there is more than one holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial, all holders must agree to surrender their right. In all cases the fee repayable will be that of the original fee paid to purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial.

The Deed Holder may transfer the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial during their lifetime to another individual on completion of an Assignment Form and payment of the required fee.

Where a Deed Holder is deceased, and other family members wish to arrange a further burial into the grave space (or install a memorial, add an additional inscription or clean and renovate the memorial) the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will need to be transferred and payment of appropriate fees, before the grave can be further re-opened (or any memorial erected onto the grave or any existing memorial repaired, altered or removed).

Further advice on how this may be possible can be obtained from the Council Office. Depending on individual circumstances, the transfer may require the consent of other family members. If the relevant consents are withheld the ownership cannot be transferred and no further burial will be allowed. Only the next of kin reaching an agreement between themselves can resolve this.

It is the responsibility of the Deed Holder to advise the Council of any change of address.

6.2 Public Graves

A public grave is an unpurchased grave where no Exclusive Right of Burial exists. There is usually no family connection with those buried in this type of grave. No memorial rights exist for a public grave therefore no headstone or memorial can be placed on it without the consent of the Council.

7. Arranging an Interment

All arrangements for an interment must first be made to the Council Office either by telephone, email or in person and confirmed in writing as soon as possible thereafter using the Council's specified form referred to in 8.1 below.

Coffins, caskets and urns for burial must be made from suitable bio-degradable materials such as wood, wicker, cane, bamboo, wool, cardboard etc... and the coffin must be suitably secured.

Wherever possible embalming should not take place if burial is to take place at in our cemeteries due to the impact the process poses to the environment.

A shroud burial is permitted so long as an appropriate board is positioned underneath the deceased for safe lowering into the grave.

7.1 Notice of Interment

Interment requests must be made on the official Notice of Interment application form supplied by the Council and must be delivered to the Council's Office at least five (5) working days prior to the interment. Email copies of the specified form are acceptable.

The forms are available by request or can be downloaded from the Council's website. The details provided on the form must be clear and complete. In the case of a second interment the Notice of Interment application form should be signed by the Deed Holder (except where the deceased is the Deed Holder) and the Deed produced with the Notice of Interment.

The Council will determine the appropriate fees to be paid for the funeral, which must be

paid fully in advance unless an alternative arrangement is in place. Payment can be made by BACS, by card payments over the phone or in person or cheques.

The Council reserves the right to delay or cancel any interment where, in its opinion, ownership of the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial is disputed.

Coffin sizes should be detailed on the Notice of Interment application form. If these are not known at the time of giving notice, they may be supplied later in writing to the cemetery admin. The Council shall not accept liability for any coffin sizes given other than in writing.

If an existing grave is required to be re-opened for the purposes of an interment the person responsible for the funeral shall ensure that before the grave is reopened a completed Notice of Disclaimer form is provided to the Council by the grave owner or if deceased, their representative and if so required by the Council the existing memorial or gravestone and any base, kerbstone and foundation is removed from the Cemetery and delivered to the premises of a registered Memorial Mason. Failure to do so may result in the postponement or cancellation of the interment.

Times of Interment

Interments can take place on any weekday (other than a public holiday).

April to September Bookings

Body

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.00pm

Ashes

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.30pm

October to March Bookings

Body

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm

Ashes

Monday - Friday 10.00am to 2.30pm

At the discretion of the Town Clerk Interments outside of the above hours may be available by special arrangement and will incur extra fees

The time stated in the Notice of Interment application form is the time the funeral cortege must be at the cemetery.

The Council reserve the right to refuse to accept a notice of interment in special circumstances.

In the event of a confirmed booked interment being cancelled after work on the preparation of the grave has commenced, the Council reserve the right to retain a part of or whole interment fee.

The Council accepts no liability for the consequences arising from the loss or delay in delivery of any notice, Orders or other document sent to the Council by email or post.

7.2 Disposal Certificates

No interment can take place unless the Council has first received the appropriate certification. This is:

- A 'Certificate of Disposal' issued by the Registrar of Births and Deaths, or
- An 'Order for Burial' issued by the Coroner, or
- A 'Certificate of Cremation' issued by the crematorium

This documentation must be submitted to the Council before the interment can take place. Failure to provide the necessary documentation may result in the delay of the interment until the appropriate certification can be produced.

A scanned copy of the document(s) should be sent by email in advance to the Council.

7.3 Religious ceremony

A burial can take place with or without a religious service or ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bereaved family or funeral director to arrange for a Minister, Clergy or other authorised person to officiate at the burial. Any authorised person may officiate at an interment providing the ceremony is conducted with decorum.

7.4 Alterations to funeral arrangements

No alteration to a notice of interment is permitted unless:

- (i) a written request for any such alteration has been submitted to the Council Office and:
- (ii) Such alteration has been agreed by the Clerk/Operations Manager.

Any additional expense incurred by the Council as a result of incorrect information having been supplied will be charged to the person making the application.

8. Graves

Interments will only be allowed in designated areas previously laid out for burial. These areas are identified on the cemetery plans held by the cemetery office.

8.1 Allocation of Graves

Eynesbury Old, St Neots Old and St Neots New Cemeteries are closed cemeteries which means that there are no available grave spaces for interments other than those that have been pre-purchased or to be re-opened for an additional interment.

When purchasing a grave, a person will be allocated the next available space. (Normally the next grave space "following on" from the previous interment).

The use of the plot at time of need is subject to ground suitability and weather conditions, for instance if digging becomes unsuitable due to high water table or other factors outside of our control. However, every effort will be made to accommodate family wishes where this is possible.

8.2 Excavations

A grave shall be of sufficient width and length to admit a coffin to the size specified on the notice of interment. Where possible, a member of the Operations Team will arrange with the funeral service provider to check the coffin measurements before grave preparation

starts.

It is the responsibility of the person making the funeral arrangements to provide accurate measurements of the coffin size to ensure the correct size grave is prepared.

The Council reserves the right of passage over all graves and to place on a grave, excavated material from a neighbouring grave (whether or not contained in a soil box) the right to remove headstones and in exceptional circumstances to move material and equipment, including mechanical diggers etc. over graves. However, in undertaking such work, the Council will always exercise due care and afford the level of dignity to the operation which would be expected in a cemetery environment. In addition, the Council will make good any damage that may be done during such work.

Where a temporary wooden marker (cross or stake) is placed on a new grave, the Council has the right to remove the marker if it deteriorates to a poor condition or when a memorial is erected on the grave.

8.3 Type and depth of graves

The types of graves available at the cemeteries are traditional and cremated remains. Below is an explanation of each type:

Traditional Graves are offered for those who want greater choice over the design of the memorial, or do not want people to walk over the grave. The grave can be surrounded by kerbs or have a cover slab.

Cremated Remains Graves are for the burial of cremated remains only. A headstone, wedge tablet or flat tablet memorial are permitted. Kerbs, edging and other surrounds are not permitted. This type of plot can accommodate two cremated remains.

For any oversized grave, the Council has the right to charge for two grave spaces to facilitate the interment.

Graves shall be excavated to a minimum depth of:

- (i) 6 feet 4 inches (1930 mm) deep (double depth)
- (ii) 4 feet 6 inches (1370 mm) deep (single depth)

Ashes plots can hold up to two caskets and shall be excavated to a minimum depth of:

- (i) 1 foot 6 inches (450 mm)

Scattering of ashes is not permitted in any of the cemeteries.

Funeral Service Providers must carry appropriate insurance, have in place a health and safety policy and comply with other statutory requirements. They must ensure that any contractors employed by them also comply with this requirement.

Funeral Service Providers shall at all times provide sufficient bearers for the carrying and lowering of the coffin into the grave.

Anyone acting as a bearer during an interment does so at their own risk and the Council will accept no responsibility for any resulting accident or injury to a bearer howsoever

caused unless such injury is caused by the Council’s negligence.

8.4 Re-Instatement

Following the burial taking place, the grave will be filled in and, when the ground has settled, it will be seeded so that the level of the top of the grave corresponds with the level of the surface.

For the interment of cremated remains, the grave will be filled in and a marker slab with a centre hole will be place on the plot.

Requests for personal involvement during the backfilling process will be considered upon request and should be notified to the Council prior to the burial taking place. Any personal involvement agreed to will be undertaken under the supervision of the Council.

Anyone taking part in backfilling of a grave does so at their own risk and the Council will accept no responsibility for any resulting accident or injury to a person howsoever caused unless such injury is caused by the Council’s negligence.

After an interment has taken place, the soil will continue to settle for approximately 9 - 12 months, or longer, depending on the soil conditions.

Graves can also settle unexpectedly during adverse weather and if this happens arrangements will be made to level the grave as soon as possible.

8.5 Items placed on a grave

The Council will not be liable for any loss, damage, theft or vandalism of any item (including memorials) placed onto a grave however caused.

Anything added to a memorial/memorial tablet or grave not permitted under these regulations can be removed without notice by the Council. This includes items in disrepair or broken. Items will be removed by staff of St Neots Town Council and either disposed of (if broken).

Council staff may remove articles from a grave, without prior consent from the Deed Holder, which, in their opinion, are likely to cause risk, damage or offence or which may interfere with the Council’s maintenance of the site

The following items are not allowed to be placed onto graves and if found will be removed: -

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised memorials • Unauthorised kerb edgings • Unauthorised trees and plants • Artificial grass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass items or breakable containers • Wire / plastic fencing • Lantern stands with a pointed top • Balloons • String/rope lights
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To protect the character of the cemetery and avoid attractions that might encourage undesirable visitors during the hours of darkness, as a general principle solar lamps are permitted but limited to two lamps on any one grave and should be positioned on the plinth of the headstone and should not exceed 30 cm in height.

8.6 Tributes

Floral tributes placed on a grave or ashes plot at the time of the interment, Religious Festivals, significant dates and anniversaries can remain for a period of 14 days. The Council reserves the right to remove any wreaths, flowers flower holders or other receptacles which remain on any grave or ashes plot after 14 days and once seeded. We encourage plastic-and-wire-free tributes where possible to facilitate the composting of flowers.

Please remove all cellophane, plastic wrappings, string, elastic bands or ties before placing flowers in the permitted flower holders.

Tributes may be placed on the base of a permitted memorial or within a kerb set surround of a grave with the following restrictions:

- Items must sit within the boundary (the base/plinth) of the permitted memorial or kerb set surround and not protrude/overhang onto the grass.
- Items must be made of unbreakable materials, for example, outdoor frost proof pots.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed once a permitted memorial has been installed.
- Temporary crosses/markers must be removed if broken.
- Tributes are permitted on grave spaces that are in use which have not been seeded. Any items placed on the earth must be frost proof and unbreakable and be removed once seeded.

9. Memorials

Unless specified these rules apply to graves and ashes plots.

A Deed Holder may apply to the Council to install a memorial following an interment. There is a requirement to allow the ground to settle in the Cemeteries, usually 12 months.

Memorials remain the ownership of the grave owner for the duration of the ownership of the grave. The maintenance, repair and safety of the memorial remain the responsibility of the grave owner. It is recognised that many memorials require a considerable financial investment. ***It is strongly recommended that all memorials are insured against accidental damage or vandalism.*** Memorial insurance is available and can be sourced independently or through your memorial masons.

The Council cannot accept any responsibility for the condition of any memorial.

The Council cannot accept any responsibility for any damage caused to memorials or graves unless caused by the Council's own negligence.

Memorials are only permitted on graves for which the Exclusive Right of Burial has been acquired and on the application of the deed-holder. A memorial may not be erected on a grave prior to the first interment. Mourners' flowers may be placed on top of the grave after a funeral has taken place. They must not be placed on adjacent or other nearby graves and will be removed by the Council and placed in a more suitable area of the cemetery.

A fee will be charged for the erection of a headstone, tablet memorial, an added inscription, repair or other change.

The brass plaque/wooden cross that is placed on the grave by Funeral Service Providers is

considered to be a temporary memorial and should be removed by the stonemason when a permanent memorial is in place.

Permission to maintain a memorial above a grave shall remain for a period **not exceeding 50 years** from the date of burial, after which the owner at the time must apply for an extended period. Failure to obtain permission from the Council could result in the removal of the Memorial subject to Article 10(1), (5) and (7) of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and any cost incurred by the Council shall be met by the grave owner.

Granted memorial permits will expire two years from the date of approval (unless the memorial is erected) and a new application must then be submitted to and approved by the Council.

Any unauthorised memorials are subject to removal by the Council without notice and the cost of removal and disposal shall be charged to the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial or other responsible person.

Memorial headstones must be marked with the grave number on the rear of the memorial.

9.1 Application to install a memorial

Only stonemasons that have been approved by the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) or British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) will be permitted to install or undertake fixing work on memorials within the Cemeteries. The stonemason will be required to supply to the cemetery office a copy of their NAMM or BRAMM certification, together with evidence of their Public Liability Insurance for a minimum value of £5million before any permission will be issued by the Council.

An "Application for a Memoria Permit" should be submitted in writing on the appropriate form supplied by the Council, which includes;

- Grave/plot reference number
- A sketch and/or design of the proposed memorial
- The exact dimensions
- The wording of any inscription
- Method statement to include chemicals used for cleaning a memorial
- Signed by the holder/s of the Exclusive Right of Burial

Memorial Masons must not start to make a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial until all details (including sizes) have been submitted to the Council and approval has been granted in writing.

Memorial Masons who start to make or add an inscription to an existing memorial prior to being granted approval does so at their own risk.

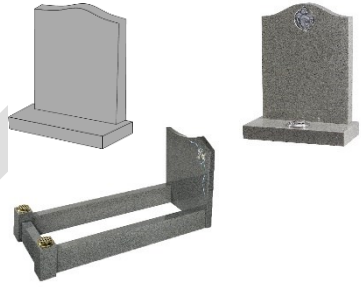
Stonemasons, or other persons engaged in erecting a memorial, must perform the work in accordance with these regulations. All stonemasons must be registered with the Town Council. Headstones/plaques must be prepared ready for fixing before being taken into the Cemetery.

All memorials installed or refixed must be fixed in accordance with British Standard 8415.


9.2 Memorial Sizes

Memorials on traditional graves maybe headstones, books, hearts or other shapes as appropriate. They may also include a kerb set surround, cover slab, post/vases and footstone. Due to the age of some of our cemeteries, the space available for memorials may vary. We strongly advise that you contact the Council in the first instance for confirmation of the maximum size memorial that can be accommodated.

Memorials

Section	Memorial Type Permitted		Example	
All sections	Memorial designs can include a headstone at the head of the grave space, kerb set surround, cover slab and additional memorial items.			
Maximum Measurements permitted	Height of Headstone (including base/plinth)	Width of memorial (including base/plinth)	Length of kerb set surround/cover slab	Thickness of headstone
	36" (900mm)	27.5" (700mm)	Length of grave space 77" (1955mm)	4" (102mm)
Planting	Not Permitted			
Additional Items Permitted	Vases must be securely fixed to the base and or form an integral part of the overall memorial and must be clearly stated on the memorial application.			

Cremated Remains Memorials

Section	Memorial Type Permitted		Example	
Cremated Remains	Memorial designs can include a headstone at the head of the grave space.			
Maximum Measurements permitted	Height of Headstone (including base/plinth)	Width of memorial (including base/plinth)	Depth of tablet memorial	Depth of headstone memorial (including base/plinth)
	36" (900mm)	27.5" (700mm)	18" (457MM)	12" (305mm)
Planting	Not Permitted			
Additional Items Permitted	Vases must form an integral part of the overall memorial and must be clearly stated on the memorial application.			

9.3 Memorial Materials

To encourage greater artistic input and reflect the individuality and spirit of the deceased and/or local community, memorials must be constructed from natural stone, slate, granite, sandstone or wooden temporary markers. The Council encourages the use of locally

sourced materials to reduce the negative aspect of the carbon footprint relating to distance of travel.

9.4 Inscriptions

Stonemasons should not start work on a memorial until approval has been granted in writing by the Council.

The Council reserves the right to refuse permission for a memorial where, in its opinion, the proposed inscription could cause offence or is deemed unsuitable.

9.5 Installing a memorial

The Council has authority to refuse to allow any person to undertake work in the cemetery unless a notice is produced giving the written permission of the Council for such work to be carried out.

Prior to carrying out any work in the cemetery, memorial masons must contact the Operations Manager or Council office to make an appointment. Masons should also provide the permit number given on their memorial works permit.

No memorial shall be installed or placed on a grave without the presence of a member of the Operations Team.

All memorials and materials must be carried into the cemetery in a way that does not cause damage to roads, walkways or grass areas.

A memorial may only be erected on a burial or cremated remains plot within the cemetery in accordance with the current regulations in force at the time of application.

All memorials installed or refixed must be fixed in accordance with British Standard 8415. Suitable foundations must be provided to prevent memorials from sinking or tilting. All memorials erected in the cemetery must comply with BS8415 and the BRAMM/NAMM Recommended Code of Practice.

Masons or other persons employed in fixing, painting or restoring memorials will be required to remove any debris, tools and clean up the ground carefully after completing their work. They will be held responsible for any damage caused by them to either the ground or memorials erected within the cemetery and will be charged according to the cost of such damage.

Memorial masons must ensure that the grave and the area around the grave is left in a clean and tidy condition to the satisfaction of the Council.

All memorials, or materials for fixing memorials into position, admitted into the cemetery or permitted to be erected therein shall be so conveyed, erected, remain and removed at the owner's risk and the Council shall not be held responsible for any damage or breakage occurring to, or loss of any such materials howsoever caused.

Any employee or subcontractor of a memorial mason firm breaching any applicable cemetery rule will render themselves liable to such action as the Council thinks necessary to prevent further breaches, including disqualification.

If any memorial fitting or other work to be carried out is in violation of these rules, the memorial or work may be removed at any time by the Council, without notice, at the cost or expense of the person responsible and suitable enforcement action will be taken by the council against those in breach of these rules.

The fixing of memorials is not allowed on Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays. Erectors or masons are requested to note that no incidental work will be permitted in the cemetery after 3.30pm, unless agreed otherwise with the Operations Manager.

A signed copy of the memorial permit must be sent to the Council within 7 days of the Memorial Mason completing work in the Cemeteries to confirm the memorial has been fixed in accordance with BS8415 and NAMM Working Code of Practice.

Basic cleaning/washing down and non-specialist cleaning of a memorial may be undertaken by any person with the permission of the owner/their families/heirs. Only the use of a water and standard household dish soap is permitted to prevent any health risk to the public or harm to the environment and wildlife.

9.6 Removing a memorial

No memorial shall be removed from the cemetery without the permission of the Deed Holder or their representative and without the Council being informed of the whereabouts of the memorial.

When a memorial/kerb/edging is to be removed to allow a second burial to take place it is the responsibility of the Deed Holder or their agent to remove the memorial at their own risk and expense prior to the burial taking place. Removal of the memorial must take place within four working days prior to the booking.

The Council reserves the right to:

- Remove without notice, any unauthorised monument, memorial, stone, kerb, edging, tree, shrub, plant or item erected or placed in the cemetery in contravention of these regulations or where, in its opinion, items reach a condition that could be a health and safety risk.
- Remove a memorial headstone/kerb/edging from a grave to allow for adjacent graves to be excavated. As soon as the funeral has taken place the headstone will be fully re-instated by the Council.

9.7 Memorial safety

Memorials remain in the ownership of the Deed Holder or their family and must be kept in good repair. Any repairs will be at the expense of the Deed Holder if the memorial needs repairing to a safe condition.

If the Deed Holder cannot be contacted, the council reserves the right to make safe or remove any memorial that is allowed to fall into disrepair or become unsightly or dangerous. The Council will seek reimbursement from the owner or the successor in title for the whole of the costs of these works.

The Council undertakes a program of memorial inspections and has the right to lay down or remove (without notice) memorials it believes to be unsafe. Every effort will be made to contact the Deed Holder if this happens to advise them of the action taken and request repairs be carried out. Notice will be sent to the Deed Holder at their last recorded address and a notice placed onto the memorial.

If a memorial is not repaired by an approved memorial mason after notification has been sent to the Deed Holder, the Council has the right to remove the memorial from the grave space.

10. Exhumation

Once a body or cremated remains have been buried, they can only be removed with permission from the cemetery office and a license granted by the Ministry of Justice. In the case of consecrated ground, consent from the Church of England (called a faculty) will also be required.

Please note exhumation is a complicated legal procedure and the first step in attempting to arrange an exhumation is to contact the cemetery manager who will be able to provide support and assistance.

Any disturbance of human remains is deemed to be an exhumation.

11. Cemetery Records

As soon as is reasonably practicable after a grave has been purchased, or after an interment has taken place, details will be recorded in the burial registers held by the Council and, in the case of new graves, the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will be sent to the purchaser.

The burial registers and cemetery plans may be viewed by the public by prior appointment with the Council office. Searches of the registers and copies of entries may be made for a fee as laid down in the Council's scale of charges and within the confines of the General Data Protections Regulations.

12. Complaints Procedure

Council Complaints procedure - We aim to provide the highest standards with the resources available, however, if for any reason you feel these standards have not been met, we would welcome your complaint (in writing) in an effort to:

- Put things right for you.
- Make sure we do not make the same mistake again.
- Improve the service for everyone.
- If we are unable to resolve your complaint informally, you can lodge a formal complaint in writing to the Town Clerk.

The cemetery staff are required to carry out the burial and grounds maintenance activities in a caring and careful manner. If an incident occurs whilst carrying out their duties, they are required to report it.

Alternatively, if you have reason to think damage has been caused as a result of the operations to either a memorial or item on a grave, please report the matter either by telephone or email to the Council office.

St Neots Town Council Complaints Policy can be found on our website:

[Documents and Policies / St Neots Town Council \(stneots-tc.gov.uk\)](https://www.stneots-tc.gov.uk/Documents-and-Policies/)

13. Application of the Rules and Regulations to Graves in existence prior to the coming into force of the Policy Document.

St Neots Town Council acknowledge that there may be some graves within the Cemetery which were already in existence prior to the coming into force of this document and which will not comply with the Rules and Regulations set out in this document. In some circumstances the Council reserves the right to use its discretion to waive some or all of these Rules with respect to such graves on the condition that such graves are well kept and maintained by the owners of the graves and/or their families/next of kin.

DRAFT



St Neots
Town Council

COVER IMAGE TO FOLLOW

POLICY ON THE DEDICATION OF BENCHES AND TREES 2024

The purpose of this document is to set out St Neots Town Council Regulations and Processes Memorial Bench and Trees Rules and Regulations

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 St Neots Town Council supports the needs and principles of allowing memorial benches and trees in its cemeteries, play parks and green spaces. The Council is mindful that these facilities are enjoyed by a wide range of people. Therefore, the Council will ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual benefit of all.
- 1.2 The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances. The policy will be reviewed every four years, and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval.
- 1.3 This policy will be made available to the public and all applicants for memorial benches and trees will be issued with a copy.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 The Council is seeking to ensure it is adopting a clear, measurable and sympathetic approach to the management of its cemeteries, parks and green open spaces and the policy is in place to help ensure that benches have a common appearance, style and size which are appropriate for that location and will not cause offence to others.
- 2.2 The policy will establish responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement. The Council through this policy will endeavor to always offer the highest standard of service in undertaking its management and regulatory responsibility.

3. LOCATION

- 3.1 The Council owns and manages our cemeteries, some play parks and green spaces located within St Neots. There is limited availability for both memorial benches and trees across these locations within St Neots. We can only install benches and plant trees on land that is owned by us.
- 3.2 The Council will limit the number of memorial benches and trees in particular areas so that they shall not detract from the prime purpose of the location. Therefore, the location shall limit the number permitted. The Council reserves the right to refuse applications on this basis. The Council shall specify the type of benches and trees to be installed to be in keeping with the intended location.
- 3.3 Our Cemeteries and green spaces play host to a variety of wildlife and are key to maximising biodiversity in and around St Neots. As such, our rules ensure sympathetic consideration is given to wildlife, whilst also considering the environmental impact of any activities within our Cemeteries and green spaces.

4. CURRENT AVAILABILITY

4.1 Availability for benches and trees is summarised below;

Memorial Benches	Availability	Memorial Trees	Availability
Eaton Socon Cemetery	Limited	Eaton Socon Cemetery	None
Eynesbury Old/New Cemetery	Limited	Eynesbury Old/New Cemetery	None
Eynesbury Green	Limited	Eynesbury Green	None
St Neots Lawn Cemetery	Limited	St Neots Lawn Cemetery	None
St Neots Old/New Cemetery	None	St Neots Old/New Cemetery	None
Brickhills Play Area	TBC	Brickhills Play Area	TBC
Sydney Banks Playing Field	TBC		TBC

4.2 Memorial benches and trees shall be positioned to maximise the benefit and development of an agreed location, but the Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the applicants where possible.

4.3 The installation of benches is carried out all year round however some weather conditions may result in a delay to ensure the ground preparation is completed to standards.

4.4 The planting of memorial trees shall only be carried out between November and March to ensure the most efficient growing conditions.

5. COSTS

5.1 BENCH COSTS

5.1.1 The current approved bench style is a timber Westminster seat with two centralised arms measuring 1800mm. The bench is designed to withstand the heavy usage expected within the public domain and has an approximate lifespan of 20 years.

5.1.2 Please note, the costs listed below are approximate, final prices will be quoted by the supplier once the application has been processed.

5.1.3 Prices are excluding Vat (20%)



5.1.4 Itemised cost

Westminster Seat 1800 iroko planed and sanded finish	£618.00
Stainless steel plaque flush fitting (up to 5 lines/max 36 characters including spaces in any line)	£112.00
Inscription carving on bench (up to 30 characters)	£59.00
Extra characters for carving per letter	£2.50
Bespoke carved design	On request
Delivery Charge	£85.00
Installation Fee	£155.00

5.2 TREE COSTS

5.2.1 Native and fruit trees are the most common types of memorial trees approved by the Council, however requests for other types of trees may be considered by the Council at the time of application.

5.2.2 Memorial trees are supplied with supports and strapping and a two-year watering program to ensure survivability. Once planted there is a two-year replacement guarantee if the tree doesn't take or is vandalised.

5.2.3 The town council charge £200 for the purchase and planting of a native fruit memorial tree, which includes watering and replacement within the two-year guarantee period if required. Costs may vary if other types of trees are requested and approved.

5.2.4 Prices are excluding Vat (20%)

5.2.5 Itemised cost

Tree, supports and strapping	£225
Plaque	Applicant directly funded

6. INSCRIPTIONS

6.1 Bench Plaques

6.1.2 Plaques and or carved inscriptions are requested at the time of applying for a memorial bench.

6.1.3 Inscriptions on a plaque are not restricted, however the Council reserves the right to reject any inscription that it feels is not appropriate for the location or that it feels may cause offence.

6.2 Tree Plaques

6.2.1 Plaques inscriptions are submitted at the time of applying for a memorial tree.

6.2.2 Tree plaques must be either of a silver or brass metal finish and a maximum size of (W) 5" x (H) 3"

- 6.2.3 Inscriptions on a plaque are not restricted, however the Council reserves the right to reject any inscription that it feels is not appropriate for the location or that it feels may cause offence.
- 6.2.4 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the plaque with the approved inscription to the Council. The plaque will be placed on the wooden support structure by Council staff.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 7.1 Applicants should contact the Council to discuss available bench and tree locations. Once a location has been agreed with the Council, an application form will be provided to the applicant.

7.2 Bench Applications

- 7.2.1 Once a completed application has been received and location agreed, a quotation along with plaque/inscription proof/s will be requested from the bench supplier.
- 7.2.2 Once the quotation and proof/s have been agreed by the applicant, an invoice for payment will be issued by the Council with details of payment options.
- 7.2.3 The order will only be placed with the supplier once payment is received and cleared.
- 7.2.4 Orders typically take between 8-12 weeks to be fulfilled by the supplier. Please note that bench production times may vary. The Council accepts no liability if the production and delivery of a bench is delayed.

8. BENCH REGULATIONS

- 8.1 St Neots Town Council reserves the right to install benches where suitable but will where appropriate, accommodate requests.
- 8.2 Once purchased and installed, memorial benches become the property of St Neots Town Council.
- 8.3 Once installed, a bench cannot be repositioned or removed from the site. However, should a bench become unsafe, St Neots Town Council reserves the right to remove immediately in the interest of health and safety until repairs can take place.
- 8.4 Memorial benches will only be treated in line with our standard maintenance program which is every 3 – 4 years and for a maximum of 15 years. After this period, benches will be inspected annually.
- 8.5 Only St Neots Town Council authorised persons are permitted to maintain the memorial bench.

- 8.6 The Council reserves the right to remove any memorial bench that has been damaged and is in the view of the Council beyond economic repair.
- 8.7 The Council will contact the applicant to inform them of any actions taken. It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform the Council of any changes to their details. The Council accepts no liability if they are not able to contact the original applicant.
- 8.8 The Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial bench from vandals, third parties or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance in the bench location.
- 8.9 The Council will not grant applications for memorial benches to pets.
- 8.10 The Council permits a maximum of two flowerpots, one either side of the bench for benches that have been installed on a concrete base and where there is space. Pots must be frost-proof and must not extend beyond the front and rear sides of the bench and must not encroach on any grass area or path. This is at the discretion of the Council; any oversized, broken or items in a state of disrepair will be removed by the Council and without reference to the original applicant.
- 8.11 The Council accepts no liability for loss or damage to any flowerpots from vandals, third parties or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance near benches.
- 8.12 No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons, solar/string lights or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench. These shall be removed without reference to the original applicant.

9. TREE REGULATIONS

- 9.1 St Neots Town Council reserves the right to install trees where suitable but will where appropriate accommodate requests.
- 9.2 Once purchased and planted, memorial trees become the property of St Neots Town Council.
- 9.3 Once planted, a tree cannot be repositioned or removed from the site. However, should a tree become unsafe, St Neots Town Council reserves the right to remove immediately in the interest of health and safety.
- 9.4 Only St Neots Town Council authorised persons are permitted to maintain the memorial tree.
- 9.5 The Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial tree from vandals, third parties (after the 2-year replacement guarantee) or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance in the bench location.
- 9.6 The Council will not grant applications for memorial trees to pets.
- 9.7 No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons, solar/string lights or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the tree. These shall be removed without reference to the original applicant.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES
Date:	9th JULY 2024
Title:	ALLOTMENT MATTERS RAISED
Contact Officer:	TOWN CLERK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with concerns raised by an allotment holder in relation to plot rent increases, security and maintenance.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider and respond to the matters raised with the Council in relation to allotment rents and maintenance.

3. Background

- 3.1 The committee previously recommended to Council that allotment rents be increased at a higher rate than previous years, with a hold then put in place on rents which was seen as a more practical way of managing rent increases rather than small annual increases.
- 3.2 Communication has been received from an allotment holder raising a number of points which the Clerk is bringing to the attention of the committee for comment.

4. Information

- 4.1 The following points have been raised with the Council;

4.1.1 Mowing of paths

Concern has been raised that mowing of allotment paths at the Cemetery Road site has been reduced to only mowing the main path between the two entrance gates and not paths between plots.

Comment: Section 2.1 of tenancy agreements schedule states; "The Tenant shall keep every hedge that is planted on their allotment properly cut and trimmed, all pathways between plots trimmed and well maintained up to the nearest half with by each adjoining tenant."

The Operations Manager has advised that the Council stopped cutting in between paths some time ago following a meeting with Allotment Association at the time (at an AGM) where the association requested the Council only cut the main pathway.

The Council is not able to use a push mower on the paths between the lots due to the narrow width of the paths. The Council did use to trim between the paths but received a lot of complaints about damage to plants/crops and property as a result of the trimming.

The main path through the allotment site is cut at the same time the St Neots cemetery is cut, meaning it would usually be cut every 2 to 3 weeks during the cutting season.

4.1.2 Lack of security

Concern has been raised over a lack of security at the cemetery road allotment site and that the fencing line has a lot of gaps.

Comment: The committee previously considered costs for installing perimeter security fencing at the site, which was quoted at approximately £15,000 for which there was no agreed budget. The Operations Manager will be looking to address gaps in fencing by using stakes, wires and planting hedges which can help improve security and add to wider improvements in planting and biodiversity on council sites.

4.1.3 Vacant Plots

There have been a number of empty plots which left untended spread weed seeds to other areas. Finding tenants for vacant plots would be a first step in dealing with budgetary constraints.

Comment: Plots may not be vacant, but unattended by the allotment holder who is still paying rent for that plot. There is a process that must be followed to evict allotment plot holders who are not tending their plots, which must include suitable notice periods and opportunities for the allotment holder to act.

There are currently four vacant plots and two which are being allocated to community groups. All four allotment plots have been offered to interested persons on the waiting list and confirmations on taking up the plots are awaited.

4.1.4 Rent Increase

A 53.8% increase in rent is beyond inflation and there was no consultation with allotment holders or specific explanation on the reason for a higher than inflation increase. What period is the allotment rent to be held for as a result of the larger increase.

Comment: The Council like all organisations is facing increases across its budgets, including utilities and staffing. The committee felt that rather than implementing smaller, incremental increases year on year, it is more practical and transparent to have one larger increase, helping stabilise the fees for a longer period. This was in part due to the requirement to write to allotment holders annually to advise of rent increases, which incurred costs higher than the actual rent increase itself.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	OPERATIONS AND AMENITIES
Date:	9th JULY 2024
Title:	BRICKHILLS PALYPARK UPDATE
Contact Officer:	TOWN CLERK

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Councillors with an update on the installation of an inclusive see-saw at Brickhills play area.
- 1.2 To provide Members with the latest cost estimate for work providing surfacing and access to a inclusive picnic bench at Brickhills play area.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the committee notes the information provided on timescales for the installation of the new inclusive seesaw at Brickhills play area.
- 2.2 That the committee notes the potential cost of surfacing required for the installation of a accessible picnic bench and that the Operations Manager continues to investigate alternative options.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council resolved to purchase and install a new inclusive seesaw at Brichills to replace an old item of equipment (Dutch Disk) which has reached the end of its serviceable life. The new inclusive play equipment will complete the council's recent investment into the play area, increasing its inclusivity and play for all.
- 3.2 The Operations Manager has engaged the supplier and contractor as per the Council resolution.
- 3.3 Councillors have also asked that the Operations Manager look to install an accessible picnic bench on the site, which will require surfacing for the bench and paths to connect it to the park/pathway and make it accessible. The Operations Manager is investigating options for surfacing. The bench has already been purchased.

4. Inclusive Seesaw

- 4.1 The installation of the inclusive seesaw is to commence the week beginning 29th July 2024, subject to contractor availability. Initial work on site will include the removal of the current equipment and setting of the concrete pad, which will need roughly 1 week to enable it to be strong enough for the contractor to install the new play item.
- 4.2 The contractor will fence off the specific area of the equipment and the larger part of the playpark will remain open to the public for play.
- 4.3 Due to the need for the concrete base to set there will be a week where it may appear to the public that no work is taking place. Advisory notices will be placed on fencing at the park to advise residents of the situation. The work is expected to take 8-9 working days in total.

4.4 The Operations Manager has arranged for the wetpour surfacing to match the new blue surfacing recently installed in the newer part of the playground. This will help develop a connection and continuity between the new extension and original part of this site.

5. Accessible Picnic Bench

5.1 The contractor installing the play equipment was asked to provide a cost for also installing rubber mulch surfacing for the accessible picnic bench and connecting paths. The surfacing would match play park surfacing, creating a link to the park and a more uniform look.

5.2 The image below shows the proposed surfacing in green, connecting to an existing gate into the play area.



5.3 The price to excavate, stone, install the bench and lay the rubber mulch was quoted at £5,482.91.

5.4 Given the higher than anticipated cost for the surfacing the Operations Manager has not asked the contractor to progress with this work and is seeking recommendations on alternative options, such as tarmac.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The cost of the seesaw, surfacing and accompanying equipment is to come from the Council's general reserve as resolved by the Council.

6.2 There is no specific budget in place for the installation of surfacing for the accessible picnic bench. The Council maintains a revenue budget of £17,000 for play park and open spaces repair and maintenance. While this revenue budget has sufficient available budget to cover the cost of the path, the works are to install new surfacing rather than to repair or maintain existing.

7. Legal Powers

7.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.



TREE MAINTENANCE POLICY

Reference	SNTC/	Adopted by
Prepared by	C Robson (Town Clerk)	Adopted date
Monitored by	Town Clerk	Minute reference
Monitoring Review	Every four years	Review date

INTRODUCTION

This is a policy for dealing with tree management across the land in St Neots Town Council's ownership and management. This policy does not cover trees on other authorities land, or land in private ownership which are outside of St Neots Town Council's control. Trees in private ownership are the responsibility of the private landowner. The policy also does not cover Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas or high hedge legislation which is administered by Huntingdonshire District Council.

This Policy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors, officers and professionally interested people to enable informed decision making and to establish a clear, consistent and more structured approach to the issues affecting trees.

Trees are a highly valued feature in the landscape and are of immense environmental and aesthetical value to the Town and its residents. They make a contribution to the character and beauty of our parks and open spaces, provide a habitat for wildlife, enrich the biodiversity, act as the Town lungs and help to reduce rising temperatures caused by climate change. Some trees in the Council's ownership may help absorb traffic noise in built-up areas and can help limit noise pollution; as such they act as a screen, increasing privacy in residential roads and gardens. St Neots Town Council recognises these benefits, seeking to preserve healthy trees.

We recognise that although trees are a positive feature, they can be the cause of a range of problems, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or even death. As a tree owner we have a direct responsibility for ensuring our trees do not pose a danger to the public or property and are managed appropriately. This policy sets out our approach to tree management.

The overall aim of the tree policy is to ensure that our tree stock is retained whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the public and property.

LEGISLATION

We have a responsibility to maintain trees within our ownership / management to ensure they are in a safe condition and not causing an unreasonable danger or actionable nuisance.



As the owner and manager of trees, St Neots Town Council has a legal duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that any foreseeable hazards can be identified and made safe. This duty is laid down in the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Section 3.

Tree works shall be carried out whilst ensuring adherence to all wildlife and conservation laws are observed including:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1995)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Town and Country Planning (Trees) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997.
- Highways Act 1980

INSPECTION OF TREES

The Town Council works to a risk-based approach to tree management: a programme of inspection identifying and prioritising potential hazards. The cycle of inspection for trees will be set according to their location and area of risk. A full inspection of all tree stock will happen every 5 years. Inspections are carried out by appropriately qualified individuals following the Council's financial regulations.

This inspection programme is designed to assess the trees' condition and health whilst highlighting any work that may be required to ensure the tree is retained in the best possible condition.

The decision to prescribe work to a tree is calculated on a risk basis. Risk is calculated through the process of a visual tree assessment. An evaluation of the tree takes into account many factors including:

- Location
- Size
- Species
- Presence of structural decay or defects
- Relationship of any fungal infection relative to species.

Tree defects likely to cause a hazard are identified, categorised and the appropriate work is undertaken where appropriate to remove the hazard.

In bad weather even the healthiest of trees can become hazardous. St Neots Town Council will take prompt action in such emergencies, to ensure that everything possible is done to protect road users, residents and property.

When the level of risk has been established by surveying the tree any works required will be dependent on reducing the risk to an acceptable level. The legal framework does not require the elimination of risk altogether, but that the risk is minimised to an acceptable level.

If a tree is highlighted to be dead, dying, diseased or dangerous and is posing an unacceptable risk to



public safety, it will be identified for felling.

There may be exceptional occasions when a higher risk may be acceptable for example if there is a tree of particular additional value or for reasons of heritage. In these circumstances the advice from an independent consultant will be sought. In addition to this further arboricultural advice or investigations into the condition of the tree may be sought.

TREE MAINTENANCE / MANAGEMENT

The Town Council will ensure that tree maintenance work will be conducted as a result of information gathered during tree inspections. However, reactionary tree maintenance will always form a key element of overall tree maintenance operations and normally originate from enquiries from councillors, residents, council officers, contractors or utility companies.

We receive requests and complaints regarding trees. It is important that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and enjoyment of the area by local residents and visitors. Many of the complaints received involve minor or seasonal issues that are generally considered to be foreseeable or social problems associated with living near trees, which can potentially be minimised through careful pruning and careful species selection when planting.

In all cases, consideration will be given as to whether the tree in question meets the necessary criteria for protection. We will respond positively to tree issues raised regarding safety and endeavour to undertake works to alleviate damage to property, though it is not possible or desirable to undertake all works requested. Some requests would not alleviate the problem whilst others would only be a temporary measure which could not be repeated due to restricted budgets. Pruning can be to the detriment of many trees and can have the adverse effect of accelerating additional growth.

To ensure that requests for works to trees are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly, our policy in relation to the more common types of request is outlined below.

OVERHANGING TREES/BRANCHES

The Council has no legal obligation to prune overhanging trees unless they are causing direct damage to an adjacent property or are dangerous. The Council will not prune trees that overhang neighbouring properties unless the trees are dangerous or are causing an actionable nuisance. This reflects the Council's position as an owner of a large tree stock and the resources available.

Adjacent landowners are entitled to prune encroaching tree branches or roots back to the boundary of their property providing that the works do not unbalance the tree or do other damage to it. Legally, they are required to retain the prunings and offer them back to the Council, but the Council is not obliged to accept them.

Where access to the Council's land is required in order to undertake tree works, the adjacent landowner must seek the permission of the Council to enter their land. This will not be unreasonably refused.

It is a requirement that all Contractors working on Council land are suitably qualified to undertake the proposed work. It is also a requirement that adequate public liability insurance (a minimum of £5m or £10m when adjacent of a highway) is in place and that appropriate risk assessments and method statements have been completed. The Council will request evidence of this before permitting access.

PRUNING TREES FOR LIGHT IMPROVEMENT

A common complaint about urban trees is that they block light from properties or shade gardens. However, the seriousness of this effect is variable and often removal of the tree will have little effect on the amount of sunlight reaching the house or garden. An example of this is where the house is north facing and the tree is small or at a distance.

There is no right to light under the law and therefore the Council has no legal obligation to abate this perceived nuisance.

However the Council will consider taking action (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:

- Trees over 12m in height – distance between base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5m.
- Trees smaller than 12m high – distance between base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree.
- Where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2m. A 'habitable room' means a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but specifically excludes WCs, bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways.

It is recognised through the preparation of the Equalities Impact Assessment that there are exceptional circumstances in which this approach needs to be more flexible. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is causing a detriment to the health of residents, further consideration will be given to the management approach of trees. This consideration will also take in to account the quality and importance of the tree in question. This approach is important as the presence of trees also has a beneficial impact on other residents and the reduction in the number or size of trees may have a greater impact than on just one original enquirer.

Where a situation falls within these guidelines cases will be prioritised according to proximity and account will also be taken of the orientation of the affected window. The results of any consultation exercise may modify decisions if it appears that any work would be by and large unpopular with the rest of the community.

PRUNING TREES TO IMPROVE TELEVISION, SATELLITE OR RADIO, RECEPTION

Interference with television or satellite reception can be a cause for frequent complaints. Interference is worse when leaves are on trees and in bad windy and rainy weather. Satellite reception is more sensitive to interference than television reception. Some Councils have seen an increase in these complaints in recent years with the advent of this new technology and increased numbers of subscribers.

There is no right to good reception and in many cases it is possible to resolve issues of poor reception by finding an engineering solution.

The Council will only consider requests to prune trees to improve reception where all the following conditions are true:

- Efforts have been made to find an engineering solution to the problem and have not been successful;
- The work required is consistent with good arboricultural practice and will not unduly affect the amenity or health of the tree;
- The work required can be executed within financial resources available.

PRUNING FOR CLEARANCE OF OVERHEAD POWER CABLES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

In accordance with Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act 1989, electricity suppliers are empowered to remove obstruction to their equipment. This applies where any tree is or will be in such close proximity to an electric line or electrical plant that it will obstruct or interfere with the installation, maintenance or working of the line or plant; or constitute an unacceptable source of danger to the public. In accordance with Schedule 3A of the Communications Act 2003, telecoms operators may require trees to be lopped to prevent obstruction or interference.

PRUNING TO PREVENT DIRECT DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Trees or branches proven beyond reasonable doubt to be the cause of serious structural damage to buildings as identified by a competent professional assessor may be removed by the Council. We endeavour to provide a 1.5 metre clearance from overhanging trees to a dwelling house (not property boundaries).

The Council will cut back trees from properties where they touch windows, walls, roofs or gutters. This will ensure that damage to property such as aerials, tiles or gutters is avoided.

Cases of direct root damage will be considered on an individual basis. A balance will be struck between the nuisance experienced by individuals and the benefits offered by the tree to the wider community.

The Council will not normally take action in response to complaints that Council trees are damaging drains. Trees do not have the capacity to break into a sound drain, but they will ruthlessly exploit any existing fault. The removal of one tree will not prevent other vegetation from exploiting the same



opportunity. The Council's presumption is that the appropriate way to deal with tree root blockage of drains is for the property owner to ensure that the drains are watertight.

It is often possible to rebuild or repair garden walls and fences to take account of adjacent trees. This can be achieved in a number of ways (for example installing a section of railing or bridging foundations around the base of a tree). Therefore where trees are considered to be causing damage to walls or fences, we will only consider tree removal if the walls or fence are irreplaceable and of exceptional importance e.g. a retaining wall or of historical interest, or if there is a risk to public health in leaving the tree which cannot otherwise be mitigated. If a damaged wall or fence was constructed after planting of the tree, it may mean that the design or construction has failed to take the presence of nearby trees into account and will not be considered appropriate for replacement.

It is often possible to repair paths to take account of adjacent trees and tree roots. Where roots protrude they can be root pruned, or the path re-laid around the tree with flexible materials such as asphalt to provide a smooth surface. Where trees are considered to be causing damage to paths or footpaths, we will not normally consider tree removal except where there is a risk to public health which cannot otherwise be mitigated.

PRUNING TO PREVENT GENERAL NUISANCES

The Council will not fell or prune Council owned trees solely to alleviate problems caused by natural and/or seasonal phenomena, which are largely outside of their control.

There are a variety of potential nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor or seasonal and considered to be social problems associated with living near trees. Examples of such problems are:

- Falling leaves, sap, fruit, nuts, bird droppings or blossom;
- Reduction or increase of moisture to gardens;
- Suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens;
- Leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs;
- The build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.

Clearing of leaves from gutters and pathways and weeding of set seeds are considered to be normal routine seasonal maintenance which property owners are expected to carry out.

As with leaves, honeydew is not readily controllable by pruning and cleaning of affected surfaces can be considered to be routine maintenance. Pruning will not normally be considered solely as a way of alleviating problems with honeydew.

Tree works WILL take place in the following situations:

- Dead, dying or dangerous trees and branches that are or likely to be a danger public safety;
- Trees or branches creating unreasonable obstructing to a public highway, public right of way or access to property;
- Trees obstructing established essential fixtures and services situated in the highway;

Tree works MAY take place in the following situations:



- Trees deemed by the Council to be an inappropriate species for their situation;
- Trees in an area which is designated for development or redevelopment;
- To maintain historic or important vistas or in the interest of preservation of heritage or locally important structures;
- Re-pollarding or re-coppicing on a regular cycle;
- Trees giving rise to justifiable fears about risk of crime, or trees that have provided access and/or cover for criminal activity;
- Trees and branches restricting other grounds maintenance operations;
- Trees which need formative pruning to shape or train them during the early years;
- Thinning of trees where it will benefit adjacent specimens or those of more favourable species;

- The tree is a species which is known to ultimately outgrow its location and in doing so unreasonably restricts the use of the area;
 - To protect or enhance biodiversity;
 - To improve the aesthetics of the designed landscape;
 - Self-set trees on boundaries where they are a significant nuisance;

The Council will not undertake tree work operations which may be to the detriment of the tree. Tree works WILL NOT be carried out in the following situations or for the following reasons:

- Because trees are perceived as being too large by a member of the public;
- Obstruction of views from private residence;
- Where tree roots have entered gardens;
- To allow construction of new access or driveway to property;
- Erection of fencing, walls, play areas and sports pitches
- To facilitate the implementation of non-essential underground or over ground works.
- The tree 'moves in the wind'

OTHER FACTORS CONSTRAINING WORK TO TREES

Birds

Under the Wildlife & Conservation Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to kill, injure or take wild birds, their young, their eggs or nests. Non-urgent major tree work involving tree removal / reduction and hedge cutting operations should not normally be undertaken during bird nesting / breeding season, which is considered to be from 1st March to 31st July.

Bats

Bats are a European Protected Species and are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to a roosting / nesting site is a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment. Trees displaying signs of roosting bats will be referred to an Ecologist before any work commences. Any trees supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted.

VANDALISM AND DAMAGE TO COUNCIL OWNED/MANAGED TREES

Vandalism is an increasing pressure on trees. Usually, it is young newly planted trees that are damaged; however, mature trees are often damaged too. There are various ways in which vandalism can be counteracted, but none of these are 100% effective against determined attack.

The main methods of deterring vandals are to plant large numbers of very young trees, known as whips, or to plant larger robust trees depending on the site. Another method is to put guards or fencing around trees, but these must be large enough and strong enough to offer real protection.

This latter approach tends to be the most expensive method and only appropriate in very high-profile positions. In the long run, increasing environmental awareness within schools and communities should help reduce vandalism.

We will investigate any reports of vandalism or damage to trees in our ownership/ management and try to repair any damage where we can. Where appropriate, we will take legal action against the person(s) causing the damage.

Any felling or heavy pruning of Council trees on Council land is deemed as criminal damage. The perpetrator will be investigated and under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 a Community Protection Notice may be issued, breach of which would result in a fine of up to £2,500 for an individual and £20,000 for a body.

RECORD KEEPING & APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The Council, or its contractor, will retain adequate records of the details of inspection and maintenance regime for all trees.

Although, we believe this policy to be as comprehensive as possible, we acknowledge it does not cover every situation. St Neots Town Council reserve the right to exercise discretion in application of this policy when to do so commit to be in the best interests of the Council and residents.

All enquiries regarding trees on St Neots Town Council land should be directed to the Council on 01480 388911 or enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk.