

Title	Whitehill Burial Ground
Authors	Burial Ground Clerk
Meeting	Goring-on-Thames Parish Council Meeting – 08 th September 2025

XX.1 To consider, and if appropriate approve a request for a memorial stone which deviates from the current policy of the Council

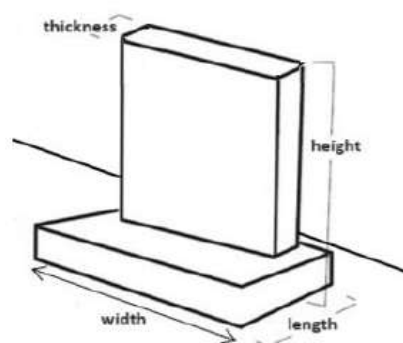
Background: the current burial ground policies were fully reviewed less than 12 months ago, including an overhaul of the dimensions and more explicit details regarding the shapes of memorial stones allowed. When the following memorial was first submitted to the Burial Ground Clerk for consideration, it was refused on the following grounds:

- height – this council had updated the height regulations during the design of the stone.
- prominent use of a “nickname” and large engraving taking the prominent position on the stone
- engraving around the entire perimeter of the stone, which in accordance with our regulations, should normally be found in “Area 3”.

The applicable extracts from our burial ground regulations, pertinent to this request:

- 6.1. All graves purchased in the burial ground are traditional graves, which allows for a monolith or cross style headstone, the maximum dimensions as shown below. It must be positioned near the west (head) end of the grave space, in line with adjacent monuments, or where marked by the council. The monument shall rise from a matching stone base, set level with the ground and not extending by more than the dimensions given below. The base may be pierced for a removable flower container.

- Height 3'0"
- Width 2'6"
- Length 1'0"
- Thickness 6"

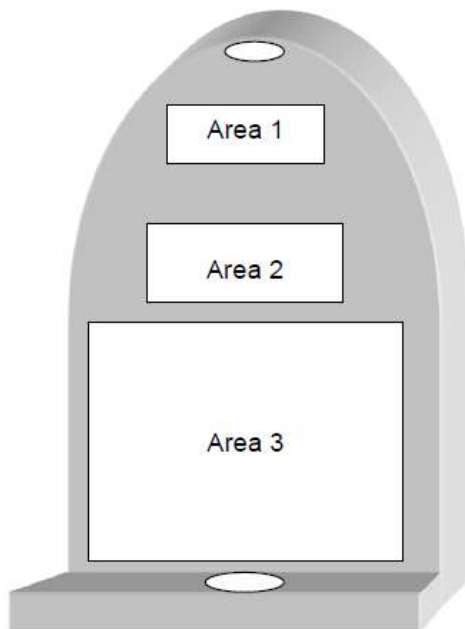


Images of example acceptable headstones are shown below:



(shapes continue below in the regulations)

Area 1: To contain a dignified simple and reverent sentence of factual content.
For example: "In loving memory of" or "In remembrance of".



Area 2: To contain the name/s of the deceased in a larger font, together with relevant dates

Area 3: Area for personal tributes of a solemn and dignified nature.

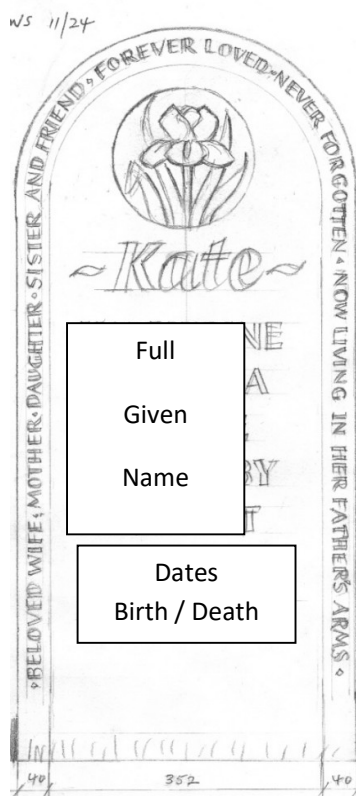
Footnotes:

- (a) Requests for engravings/carvings at the head of the stone, nicknames etc, may be considered at the council's discretion.
- (b) Special consideration will be given for memorials for children under the age of eleven (11) years.
- (c) A single ceramic photograph not more than 6 x 4 inches may be considered at the Councils discretion above Area 1.

The above principles will also apply to cremation tablets.

- This stone shape is an example only.
- Some other shapes are permitted within the overall dimensions.

The stone requested is as below:



The requestors have given the following additional information, in support of the design they have requested.

- The "engraving" relief is of Kate's favourite flower - The Iris. I would note that we have not included a nickname on the headstone as Kate is not a nickname but rather a diminutive of her name. She went by the Name of Kate, everyone knew her by Kate and only used Katherine for legal purposes.
- The engraving is placed on the perimeter to frame the wording of the gravestone and is granted this does not fully comply with the location of the area 3, the design and wording have been selected to be discreet and reflective of Kate's life. As the chosen stone is Portland Stone the contrast between the lettering will be far more subtle than granite or coloured lettering.

In accordance with our policy, a deviation from the pre-approved layout, including a prominent engraving, can only be approved by the full council

XX.1 To consider, and if appropriate approve a request for a memorial plaque to be added to the new kissing gate at the Sheepcot Recreation Ground.

The appropriate forms have been completed, using the "memorial bench" form. A request has been made to place a memorial plaque, similar to those on the memorial benches around the parish. All criteria for the residency of the deceased, have been verified, as per the memorial bench policy.

Propose, charges to be,

- cost price of plaque from Goring Hardware, plus
- 1 hour of Burial Clerk time, for the administration, including site visit etc.
- 1 hour of Facilities Assistant time, for collection of plaque, fitting etc.

RFO to calculate the total/final cost.

XX.1 To consider, and if appropriate approve a request for a contribution to the Burial Ground Clerk's costs for SLCC membership and SLCC Conference Attendance.

The Burial Ground Clerk has 3 employments

- Clerk & RFO at Western Valley (Up to 8 hours per week)
- RFO at Harwell (4 hours per week, currently up to 10 hours per week to support the Locum if required)
- Burial Ground Clerk at Goring-on-Thames (4-6 hours per week)

Western Valley Parish Council has formally asked for a contribution to their cost toward the SLCC membership, and SLCC National Conference attendance this year, of their Clerk & RFO (Mrs L White, Laura), as the training and membership benefits all of the Councils which Laura works for. For example, last year at the conference a lot of information was gained pertaining to burial grounds, which was extremely useful for their work at Goring.

Whilst the below business case refers to “Clerk” throughout, the benefits of the Burial Ground Clerk staying up to date on knowledge at the level of Clerk is important in their role and general support of the council.

The Society of Local Council Clerks recommends that Clerks improve their knowledge on the law and workings of the Council through attendance at SLCC Branch meetings, Regional Seminars and Conferences. These conferences enable the Clerk to go forward in their education, bring forth innovative and practical actions shared from the learning opportunity and the networking sessions to the Council. A Council needs to expand the knowledge of its Clerk as its professional advisor.

The Council is far from an inactive Council and therefore the Clerk and the Parish would benefit from attendance at SLCC Branch meetings, Regional Seminars and Conferences.

The SLCC National Conference in October 2025 has several beneficial sessions.

A session solely on Developments in the UK Parliament to Address Issues Relating to the Current Ethical Framework.

It will be covering a session called “Biodiversity Plus” and how the Council can meet the new councils to consider biodiversity in all decisions.

And Specialist Advisors are available throughout the conference for any specific questions this Council may wish to take the opportunity to ask.

The total cost of the conference is £660, with Laura covering any additional cost relating to expenses, milage etc.

Western Valley Parish Council is asking that this Council considers contributing in the region of **£150** toward the training cost, from the training budget.

Similarly **SLCC membership**

SLCC membership cost increase, as the member’s anticipated salary for the coming year increases. Therefore, additional employment comes with additional cost.

Currently the Burial Ground Clerk’s earnings are approximately a ratio of 1.5:1:1, for WVPC:HPC:GPC

Total cost of the membership this year is £190

WVPC asks that this Council considers contributing £55 to the Burial Ground Clerk's SLCC membership, inline with the ratio of contracted earnings.

Benefits are shown below. However specifically for this Council being able to call the advice line for specific professional advice is really important.

REASONS TO JOIN

1. Contact our team of experienced advisors by telephone or email for answers to your professional queries
2. Read our bi-weekly news bulletin containing the latest sector news and information
3. Join the online, professional Forum which provides unique, networking opportunities with local council colleagues
4. Access over 600 best practice advice documents on a range of topics in the members' area of our website
5. Review our bi-monthly magazine called 'The Clerk' packed with advice, information and case studies from fellow members
6. Discover the latest legislation and regulation at our conferences and events at a discounted rate
7. Save on a range of council products and services, including office stationery and books
8. Advertise your councils' job on the SLCC website and take advantage of member discount
9. Maintain good practice by studying for a sector qualification or attending a continuous professional development course at a discounted rate
10. Network with fellow clerks and discuss current issues at regular county based branch meetings
11. Access the free confidential 24hr counselling service for any personal issues