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## HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

## HELSEBY PUBLIC CEMETERY

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### Information About Graves

*This leaflet has been produced to help answer some of the questions you may have about graves (which includes plots for cremated remains) in the cemetery on Old Chester Road. If you have any further questions, you may ask your funeral director, or contact the Parish Clerk at the address below, who will be pleased to help with your enquiry.*

Mrs Claire Jones  
Helsby Parish Council  
Helsby Community Sports Club  
Callender Way  
Helsby  
WA6 0FX  
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### **PURCHASED GRAVES**

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When you purchase a grave or plot, you do not actually buy the land that the grave occupies – that remains in the ownership of the Parish Council. Purchasing a grave means that you purchase the Exclusive Right of Burial in the grave. This means that no burials or interments can take place in the grave without your permission. In Helsby, purchasing the Exclusive Right of Burial also gives you the right to have a memorial placed on the grave or plot, subject to current cemetery regulations and the payment of a memorial fee.

New graves cannot be purchased in advance of a death occurring. All new graves will be dug for at least two burial interments. Cremated remains may only be buried once the grave is full or if you sign to accept that no further burials will be allowed in the remaining depth.

The location of the plot will be assigned by the Parish Clerk.

### **UNPURCHASED GRAVES**

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If the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave is not purchased, the Council retains the rights, and may use any remaining space in the grave for further unrelated burials after 5 years have elapsed from the last interment.

## **BENEFITS OF GRAVE PURCHASE**

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- Control over who is buried in the grave
- Right to place a headstone or other type of memorial

## **DEED OF GRANT**

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When you purchase a grave, the Council will issue you with a Deed of Grant. The Deed is proof of your ownership and is a very important document. You should keep the Deed in a safe place as you may be asked to produce it when you ask for a burial to take place in the grave.

## **LENGTH OF PURCHASE**

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In Helsby you may purchase a grave for a period of 75 years. At the end of the lease, the current owner may apply to the Council for the opportunity to re-purchase the right for a further 75 years at the current fee. If you choose not to apply, the rights to the grave will revert to the Council, and any remaining space in the grave may be used for further unrelated burials.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS**

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As the owner of the grave, you are responsible for the safety and condition of any memorial on the grave. Although the Council has responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation to ensure the safety of visitors and staff in cemeteries, the responsibility for the safety of individual memorials rests with the owner. If a memorial becomes dilapidated and/or unsafe, the Council has the right to remove it or make it safe.

The Council undertakes regular safety checks on all the memorials in the cemetery. If a memorial is found to be unsafe, it will be laid flat and where possible, the grave owner will be contacted. If no response is received after one month, the Council retains the right to remove the memorial.

In order to keep our records up to date so that we may contact you if necessary, it is important that any changes of address for the holder of the Deed of Grant are notified to us as soon as possible.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL**

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Whether the grave is purchased or not, the Council will maintain it to a decent standard by cutting the grass regularly and ensuring that it is topped up and levelled if it should sink. The Council will carry out periodic testing of the stability of any memorial on the grave, and will contact you if there are any problems. The Council is not responsible for the maintenance of individual memorials.

## **TRANSFER OF RIGHTS**

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You can choose to transfer the rights to the grave to another person, but this must be done through the appropriate legal process and is subject to an administration fee.

You may bequeath the rights in your Will, but the Executor will need to contact the Parish Clerk in order to affect the Transfer to the new owner.

If you do not leave a will, your next of kin will need to contact the Parish Clerk for advice on how the rights can be transferred.

## CEMETERY REGULATIONS

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The Council has endeavoured to keep regulations to a minimum. It is recognised, however, that some regulations are necessary in order to ensure that the cemetery is a safe, attractive and fitting place for all those who visit and work in them.

A full copy of the Council's Cemetery Regulations is available from the Parish Clerk. They can also be viewed online at [www.helsbyparish.org.uk](http://www.helsbyparish.org.uk). A brief summary of some of the regulations are given here.

The cemetery is open to the public at any time. Visitors are asked to respect the peace, dignity and reverence of the facilities. Dogs are not allowed in the cemetery unless on a lead. Children under the age of 12 years must be in the care of a responsible adult.

Memorials for both burial and cremated remains plots must be of good quality, hard-wearing materials, not exceed a maximum size and be approved by the Clerk before being fixed. They must be fixed according to strict safety standards so that they do not present a danger to visitors. Only those memorial masons that are BRAMM accredited will be allowed to undertake work in the cemetery.

We require cooperation in the style of grave planting and ornaments so that the Parish Council can maintain the cemetery effectively. We also need to be able to cut the grassed areas using mowers and trimmers without risk of injury to the operator or visitors from glass or plastic shards, and without causing damage to memorials. We recognise that you may wish to leave tributes therefore we allow plants and suitable artefacts to be placed on burial graves but these must be looked after by you. If we are not able to cut the grass on or around the grave, it may look untidy compared to others. Shrubs or bushes are only allowed within burial memorials which have a kerb surround, and must not exceed three feet in height and width when fully mature. The Council reserves the right to prune, cut down or remove any shrubs or plants that have become overgrown or dangerous.

Vases may be incorporated in the stonework of memorials or as a separate fixture. We ask that you consider the choice of container carefully as glass or ceramic pots will shatter during winter due to freezing of any water in them. This presents a hazard to visitors, staff and wildlife in the cemetery.

For an assigned cremated remains plot in either the gravel area or main cemetery, the memorial must be no more than 18" by 18" and 6" high located centrally within the 2' x 2' plot area. No planting will be allowed and any vase must be incorporated within the plot area.

The Council reserves the right to remove memorabilia of a temporary nature such as soft toys when appearing unsightly, or after 12 months of placement.

Thank you for your assistance in helping Helsby Parish Council maintain this community asset for the benefit of all.