

Groby Parish Council

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DETAILS OF POLICY	
Policy Title	MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY for GROBY PARISH CEMETERY
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GROBY PARISH COUNCIL

Memorial Safety Policy - Groby Parish Cemetery

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out Groby Parish Council's policy for the management of memorial safety in its burial ground and details what the Council will do when it identifies that a memorial is unsafe. A dangerous or unstable memorial is defined as one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with the exertion of a force of 25kg or less.

Whilst the maintenance and insurance of a memorial is the responsibility of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial, Groby Parish Council has an obligation under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure the safety of all staff and visitors to the cemetery and as such must undertake routine testing of memorial safety¹.

The core of the Council's memorial safety testing is to ensure that **ALL** memorials within Groby Parish Cemetery are inspected at a minimum of five years. The period between inspections is determined by the priority category that was assigned to the memorial at the previous inspection or by risk assessment.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Prior to commencing memorial safety inspections, the Council must take steps to publicise the work that is to be carried out. This will be done in the following ways: notices will be placed on Council's website; Council's social media; Groby Parish Cemetery's noticeboard; Parish Council Office door and an advert placed in the Groby & Field Head Spotlight. All of these measures will ensure that the public are informed about the work to be carried out, why it needs to be done and how it will be done.

On commencement of the memorial safety inspections, a sign will be placed at the entrance to Groby Parish Cemetery stating that routine inspections are taking place, and this will be removed once the families of all Priority P1 memorials have been written to.

3. MEMORIAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Prior to commencing inspections, Council will put in place the following:

- A method statement and reasons for prioritisation and order of assessments;
- A risk assessment of each stage of the process;
- Appropriate resourced remedial procedures;
- A means of recording and storing inspection data

All memorial safety inspections will be carried out by suitably trained persons. A record of all memorial inspections and the results of these inspections will be kept by the Council.

¹ The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 – Article 3 – a burial authority may do such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery.

For memorials between 500mm and 1500mm tall, the inspection will comprise a visual inspection and a hand test in line with ICCM guidance.

For memorials over 1500mm tall (or for complex structures) a hand test may not be appropriate, and if a visual inspection suggests potential issues with a memorial an external structural survey or inspection by a memorial mason will be required.

Each memorial shall be assigned to one of three categories:

- Priority 1 (P1) – immediate action is required
- Priority 2 (P2) – annual reinspection is required
- Priority 3 (P3) – quinquennial reinspection is required

A written record of inspections shall be kept detailing:

1. Section and Grave Number
2. Name on memorial
3. Priority Category
4. Date of inspection
5. Name of inspector
6. Explanation of failure for P1 and P2 memorials
7. Name of mason (if visible) for P1 and P2 memorials
8. A photographic record shall be taken of all P1 and P2 memorials

4. INSPECTION CATEGORIES AND REMEDIAL ACTION

Priority 1

Priority 1 (P1) memorial is an immediate danger to the public and must be immediately made safe.

On identifying a P1 memorial the inspector shall immediately do one of the following to make the area safe:

- a. Install a stake and banding to prevent the memorial falling
- b. Securely cordon off the area to prevent the public accessing the memorial
- c. Lay the memorial (or part thereof) flat

A notice will be installed on the memorial advising the owner to contact the Council to discuss the failure.

The Council will write to the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial at the last known address to advise:

- the memorial has failed an inspection
- what immediate action has been taken
- what further action is required and the timescale for doing so

If the Council does not receive a response within 3-months, a further letter will be sent.

The rights holder may contract their own mason to undertake the repair, and this will follow the process for approval of works to a memorial, ensuring that all repairs comply with British Standards BS8415.

If the repair is not undertaken within six months from notification, the Council may fund the repair to the memorial and this cost must then be repaid to the Council before the Exclusive Right of Burial is further exercised.

The repair will either be to:

- Bring the memorial to the current BS415 specification
- Bury the bottom 1/3 of the memorial
- Embed the headstone flat within the grave OR such other works as considered necessary which may include (as a matter of last resort) the removal of the memorial.

Priority 2

Priority 2 (P2) memorial is not an immediate danger to the public but is not fully stable.

Memorials may also be classified as P2 if their position, construction of material suggests a more frequent inspection should be undertaken.

All P2 memorials shall be inspected annually.

Priority 3

A Priority 3 (P3) memorial is one that is perfectly stable or below 500mm in height.

P3 memorials shall be reinspected quinquennia (every five years).

