



Cemetery Regulations 2025

Introductions

These regulations set out the responsibilities of the Council and those of the Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) holder of the grave plot.

These regulations are made in relation to The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 and The Local Government Act 1972.

The Council adheres to the guidance of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

Certain terms used in these regulations are explained in the definitions section at the end.

Wherever these regulations require an opinion or approval to be given it shall be that of the Service Co-ordinator for Cemeteries, or their delegated replacement. Any person aggrieved by such a determination may challenge it through the Council's complaints procedure but shall comply with the decision in the interim. Copies of the Council's complaints procedure are available from the Town Hall or can be found on the Council website.

Wherever these regulations prohibit or limit actions which may be taken by the public the Council reserves the right to take any action necessary to ensure compliance and to recharge the cost of that action to the person causing the contravention of the regulations.

Office Administration

All queries regarding funerals, purchasing of graves, transfer or extension of Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB), memorials and memorial applications, cemetery maintenance and the chapel should be directed to the Cemeteries Department by phone, on 07851 109407 or by email to: cemeteries@brentwood.gov.uk.

Opening Times

The cemeteries are open to the public everyday throughout the year.

For vehicle access they are open everyday between 7am and 4.30pm in the winter and between 7.30am and 7pm in the summer (or 30 minutes before dusk – whichever is earlier).

The office hours are 8am until 4pm Mondays through Thursdays and from 8am until 3.30pm on Fridays.

The Council reserves the right to close the cemeteries on any day should circumstances so warrant and where possible notice will be provided in advance. This decision will be made in conjunction with the relevant committee chair.

Please remember that the cemetery is a public open space and everyone is welcome, however, some visitors may require some peace and solitude, therefore you are asked to respect the wishes of other people in the cemetery.

Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB)

The Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB) is a legal grant issued when a grave plot is purchased and entitles the holder to authorise a burial in the grave, the placement of a memorial, the additional inscription of a memorial, and maintenance of the memorial. Permission must be sought from the Council prior to any of these operations taking place.

ERB can be granted to one or more persons, however issuing to more than two persons will be at the discretion of the Cemeteries Department. The decision of the Director of Environment or their appointed representative shall be final.

The ERB may only be granted to a person or persons over the age of 18 years.

The removal of any monument and/or grave vegetation prior to a grave being opened is the responsibility of the applicant and is at their own expense.

The lease period for ERB for grass plots is 50 years and any extension is for 25 years from the date the last grant ended.

The current lease period for ERB for vaults and niches within a columbarium is 50 years, and any extension is for 25 years from the date the last grant ended. The Council reserves the right to amend these periods if it so wishes.

Where the ERB has expired on a grave plot, this must be renewed before any burial or the placement of a memorial can take place. This includes an additional inscription on a memorial or the maintenance of a memorial.

Where the owner of a grave has been interred and ownership is to be transferred, the family or executor should contact the Cemeteries Department for advice on the relevant method and costs of transfer.

Should an owner wish to assign their ERB to another individual they should contact the office to prepare a Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial form.

Please be aware that our cemeteries are operational sites and from time to time the Council may require access to an owned plot, move a headstone or any other reasonable operation to allow for the continued operation of the cemetery. Should this matter arise, the Council will make every attempt to contact the grave owner to make them aware, whilst ensuring that all areas are reinstated to the correct British Standard and in keeping with the decorum of the cemetery.

Plot Options.

1. New grass plots can be purchased for up to 2 internments and up to 6 sets of cremated remains.
2. Cremated remains plots can accommodate 3 sets of remains.
3. Vaults can accommodate 4 sets of cremated remains.
4. The Columbarium niches can accommodate 2 sets of cremated remains.

Plot Sizes -

Each plot size will be 8 foot long by 4 foot wide, the grave is to be opened no longer than 8 ft, nor wider than 3 ft allowing a strip at the head end and foot between the new grave of

undisturbed ground. Should the grave need to be prepared larger than these dimensions to accommodate a larger coffin then a second grave space may need to be purchased.

Each new grave will be dug down to 6ft 8 inches, unless ground conditions prevent this; under normal circumstances, this provides space for two interments.

No body shall be buried in a grave in such a manner that any part of the coffin is less than 3ft below the level of any ground adjoining the grave; provided that the Council may, where they consider the soil to be of suitable character, permit a coffin made of perishable material to be placed not less than 2 ft (61 cm) below the level of any ground adjoining the grave.

No body shall be buried in a grave unless the coffin is effectively separated from any coffin interred in the grave on a previous occasion by means of a layer of earth no less than 6 inches (15 cm) thick.

The Council will carry out a topping up procedure during the first 12 months following an interment, up until the grave is turfed, to maintain the ground level as the coffin subsides.

No refund will be made if any burials have been made in the plot. If the plot is empty a refund may be payable, any refund will be based on the fee paid for the plot. An administrative fee and VAT will be charged. Full details will be provided on application to the Council.

Funerals

Applications for burials must be booked through the cemeteries administration office.

Funerals can be booked through a funeral director or privately by the family themselves; however, it is advised that full burials are booked through a funeral director.

Burials, full burials or ashes services, must be booked a minimum of 5 working days prior to the requested day to allow sufficient time for the ground to be prepared. Lesser periods of notice may be accepted at the absolute discretion of the Council.

Burials may take place between 9am and 2pm on Mondays through Thursdays and between 9am and 1.30pm on Fridays. Burials cannot take place on weekends or public holidays without prior permission from the Council.

The Council will allocate the location of each new grave space at the time an interment is booked, but in exceptional circumstances. The Council does not allow for the reservation of specific burial plots.

All notices of burial must be given on the interment form provided by the Council and must be accompanied by the relevant documents authorising a burial to take place.

Completed interment forms must be signed by the current ERB holder, or applicant if the ERB holder is the deceased, and must be submitted to the Council 3 full working days before the funeral is to take place. For new plots where the grave is being allocated for the funeral, the person to be named as the ERB holder must complete and sign the interment form. The original signed copy of the interment form and the accompanying relevant documents to authorise burial must be submitted at least 3 full working days prior to the day of the funeral to the Council's appointed representative.

Burials

All burials shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the ICCM.

Only persons appointed by the Council shall excavate graves.

It is the responsibility of the ERB holder to make arrangements with the undertaker to remove memorials prior to any grave preparations taking place. The memorial must be removed at least 3 full working days before the funeral is due to take place. The Council reserves the right to cancel or postpone any burial booked where the headstone is not removed within the timeframes stated above.

All remains received for burial shall be enclosed in an appropriate container marked with the name of the deceased. Burial may only take place in a coffin, casket, or shroud of a type approved by the Council.

The burial of cremated remains is not permitted in any part of the cemetery other than within a grave purchased for that purpose and with the written authority of the person holding the ERB and the consent of the Council.

All cremated remains must be interred in a plot in a sealed hardwood casket, polytainer, or other appropriate container as deemed by the Council, measuring no larger than 30cm in any dimension. Ashes are not permitted to be poured or scattered.

Graves shall be backfilled immediately after burial, by persons appointed by the Council for that purpose in accordance with the Council's procedures and current Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The backfilling of a grave by a family member of the deceased is not permitted.

No interred remains, may be disturbed or removed without producing to the Council the appropriate licence required by law and issued by the Ministry of Justice, and the diocese if the plot is on consecrated ground.

The Council reserves the right to make different charges for burial to residents and non-residents of the Borough. A person is considered a resident if they currently reside in or have spent at least 75% of their life living in the Borough.

Interments in vaults and niches

All cremated remains interred in the Columbarium vault or niches must be in a aluminium urn which can be purchased by contacting the Cemeteries Department. Ashes are not to be scattered with the cemetery.

Memorials on grass plots

Memorials can be placed on both full burial and ashes plots in our cemeteries. All memorials or inscriptions must be approved by the Council before they are installed, which should be via a recognised stonemason who is NAMM or BRAMM registered.

Memorial applications need to be applied for by the ERB holder. Where the ERB holder is deceased, a transfer of the ERB will need to take place.

Headstones and kerb sets are permitted grass plots in London Road Cemetery and Woodman Road Cemetery. Memorials may be placed on a plot approximately 12 months after any burial takes place. This allows for the ground to settle and stabilise before the headstone is installed.

In sections M,T,R,V and W of Woodman Road Cemetery where there is a beam in place, a headstone memorial or headstone and kerb set can be installed once the burial has taken place and the grave has been reinstated. No full landings are permitted on M,T,R,V, and W at Woodman road cemetery. A memorial could consist of either a headstone or headstone and kerb set for full burial plots, or a vertical stone tablet for ashes plot.

Full landings are permitted only within the following areas.

- Woodman Road Cemetery permitted sections are – A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K.
- London Road Cemetery permitted sections are – A, B, C, D, G, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S.

Where a situation arises whereby the ERB for a plot with a full landing has expired and has not been renewed within 12 months of the expiry date and it is either in a state of disrepair or clearly not being maintained or visited, then the Council reserves the right to remove the landing or kerb sets to aid in the continued safe maintenance of the cemetery. The only exception to this shall be if there is no headstone present and details of the deceased are carved in the stone of the landing or kerb set. Prior to removal, a notice shall be affixed to the memorial giving 6 months' notice of the Council's intention.

Headstones in sections M,T and R of Woodman Road Cemetery can be a maximum height of 2' 6" (30") and a maximum width of 2' 6" (30").

Additional sunken kerbing can also be installed with a maximum size of 4' (48") wide by 2' (24") deep.

In the cremated remains/ashes sections in both Woodman Road and London Road Cemetery an ashes tablet (upright) can be installed with a maximum height of 1.67' (20") and a maximum width of 0.83' (10"), and no plinth or kerbing is permitted.

Any memorial placed without the Council's permission (or is deemed inappropriate or exceeds permitted sizes) may be removed.

Stonemasons and Funeral Directors who are wishing to install or carry out maintenance on a memorial, having been granted permission by the Council, should contact the Cemeteries Department to arrange a suitable day to carry out the works. Stonemasons and funeral directors on request shall provide a copy of all risk assessments, method statements and insurance documents related to their operations within the cemetery. Should these documents not be available on request, the Council reserves the right to refuse bookings and operations of these suppliers until such a time that the Council is satisfied with all legal documents.

Memorials on vaults and niches within a columbarium

Section S of Woodman Road Cemetery where there are above ground vaults and columbarium, for cremated remains interments. Plaques can be added to the front of the vault or columbarium niches and inscribed for those interred within.

A memorial inscription can be applied for once the interment is booked and can be placed after the ashes have been interred in the vault or the niche within the columbarium. All (Vault and columbarium) inscriptions of plaques are arranged by the Council and affixed by an appointed member of the cemeteries team.

The text inscribed on the plaque for a vault or niche is limited to the number of characters shown on the online form, where a choice of 2 fonts can be made. Once applied for a proof is sent to the ERB holder by the Council and must be approved before any order is placed. Small motifs are also permitted, a sample of available motifs can be supplied by the Cemeteries Department. There is an additional charge for motifs.

One vase of flowers, not exceeding 12"/ 30cm/ 1 foot in height, can be placed in the existing vase in the base of the columbarium and vaults. Flowers or other items must not be placed elsewhere on or around the plot. Any other items will be removed, without prior notification and disposed of accordingly. Any dead plants or flowers shall be removed when observed and disposed of.

Ornaments

One ornament and one small pot plant may only be placed in the following areas of a full burial plot;

- Within an approved kerb set.
- On the stone base of a headstone.

The following items are not permitted on or around grave plots, or adjoining grassed areas;

- Ornaments and pot plants exceeding 12"/ 30cm / in height
- Any texts or written documents that have not been pre-approved by the Council
- Items with club association i.e. sporting memorabilia
- Solar lights/ lanterns
- Wind chimes
- Flags
- Nationalist memorabilia
- Perishable items including food and drink
- Soft toys* - exceeding 12"/ 30cm in height
- Balloons
- Glass jars or any glass containers
- Bedding plants, trees or shrubs unless within a purchased curb set.

No items shall be permitted to be placed to the rear of a headstone, regardless of the presence of a concrete plinth or base.

All empty pots, jars, containers or any other item will be removed, without prior notification and disposed of accordingly. Any dead plants or flowers shall be removed when observed and disposed of.

For ashes plots only a single square stone 6" x 6" flower vase may be placed on the plinth to the front of the headstone as part of an approved memorial application or a single spiked floral container, again placed within the stone area to the front of the headstone. No item will be allowed to be placed on or within the grass to the front of the memorial setting/beam.

Benches shall be permitted to have a singular pot or container placed at the base of one side of the bench only. Ornaments will not be permitted on or around a bench. Pots or containers must not encroach onto surrounding areas i.e. adjoining plots or memorial bench bases.

Any ornament, pot plant or any other item that is placed on a plot or bench base outside of the above approved areas may be removed without notice in order to preserve the visual appeal of the cemetery.

In addition to this, the Council will also remove any ornaments or memorabilia placed on a grave that is deemed inappropriate, may cause offence to others, or that it is felt may bring unwanted attention to the grave.

Common Graves

Burials within graves without a current ERB are not permitted.

Under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 the Council has a duty to bury any person who has died or 'found to be dead' in the Brentwood area in any case 'where it appears to the local authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made'.

The Council are responsible for the interment of anyone who dies in or is found deceased in Brentwood and is properly buried or cremated if suitable arrangements have not been made, with costs recovered from the deceased estate

If the Council arranges a funeral, then it can recover the costs from the estate of the person who has died if an estate is in existence.

Upon completion of the burial/interment the Council will also make arrangements for a suitable memorial stone to be placed on the grave.

A common grave remains in the ownership of the Council.

Fees and Charges

Fees and charges are set and reviewed by the Council on an annual basis.

The cemetery has been provided to cater principally for the residents of Brentwood but is also available for use by non-residents as well. A two-tier fee structure reflects this.

Current fees and charges are available on the Council website www.brentwood.gov.uk/cemeteries or on request from the Cemeteries Department.

Miscellaneous

- Maps of the cemetery layout and sections are shown on signs in each of the cemeteries. Maps, including section maps showing the position of individual graves, are available on the website www.brentwood.gov.uk/cemeteries or from the Cemeteries Department.
- Registers of burial are kept by the Cemeteries Department, and the Council will endeavour to assist people trying to locate lost relatives who have been interred in one of our cemeteries. A charge will be applied for extensive searches within paper archives.
- All vehicles entering the cemetery grounds must use designated parking areas, and access to working areas of the site is not allowed. The owner of any vehicle is liable for any damage it causes whilst on the premises. A 5mph speed limit should be adhered to at all times within the cemetery grounds, parking on grass is not permitted.
- Smoking is prohibited in the vicinity of a grave or cremated remains whilst an interment is taking place.
- No animals are allowed in the cemetery grounds except disability assisting dogs and horse drawn hearses.
- The consumption of alcohol or drugs in any part of the cemetery is forbidden.
- No goods of any kind may be offered for sale in the cemetery grounds or adjacent land owned by or under the control of the Council.
- The approval of the Council must be obtained before photographing or filming in the Cemetery.
- All persons admitted into the cemetery must comply with the directions of Council staff.
- Children under the age of 16 years must be kept under the direct supervision of a responsible adult at all times.
- No band or music will be allowed within the cemetery except by the consent of the Council. Any permitted band/music must not be explicit in nature or offensive.
- No employee of the Council may demand or receive any gratuity.
- Please help keep the cemeteries free from litter, either taking it with you or using the facilities provided.

- No person shall solicit any orders or distribute any circular, bill or article, of the like nature within the cemetery.
- Under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, it is an offence to: wilfully create a disturbance, commit a nuisance, wilfully interfere with any burial taking place, wilfully interfere with any grave, memorial or flowers or plants, or play any games or sport.

Definitions

In these regulations:

'The Council' means Brentwood Borough Council, or its appointed successor, which owns and runs the cemeteries.

'Cemeteries Department' means the officers and supervisors appointed by the Council with overall responsibility to manage the cemetery to whom all powers and duties contained in these regulations are delegated. It includes his or her appointed representatives and successors.

'The Cemetery' means the place provided for the interment of human remains at Woodman Road and London Road, Brentwood.

'Working Days' means days on which the office is open.

'ICCM' means The Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management. This promotes best practice and advises burial authorities throughout the UK.

'The applicant' is the person who applied for the funeral and signed the appropriate forms.

'Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB)' means a legal grant issued by the Council when a grave is purchased. You are not actually purchasing the land on which the grave is situated but are acquiring the exclusive right of burial therein for a limited time period determined by the Council.

'ERB holder' is the person or persons registered with the Council as the owner of an exclusive right of burial.

'Grave' means a burial place formed in the ground by excavation and without any internal brickwork, stone, or any lining. Up to 3 burials and 6 sets of ashes can be buried in a full burial plot.

'Grave space' means the area allowed for the establishment of a grave and in such position determined by the Council.

'Un-purchased grave' means a grave in respect of which the Council has not granted an exclusive right of burial.

‘Cremated remains/ ashes section’ means an area of grave plots in the cemeteries specifically for caskets containing the ashes of cremated remains. Up to 3 sets of ashes can be buried in an ashes plot.

‘Cremated remains’ means the ashes remains of a person who has been cremated.

‘Scattering of ashes’ means the dispersal of the ashes remains within a defined area by scattering from an urn in a manner determined by the Council.

‘Monument’ means a headstone, tablet, cross or kerb set placed on a grave space.

‘Resident’ means any person who normally resides within the Borough of Brentwood. It includes any person who has spent a total of at least 75% of their life living in the Borough. A child or stillborn child is deemed to be a resident if delivery occurred within the Borough Council administrative area or either parent is a resident. Body parts will be deemed to be those belonging to a resident if that person prior to their death, or loss of limb, normally resided within the Borough or the surgery for their removal occurred within the Borough.

‘Columbarium’ means an above ground structure with niches for cremated remains to be stored.

‘Niche’ means a recess within a columbarium where cremated remains are placed.

‘Vault’ means an above ground individual structure to inter cremated remains within.

‘Interment’ means the burial or placement of a coffin or cremated remains container in the ground or a burial structure.

‘Plaque’ means a commemorative tablet affixed to the front of a niche or vault which is inscribed for the deceased interred within.