



PUCKLECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

PUCKLECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL BURIAL GROUND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Legal Framework for Burial Ground Management

By Section 214(1) of the LGA 1972, a Parish Council shall be a burial authority. Powers and duties under Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 1977) empower burial authorities to:

“enclose, layout and embellish a cemetery in such a manner as they (the burial authority) think fit, and from time to time improve it, and keep the cemetery in good order and repair”

and also provides those burial authorities may do:

“all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for proper management, regulation and control”

But NOT take any action in relation to any memorial other than is necessary to remove a danger which arises by reason of the condition of the memorial.

Risk management

The development of this policy is to ensure that the Council has adequate risk management in place at Pucklechurch parish burial ground and that risk is properly managed.

Risk Assessment

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that risk assessments be made of all work activities and the parish council has a duty to have controls in place to ensure the safety of all employees, contractors and members of the public.

The purpose of risk assessments is to:

- Identify the hazard
- Identify who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risk
- Record significant findings
- Take steps to implement any precautions required from the findings
- Review risk assessments periodically and update if necessary

Site Inspections

Site inspections will be carried out on a regular basis, in order to identify any hazards that may be present on the burial site and all hazards will be recorded and assessed for action. Inspection will cover:

- Gates
- Paths
- Grave stones/memorials
- Trees
- Cemetery grounds
- Seating
- Newly dug graves

Memorials

The parish council has an overriding duty to take as far as reasonably practicable measures to prevent injury or death from unstable memorials. It is incumbent on all Councils to have a system in place for assessing risk posed by individual unstable memorials.

In line with the burial ground regulations, memorials may only be erected/installed or removed by a person who is qualified by either NAMM or BRAMM and in accordance with the NAMM or BRAMM standard applicable for each type of memorial concerned.

Memorials will be inspected periodically to identify:

- Damage
- Movement from original position
- Undermined or unstable foundations
- Leaning, structural damage, or disturbance e.g. cracks

Causes of instability	Warning signs
poor workmanship	angle of lean from the vertical
unsuitable foundations	cracks of undue spalling/flaking in the headstone or base
lack of maintenance	absence of any component part of the monument
damage by grave diggers, contractors or visitors	settlement of the ground within 2 m of the monument
storm, flooding or subsidence	dried out cracking ground
tree roots	
vandalism	
Best form of detection regular visual inspection and hand test	

Visual inspections will help determine which memorials require a hand test or a specialist assessment. **Regular visual checks** should be undertaken by the Parish Council. Any areas of concern to be highlighted and action taken based on individual circumstances.

Hand tests on memorials will be conducted by standing to one side of the memorial and a firm and steady pressure applied in various directions to determine stability and all findings will be recorded and kept. In addition, and in accordance with the regulation 37, professional topple testing will be commissioned every five years. This will require public

notice explaining exactly what is going to happen – minimum of 3 months of intention to test must be made.

If any memorials are considered to cause a risk, consideration needs to be given to what action to take next:

1. Where a memorial gives cause for concern:

- DO NOT cover or lay down memorials. Such action should only ever be used if there is a need to prevent a genuine hazard to health and safety that cannot be remedied by temporary support.
- contact to be made with next of kin with a view to rectifying the problem as primary responsibility
- temporary repairs such as 'back fixing' and a warning notice to be considered, if appropriate, to give the next of kin time/opportunity to repair memorial. Such repairs should not be allowed to become permanent
- any re-fixing work carried out needs to be done to Council's satisfaction/approved standard and pass further testing.