

**ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL  
& BURIAL AUTHORITY**

**BURIAL AUTHORITY POLICY**

Reviewed & Updated: April 2026

Next review: as required

# **ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL & BURIAL AUTHORITY**

## **Burial Authority Policy**

### **Introduction to the St Briavels Burial Authority**

This policy outlines the rules and regulations governing burials, memorials, and maintenance activities to ensure respectful and orderly management of these sacred spaces.

St Briavels Parish Council & Burial Authority is the Burial Authority for St Briavels Cemetery under the Local Government Act 1972(A), the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1974, and the Public Health Interments Act 1879. This Burial Ground has been consecrated for Burials according to the rights of the Church of England.

The Burial Authority is responsible for the management and upkeep of burial grounds within its jurisdiction. This Burial Authority also maintains the adjoining Churchyard of St Mary The Virgin Church, which is a Closed Churchyard under s. 215 of the 1972 Act. Its owners are still the Diocese of Gloucester (delegated to the Parochial Church Council), and only the responsibility for maintenance transferred under an official Order.

The addresses are:

St Briavels Cemetery, Church Street, St Briavels, GL15 6RG

St Mary the Virgin Church churchyard, Church Street, St Briavels, GL15 6RG

The parish council is grateful to the Officials of the church with whom close and sensitive collaboration is key to ensure an accessible, sympathetic and effective service to our users.

The following Policy provides information on Eligibility & Criteria, Exclusive Rights of Burial, Memorial Regulations, Maintenance Matters, and Fees & Charges.

### **Eligibility & Criteria**

The eligibility for burial in the St Briavels Cemetery is determined by the following criteria:

- Residents of the parish area at the time of death or in previous years
- Existing purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial
- Individuals with family plots already established within the burial grounds

Applications for burial must include proof of eligibility and be submitted through the appropriate channels outlined by the Burial Authority. This is usually the Funeral Director.

An easy to follow flow chart is provided at Appendix A and should be regarded along with the information provided re multipliers under the Fees section further below.

Applications for Burial where these criteria are not met will be refused.

The scattering of ashes in the Memorial Area is open to All, with no eligibility requirements – see specific section below.

## Exclusive Rights of Burial

In addition to the burial fee, an Exclusive Right of Burial must be purchased. This gives the purchaser (Grant Holder) the right to say who can be buried, or have ashes buried or scattered in the grave, and give permission for a memorial to be erected or amended. It does not purchase the land itself, but the plot is guaranteed exclusive use for 100 years.

The Exclusive Right of Burial must be purchased before or at the time of the first interment and produced to the Clerk, representing Church Official, or the Funeral Director when arranging subsequent re-opening of a Purchased Grave. The Registrar's Certificate for Burial or the Coroner's Burial Order must be forwarded to the Clerk on or before the day of the Burial.

A purchaser or owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave space shall not dispose of such right without the consent of the Burial Authority. All transfer of such rights shall be prepared by the Burial Authority at the expense of the applicant. If the Exclusive Right of Burial Grant Certificate cannot be produced at the time of the second interment, the owner of such a grant or his/her legal representative must produce a completed form of formal declaration to the Clerk of the Burial Authority.

Where the Exclusive Right of Burial in a grave space is not purchased at the time of Burial, the exclusive right shall remain with the Burial Authority. No memorial shall be erected on such a grave before the exclusive right of Burial has been purchased by the next of kin or legal representative of the person buried in such a grave.

As explained above, the St Marys Churchyard is officially Closed, and no new plots are available. The addition of cremated remains to existing plots may be permitted subject to the agreement of the churchwardens and incumbent. Burial Plots are single depth only in the Cemetery, but Ashes may be added subsequently where an Exclusive Right of Burial is held.

Please note: Only Funeral Undertakers are permitted to dig the plots for interment, or Memorial Stonemasons carry out memorial installation. Non-professionals must not do this to ensure proper practices and requirements are upheld, and any risk of liability or safety issues mitigated.

## Memorial Regulations

Memorials within the cemetery must adhere to the following regulations. All memorial designs and inscriptions must be approved by the Burial Authority before installation. The aim is ensure materials, designs and Inscriptions are appropriate, respectful and in keeping with the aesthetic of the burial grounds.

All applications require a drawing showing details of the inscription and any embellishments. These should be sent to the Clerk to obtain prior approval.

The Burial Authority has the right to remove unauthorised memorials that do not comply with the Burial Authority's Regulations, and those not meeting the standards will be removed at the owner's expense.

The cemetery is laid as a lawn cemetery, and graves are to be left flat with turfs re-laid. Therefore grave mounds with a type of edging, walled graves, footstones, kerbstones, flat stones, are not permitted.

The planting of trees/shrubs or use of plastic flowers will not be permitted and may be removed.

All memorials to be of lawn type headstone and base. Maximum overall size being 2'10" x 2'6" wide and 4" thickness. No footstones, flat stones, kerbstones or glass or plastic vases will be permitted. Any memorial vases, maximum size 8" x 8" x 8" to be fixed at head of the grave only.

Cremation Memorial tablets maximum size is 18" x 18" and to be fixed flush to the ground, or of a "desktop" style.

[NB: Exclusive rights / plots must always be purchased by the person wishing to erect a memorial before it can be placed.]

## Maintenance Matters

To maintain the dignity order and safety of the parish burial grounds, the following maintenance rules apply:

- Memorials/gravestones are to be kept in repair by the families/relatives
- Where relations no longer traceable the Parish Council may choose to repair or remove in the interest of safety
- Plot owners are encouraged to maintain their family plots, ensuring they are free from overgrown vegetation and debris
- The Burial Authority is responsible for general area upkeep, including grass cutting, trees and litter collection
- Whilst efforts will be made to minimise grass clippings on graves, this cannot be guaranteed
- Grass cutting and similar maintenance is subject to weather conditions. The councils' contractors will strive to uphold the neat and tidy standards as best they can balanced with protection of the ground in severe weather conditions
- Where early spring flowering bulbs are present these may be unavoidably mown down when mowing begins
- There will always be a delicate balance to aim for to achieve high standards of neat and tidiness versus local provision for wildlife and nature with Biodiversity aims

Regular health & safety inspections are conducted, and non-compliance may result in corrective action taken by the Burial Authority. Where headstones are found to be unsecure, these memorials may be respectfully laid flat on the ground to avoid danger to visitors.

Please Note putting headstones back upright unsecured will mean the grave owner is liable in the case of any incident or damage. Unsecured heavy gravestones can cause serious damage to visitors. Memorials that need remedial work must only be undertaken by a BRAMMS registered memorial mason and will need relevant permission to proceed.

## Fees and Charges

The St Briavels Burial Authority fees and charges applicable are attached at Appendix B. These are shown at standard rates however in certain defined circumstances these are subject to fee multipliers explained in the following section.

Where immediately prior to death, a person has lived outside the Parish of St Briavels for more than six months, charges for interment and exclusive right of burial/plot will be multiplied as shown below.

- If the deceased lived in the Parish for a period of five years or more prior to moving to reside in a residential home outside the Parish for a period of up to 2 years, interment charges will not be subject to the multiplying factor.
- For Burial of persons within the Forest of Dean District Council administrative area but outside the St Briavels Parish, fees are trebled.
- For Burial of persons outside the Forest of Dean District Council administrative area, fees are quadrupled.
- Anyone who, while resident in the Parish, has purchased an exclusive right of burial, will not be liable for the multiplier if they subsequently move away

Where the request is to inter 2 sets of cremated remains at the same time in the same plot, the fee charged will at 1½ times the standard rate for interment, Exclusive Rights and any Saturday premium instead of twice the charges

Should a request be received to install a large memorial for a cremated remains interment, and this being against the Burial Authority policy, the option to purchase a full grave will be possible, subject to space availability.

\*Memorials, plaques and tablets are not subject to the multiplying factor.

## Exhumation

The following is only applicable in extremely rare circumstances. No human remains will be removed from any grave after committal has taken place without the proper authority from the Home Office and / or the Ecclesiastical Diocese. In the first instance a request for Exhumation should be made to the Burial Authority before any application for licence or faculty is made.

The Exhumation will be carried out in strict accordance with Statutory provisions and any conditions imposed by the Secretary of State for the Home Office or the Ecclesiastical Diocese and any restrictions added by the local Area Health Officer.

Nothing in these regulations should be construed as authorising the disturbance of Human Remains without the appropriate authority. Human Remains within these regulations is deemed to include cremated remains.

## Scattering of Ashes Policy (from April 2026)

St Briavels Parish Council recognises the need to supply flexible facilities for the celebration of passed loved ones. This section of the policy outlines the rules and fees associated with this facility.

- Ashes may only be scattered on the Memorial Area set aside for this purpose after permission is received from the Burial Authority.
- All applications to scatter ashes at St Briavels Cemetery must be submitted to the Council at least seven days in advance of the proposed scattering. The Council's official "Request to Scatter Ashes" form must be used, and available from the Clerk.
- Requests should be made from the next of kin or the executor of the deceased or the appointed Funeral Director.
- The official Certificate of Cremation must be forwarded to the Burial Authority with the application prior to scattering for record and retention.
- Scattering of ashes may be carried out by prior arrangement only. The day and time of the proposed scattering must be authorised by the Council in advance as there may be times when access will be restricted, for example when a funeral has been arranged, or contractors working.
- Families are free to hold appropriate ceremonies either formal or informal, with attendance or not, with faith or no faith.
- Ashes must be scattered evenly and not be left as a solid mass on the ground or buried in a hole.
- Discretion and awareness of the presence of others must be taken into consideration when ashes are being scattered, and care should be taken re direction of the wind or weather conditions.
- A fee of £20 for this facility must be paid in advance and will apply to both Parishioners and Non-parishioners. There is no parish eligibility criteria for this particular permission.
- The scattering of ashes will be recorded in the same manner that all burial records are made and may be made available for appropriate public inspection.
- Memorial plaques can be added as a small stake type marker or a brass plaque mounted on the Memorial Area wall and be a maximum size 6" x 4". This will be subject to the availability of space and full responsibility of the applicant or deceased's family to arrange install and maintain.
- Appropriate plants e.g. Roses may be planted. No other memorials will be allowed on the site e.g. vases, flowers, plastic items. The Council will remove any such memorials placed on the site.
- Funeral flowers or wreaths may be placed on the site on the date of the scattering but will be removed after a maximum period of two weeks.

END

Appendix A:

# ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL

## & BURIAL AUTHORITY

### BURIAL ELIGIBILITY FLOWCHART



