

Rossendale Borough Council
Ashes Plots
Management Guidance

Rossendale Borough Council plans to develop ashes plots within Bacup, Rawtenstall and Haslingden Cemeteries. The following guidelines aim to provide clear facts and advice regarding the management of the service.

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Responsible Section/Team	Operations Team	Version	3
Responsible Author	Tamzin Percival	Due for review	
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Section 1

Development of the Plots.

Only one ashes garden currently exists within Rossendale, and this is at Whitworth cemetery. Customer feedback and other consultation has lead us to propose the development of ashes plots/gardens in the remaining three cemeteries at Bacup, Rawtenstall and Haslingden.

Initially the following number of chambers will be constructed in each cemetery – Bacup (32), Rawtenstall (20) and Haslingden (20). During 2009 12 customer enquiries were made regarding ashes plots across the Borough and therefore if this figure is used as an estimated annual requirement it would take 6 years to sell all chambers. However demand may be greater in any one cemetery thus the timescale for selling all chambers within one location is unknown. Therefore the rate of sale should be monitored and construction of more chambers be planned when only one years worth of chambers for that location remains, based on average number of sales per year.

The construction and appearance of the chambers will be as follows:

- Chambers will be constructed in straight rows and topped with a standard concrete flag and granite tablet;
- Rows will be created in a 'back to back' fashion;
- Drainage will be included within the construction as will surfaced pathways, to allow access for all in to the garden; and
- The plots will be landscaped with planting and seating to create a garden effect.



Example of completed construction at Colne Cemetery.

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Section 2

Sale of Plots

Each chamber will be sold at £600 during 2010/11. This cost will be reviewed annually and will only increase according to the same guidelines used for all other bereavement services.

When a chamber is sold the purchaser actually purchases the right to inter ashes within the chamber. They do not own the physical chamber (this is the same principle as for graves). However they do purchase the granite memorial tablet with flower vase and this then becomes their responsibility. Each chamber will hold up to four casket of ashes.

The initial cost of £600 will be included on the list of fees and charges and will include the following:

- the charge for the right of interment;
- the granite memorial with flower vase;
- the interment fee; and
- the plaque with first inscription.

Subsequent inscriptions and interment fees would still apply as with any other form of burial.

On death of the purchaser all rights and responsibilities pass to the next of kin.

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Section 3

Memorials

Each chamber is purchased with a granite memorial tablet with flower vase.

Additional forms of memorial (trinkets and flowers) may be placed on the top of the granite memorial and on the raised flagstone immediately surrounding the granite tablet only.

In order to ensure the safety and cleanliness of walkways for visitors, any trinkets, flowers or other forms or memorial placed on the walkways will have to be removed by cemeteries staff.



Example of Granite Memorial Tablet.

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Section 4

Interments and inscriptions

Interments will be carried out by Rossendale Borough Council cemeteries Staff only. This involves lifting the flag top from the chamber, setting the casket within and resetting the flagged top.

Inscriptions on the granite memorial tablet are the responsibility of the chamber purchaser. They must arrange for their own selected memorial mason to remove the granite memorial tablet, carry out the inscription and reset the tablet.

The mason must submit a permit for all inscriptions including the first despite there being no individual charge for this. Further inscriptions must be paid for prior to the inscription being carried out.

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Section 5

Maintenance.

The ashes gardens will be part of the cemeteries and therefore will be covered by existing routine maintenance regimes to ensure areas are kept weed and litter free. The paths will be swept and treated for moss and algae as and when required.

Memorials placed on pathways will be removed by cemeteries staff to ensure the area may be well maintained and kept clean as well as ensure the safety and accessibility of visitors by avoiding obstructions.

Wilted flowers in vases will be removed and disposed of by cemeteries staff.

Christmas wreaths will be removed during February as per all others on graves. In this event a notice will be placed in the cemetery informing people of the timescale for this action.

The chamber and associated concrete flagged areas will be maintained by Rossendale Borough Council Operations Team and if damaged will be repaired appropriately.

The granite memorial tablet is to be maintained by the purchaser of the chamber. In the event of damage or vandalism the Bereavement Services Officer will contact the chamber purchaser to inform them of the situation. It is then up to that person to make arrangements and meet the cost of repairs or maintenance.

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