



## Huntington Cemetery - Standard Operating Procedure

Following recent amendments to our document handling and payment systems, we have updated the way in which Huntington Cemetery accepts burial requests, documentation, and notices. These changes have been agreed by the Parish Council and are intended to create a **clearer, fairer, and more efficient process** for all involved, particularly funeral directors who are working to support families during difficult times.

### Notice Period for Burials

The requirement has always been that **a minimum of seven clear working days** is needed between the date of request and the desired burial date. To remove any previous confusion, this will now be applied consistently.

- The day on which the request is made **cannot** be counted as a clear working day.
- Requests made with fewer than seven clear working days' notice **cannot be considered** for the requested date.

This clarity allows funeral directors to plan with confidence, avoid last-minute changes, and manage family expectations more effectively.

### Required Documentation

To consider a burial request, we must receive **all of the following at the same time**:

- A completed application form
- A signed cemetery rules form
- A **copy** of the green slip / cremation certificate
- The requested date and time for the burial

Once received, the Cemetery Clerk will confirm whether the requested date and time can be accommodated. If not, an email response will be sent offering **alternative available dates and times**.

This process ensures transparency and consistency and helps prevent delays caused by missing or staggered paperwork.

### **Cemetery Availability and Decisions**

Please note that burial dates and times are allocated based on the **working order and capacity of the cemetery**. As with church services where a vicar may refuse a date, the cemetery reserves the right to decline requests that cannot be accommodated.

Decisions made by the Cemetery Clerk are final and represent the position of the Cemetery Committee and Parish Council. Unfortunately, these decisions cannot be negotiated or altered.

We strongly encourage funeral directors to consider cemetery availability early in the planning process to help avoid disappointment for families.

### **Invoicing and Payment Process**

Once a burial date and time have been provisionally agreed **and all required documents have been received**, an invoice will be issued.

- **No payment should be made before an invoice is received.**
- **Payment will only be accepted via BACS transfer**
- Payment must reference the **invoice number and the surname of the deceased**.
- Payment must be received **before the burial takes place**.

Once payment is confirmed, a receipt will be issued. This receipt serves as **formal approval** for the burial to proceed. This structured process protects funeral directors by ensuring clear financial authorisation and avoids complications on the day of burial.

### **Preparation for Burial**

Following receipt of payment and arrangement between undertaker and grave digger has taken place, Huntington Cemetery will:

- Provide plot details to the grave digger
- Mark out the grave in preparation for the burial

This ensures that all preparations are completed correctly and in line with cemetery regulations.

### **Cemetery Clerk Contact and Availability**

The Cemetery Clerk role is a **seven-hour-per-week position** which includes attendance at burials. For example, three burials can account for three hours of clerk time, which naturally limits availability for direct contact.

To ensure enquiries are managed efficiently and fairly, the **primary method of contact** is now:

[cemeteryclerk@huntington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:cemeteryclerk@huntington-pc.gov.uk)

This allows the Clerk to respond fully and accurately when they are at their desk, rather than being interrupted during site duties. Going forward, the Clerk will only make **outgoing calls** where necessary, rather than receiving unscheduled incoming calls.

This approach helps funeral directors by providing clear, written responses that can be easily referenced and shared with families. This process also serves as a valid paper trail for audit purposes for all parties.

### **Working Together**

We appreciate that this represents a change from previous practices at Huntington Cemetery. These updates are designed to:

- Reduce delays and misunderstandings
- Provide consistent decision-making
- Ensure legal compliance
- Support smoother planning for funeral directors
- Protect all parties involved, including bereaved families

We thank you sincerely for your understanding and cooperation during this transition. As these procedures become routine, we are confident they will result in a **more streamlined, reliable, and professional service** for everyone involved.

### **Professional Conduct**

We value the professional relationships we have with funeral directors and are committed to working respectfully and collaboratively. However, any abusive or intolerant language directed toward council staff will not be tolerated. In such cases, the application will be rejected, and the family will need to make alternative arrangements with another funeral director