

Maintenance operations for open and closed churchyards and cemeteries.

Trees;

All trees within the churchyard area will be assessed in accordance with the councils tree policy. Any trees that are identified as requiring work will be prioritized on a Health and Safety basis, with those considered to be a danger being regarded as High Priority.

Grass Cutting;

Grass cutting operations will run from approx. Mid-March through until late October, dependent on growth rates and weather conditions. The grass shall be cut on a fortnightly basis.

Areas of grass that cannot be mown in their entirety such as around obstacles or boundaries will be strimmed to ensure that a “finished” visual quality is achieved. Any undesirable arisings that are spread to paths, hard surfaces and memorials due to the mowing operation will be blown or swept to remove and tidy.

Litter/ Litter Bins;

Litter picking operations will take place based on the requirements of the site. E.g., a site that is deemed to have a “littering” problem will receive more visits as would be appropriate.

Litter bins will be emptied weekly with litter picking normally carried out on a weekly basis.

Litter picking will also take place during any schedule maintenance visits i.e., grass cutting or shrub maintenance.

Shrub Areas;

Shrub maintenance will occur during the winter period on an annual basis. Each visit will include pruning and weed control.

Remedial pruning will take place during the summer time to ensure sight lines, paths and windows are not affected by re-growth.

Hedge Cutting;

Hedge maintenance will be carried out to retain the form or shape as required. Cutting will be done outside of the recognized bird nesting period usually between October and February. All arising will be removed from site.

Footpaths/ Hard standing Areas;

Will be kept in a litter and detritus free condition Chemical treatments will take place as indicated below

Chemical Use/ Application;

The use of herbicides will take place annually to control weed species. Area to be treated will include hard standings, paths and walk ways. Also, if appropriate, applications will also be considered around building bases, boundary lines and memorials.

Tombs/ Memorials;

Headstones and Memorials will be inspected on a periodic basis to assess their stability, in consideration of the Ministry of Justice, Managing the safety of Burial Ground Memorial guidelines 2014, and the Contract Documentation.

Memorials will be checked by visual and “hand” means.

If a memorial is deemed to be of risk it shall be made safe.

Methods of work

In order to ensure that the delivery of the service is consistent, and to maintain safe working conditions, Enterprise has processes in place that the staff should work to.

- ***Excavation of Graves***
- The excavation of graves shall be undertaken using the following process and procedures; -
- Upon receipt of the ‘Instruction for Preparation of Burial’, the Cemetery Management Team shall undertake relevant checks, which relate to names and location for interment, with any anomalies or concerns to be immediately relayed to the relevant Client Officer where necessary.
- Working in Partnership with the Client Officer, the relevant grave shall be marked out in full, ready for excavation, with all due steps taken to ensure spacing and alignment are precise. Care shall also be taken to ensure that sufficient additional measurement is allowed for the inclusion of grave shoring.
- Prior to the commencement of any works a Site Specific Risk Assessment shall be produced. As well as measuring the risk to carrying out the excavation, consideration shall also be given to the access to the grave, the safe method of operation, the positioning of the soil box, the creation of the burial platform and of course the safety of the public. Consideration shall also be given as to PPE, which shall include safety footwear, hard hats, gloves, overalls and where a mechanical digger is in operation – ear defenders.
- Where the excavation is adjacent to memorials, immediate steps must be taken to prevent damage to those memorials. In certain cases, this may mean seeking approval to dismantle a memorial; in such circumstances, this shall only be

undertaken with the express approval of the Client officer and arrangements must be made for the prompt return and safe repositioning by a qualified mason.

- Prior to the commencement of the excavation, all tools and equipment must be present and available for use. Furthermore, wherever shoring is in use it shall have been checked on a weekly frequency as to its condition and in particular the operational capacity of the hydraulic rams.
- Excavation shall be carried out to the centre of the grave space, ensuring a minimization of additional risk of collapse.
- Turf shall be lifted and re-used elsewhere within the cemetery.
- Soil boxes shall be erected, in line with the approved Risk Assessment and checked as secure. Soil boxes shall be located at a sufficient distance from the edge of the grave so as to minimize risk of collapse or fallback. Where a hand-dig, 'walk boards' shall be installed along either side of the grave.
- Heavy clay soil can increase the risk of collapse and where necessary additional wooden struts shall be used to protect the security of the soil box.
- Excavation shall be either by hand or by machine digging, depending upon whether access is available and safe, as well as, whether it is a new or re-opened grave. In any event, it shall be two-person operation, with care taken to ensure the safety of members of the public and the accuracy of the dig. All sides shall be square and vertical, with spoil deposited into the soil box (In certain unique circumstances, spoil will need to be completely removed from the location; in such circumstances, this shall be to the compound, taking care to ensure that there is no deterioration to roads and paths due to soil from tyres. Where this does occur it shall be immediately removed.).
- Any surplus soil shall be removed (as above).
- During the excavation process care must be taken to note any undue matter, such as the discovery of remains or a risk or actual collapse. In any these circumstances work shall cease and the matter should be immediately referred to the Relevant Client Officer for guidance. During this time an operative must remain at the site for safety purposes.
- As the excavation progresses, grave shoring shall be installed by trained operatives.
- Once a depth of 90mm has been reached (during a hand dig) access and egress must only be made using a ladder. All ladders must be regularly checked for suitability or deterioration and replaced as necessary. In no circumstances should an operative use the shoring as an aid to climbing out of, or descending into the grave.
- As the excavation approaches the prescribed depth, regular checks must be undertaken so as to ensure the preparation is accurate. Should an obstruction arise, which prevents the full preparation of the grave this shall also be referred to the relevant Client Officer for a decision on how to progress.

- Once the excavation is complete then the grave shall be fully covered by suitable boards to prevent risk for the public. If for any reason, during the excavation, the grave is left unattended, then the grave shall also be fully covered and all tools removed from site.
- At the completion of the work the entire surrounding area shall be fully cleaned and made safe.
- It is important to note that the usage of a mechanical digger, the installation of grave shoring and acting as banks-man are key activities, which must only be undertaken by properly trained and accredited employees.
- ***Excavation of Re-Opened / Reserved Graves***
 - All processes and procedures shall be undertaken, as detailed in ***Excavation of Graves*** above, with the following additions; -
 - Mechanical digging shall not be a consideration.
 - Care shall be taken when approaching the depth of the previous interment, ensuring an avoidance of damage to previously interred remains.
- ***Exhumation***
 - All processes and procedures shall be undertaken, as detailed in ***Excavation of Graves*** above, with the following additions; -
 - Work shall only progress with the relevant paperwork in place; i.e. the license issued by the Home Office or the Faculty issued by the Church Authority.
 - Work will only commence following the erection of suitable and approved screening, which is used to prevent public view of the exhumation site.
 - Suitable lifting equipment shall be engaged as necessary to remove the coffin/remains from the grave. Excess soil shall be cleared from the remains/coffin.
 - Freshly ground lime and disinfectant shall be used as required.
 - The removed remains shall be carefully placed in a container supplied. All other items, which are removed from the grave, shall be treated and disinfected.
 - Should any other remains require removal (to attain access) then such remains shall be returned to the grave in the same position.
 - All operatives involved with the process shall be supplied with specific PPE (goggles, disposable coveralls, gloves, etc. all of which disposed of following the completion of the procedure).
 - Wherever possible, the procedure shall be arranged outside normal hours, seeking to achieve completion, outside the view of the general public.

- ***Cremated Remains***

Cremated Remains shall be treated in various manners, dependent upon into which medium the interment is going to be made. This will include into earth, vault or graveled areas; or indeed scattered.