

## **Rother Cemeteries Specification**

The greatest care must be taken in the appointment of staff, any of whom may, by conduct or demeanour, detract from the atmosphere of reverence which is appropriate to the site.

All staff employed in the operation must be suitably aware of the sensitive nature of the cemetery. The Contractor is to impress upon their staff the need to act, dress and behave in a respectful manner on all occasions, having regard to the function of the Cemetery and to be particularly respectful of the feelings of the mourners and people visiting the Cemetery.

It may be necessary, prior to and during interments, for the Contractor to cease working within the vicinity so as not to be a source of distraction or to cause inconvenience or annoyance to the mourners.

The Contractor shall undertake all work within the Cemeteries as per specification, in addition of staff following the code of practice and legislation as appropriate: "The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration Code of Safe Working Practices for Cemeteries".

Members of the grave digging team must have undertaken a Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme (COTS) or hold an equivalent NVQ.

### **Grass Maintenance - Summary**

#### Grass Cutting Machines:

- Must be of an appropriate type to achieve the specified standard of maintenance.
- Be correctly adjusted to give a clean cut without damaging the grass and of a type that will minimise damage or compaction to the grass surface.

#### Each Cut:

- Move all movable items, i.e. litter baskets, seats and replace after cutting to the original or suitable alternative position to permit grass re-growth or repair.
- Ensure that all litter collection including dog excrement has taken place prior to mowing; (under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act, dog faeces are included for removal).
- Allow for strimming around obstacles, but avoid causing bare patches or damage to plants.

**Ornamental Grass:**

- Cut to a height of 12mm and remove arisings using a cylinder mower with a minimum of 80 cuts per metre, or an approved rotary mower with collection facility, to remove stalks.
- The height of growth must not exceed 25mm throughout the year.
- Leaf Clearance.
- Rake off and remove all leaves and debris from grass monthly from mid-October to January.
- Deliver all arisings to composting site(s) or to tip at contractor's expense.

**High Amenity Grass:**

- Cut to a height of 25mm and leave arisings.
- The height of growth must not exceed 50mm.
- Where hard standing areas i.e. paths/steps adjoin grass areas, arisings are to be blown back onto grass areas by means of mechanical blowers.
- Ensure all adjoining hard areas are free from arisings before leaving site.
- Clear all leaves and debris from grass at a frequency that prevents any damage to the sward.
- Deliver all arisings to composting site(s) or to tip at contractor's expense.
- Strim edges around wall/fence bases and obstacles throughout the growing season.
- All obstacles to be maintained to a maximum height of 50mm.
- All semi-mature or newly planted trees shall be trimmed by non-erosive methods.

**Amenity Grass:**

- Cut to a height of 50mm throughout the growing season and leave arisings.
- The height of growth must not exceed 100mm.

- Height of cut on areas may be varied by the Contract Officer, subsequently maintain these areas to the specified height throughout the year.
- Trim edges around wall/fence bases and obstacles throughout the growing season.

**Environmental Areas:**

- A few environmental areas exist, identified for their ecological interest, and as such have important, specific maintenance requirements in promoting biodiversity.
- Some areas in this category simply act as a green corridor on or between green space.
- Where any wildflowers are noted on site, the Contractor is to notify the Contract Officer.

EA1

- Cut once each year in early September to a height of 75mm and leave cuttings.

EA2

- Cut twice a year, the first cut being undertaken during the second two weeks of April and the second cut at the end of August to a height of between 75mm and leave cuttings.

**Hedge maintenance:**

- Trim once per year in October.
- Trim carefully and neatly under normal maintenance to regular line and shape.
- Maintain existing dimensions and form unless otherwise instructed by the Contract Officer.
- Remove current growth rather than old wood.
- All hedges must be inspected for nesting birds prior to cutting. The typical bird nesting season is March – August. Any hedges found with nests either in use or in the process of being built should not be maintained until nest is abandoned. Clarification can be sought from the Contract Officer.

- Remove weeds including ivy and bramble, grass and litter when removing clippings.

**Shrub beds:**

- Maintain grass edges to the specified standard indicated for the surrounding grass areas.
- Visit shrub beds at monthly intervals throughout the year to ensure beds are being maintained as specified and in a clean condition.
- At all times the beds and paths shall be left in a clean, tidy condition immediately following completion of any operation.
- All shrub areas are to be kept free of litter throughout the year and the Contractor is to allow for collection and immediate removal.
- Prune shrubs at correct time of year relevant to the species.
- Clean site and cultivate beds to leave a smooth weed free tilth on completion.
- All pruning and weeds to be kept clear of adjacent pathways and removed on the same day.

**Rose Beds/Head Borders:**

- The beds should be clean with an open structure and sharp edges.
- The plants should be disease and pest free and maintained to maximise their decorative appearance.
- Carry out low, medium, or long pruning as dictated by the type and variety using well maintained, sharp pruning tools (excluding hedge trimmers).
- Remove dead blooms from Hybrid Tea and Floribunda roses during the flowering period, excluding those grown for decorative hips.
- During November cut back long stems on current year's growth by one third.
- Hand weed beds throughout the year.
- Remove all fallen leaves from the beds.

- The phrase 'hand weed' includes removal of weeds by hand and hand-hoeing using a Dutch hoe, causing minimum disturbance to mulch/soil surface. Do not hoe deeper than 25mm.
- Leave beds and surrounding grass areas in a neat condition.
- The use of residual herbicide is not permitted on rose beds.
- During April supply and apply granular rose fertiliser at 50gms per square metre.
- Maintain roses free from pests and diseases by applying chemical controls to top and underside of foliage.
- Maintain grass edges to the specified standard indicated for the surrounding grass areas.
- Where there is evidence of shortage of nitrogen, phosphate, or potash, supply and apply compound fertiliser.
- Where there is evidence of magnesium, iron or manganese shortage, take remedial action.

**Seasonal Bedding/Perpetuity Graves:**

- Planting shall be undertaken twice a year in October and May.
- Clear the previous season's bedding, including bulbs, corms, and tubers.
- In preparation to receive summer bedding, dig over all the beds carefully remove perennial weeds and litter and remove all arisings.
- Supply and apply to all beds approved slow-release general fertiliser with NPK Ratio 16.8.12 at 50gms per square metre during preparation.
- In preparation to receive Spring bedding, supply and apply compost as agreed with Contract Officer to a full even depth of 50mm over the whole area of the beds and dig into a depth of 225mm (or such lesser depth as the Contract Officer shall instruct).
- Remove all dead flower heads, remove all litter, thoroughly hand weed and lightly hoe all beds throughout the year.
- Maintain grass edges to the specified standard indicated for the surrounding grass areas. Remove all arisings from the bed and surrounds.

- Maintain vertical edge of 50mm around the grass edge of the bed.
- Keep all beds free from fallen leaves and remove all arisings.
- Keep all bedding plants free from pests and disease by applying appropriate approved chemical controls.
- Do not use sprays during windy and/or drought conditions.
- Water to maintain optimum growing conditions in all beds throughout the growing season ensuring adequate water penetration and avoid puddling of the surface.
- Hoe not later than the next working day.
- Supply and apply organically based liquid feed. Allow for three applications during the growing season to all summer bedding.
- Remove flower heads and stems from species used for foliage effect.

**Litter:**

- Collect all litter, including stones, bricks, cardboard, plastic, paper, confectionery wrappings, bottles, cans and containers or any visible or offensive debris, including arisings from fly tipping, (up to one cubic metre consolidated).
- Dog/animal faeces are to be collected and removed from site using mechanical means on a rolling weekly programme. Allow for immediate graffiti removal under this item.
- During the growing season arrange for litter collection to take place immediately before regular mowing.

**Litter Bins:**

- All collected litter should be bagged and sealed and removed immediately to contained storage facilities, ready for disposal to approved tip.
- Litter bins are to be cleaned monthly to remove dirt; attention must be paid to both internal and external surfaces.
- Lubricate hinges and locking mechanisms after each clean.

**Tree Wells:**

A 1m vegetation free base must be maintained around young trees in lawn areas to prevent strimmer damage.

**Snow and Ice clearance:**

When requested by the Cemetery Officer snow and Ice removal and the application of salt (supplied by cemeteries officer) may be requested.

**Locking and unlocking of gates:**

The Contractor shall undertake the locking and unlocking of entrance gates at Bexhill Cemetery only, as required. The gates shall be unlocked at 08.00am and locked half an hour prior to sunset or 08.00pm, whichever is earlier, Monday to Sunday including Bank Holidays. The Contractor shall ensure that no gate is locked earlier than the official closing time and that no members of the public are locked inside the Cemetery. Closing Times Notices are supplied and placed on the gates by the Cemetery Officer.

**Bexhill Chapel of Remembrance:**

At Bexhill Chapel of Remembrance the glass display case shall be kept clean and polished. All chairs, ledges and fittings shall be dusted off and wiped with a lightly moistened cloth (including cleaning fluid). The floor shall be cleaned with a lightly moistened mop using a mild floor cleaning fluid.

The condition of plants and flowers within the Chapel shall be continually monitored and any that are dying are to be removed. Any memorial pot plants in the Chapel shall also be checked and watered as required.

**Book of Remembrance:**

Every day of the year The Book of Remembrance shall be turned to the correct page by 08.30am. Extreme care shall be taken; white gloves shall be worn and afterwards the display cabinet shall be locked again.

**Grave Matting:**

New dressings are to be supplied by the contractor at the start of the contract period and adequate supplies of clean dressings are to be maintained. The Contractor is to supply and provide for the provision to maintain, clean, and dry the matting at their own expense. Equipment to undertake this requirement can be stored at the Cemetery subject to approval by the Cemetery Manager and H&S requirements and any manufacturer's recommendations are met.

**Muslim Burials:**

Provision is to be made in preparation for any Muslim burial required over a weekend or Bank Holiday. Depending on when notification of burial is received,

provision of resources required for digging, dressing and preparation of grave may be required on the weekend and/or bank holiday, where the grave space will need to be prepared the previous day. Suitably qualified staff will be available to undertake required duties.

**Grave Digging:**

Lockable lids are to be attached to the shoring in place of covering the graves with boards.

**Grave Spoil:**

- A spoil board is to be placed adjacent to the grave and all necessary covers employed to protect any adjacent memorial in line with the Institute of Burial and Cremation and Administration Code of Safe Working Practices for Cemeteries. Any spoil mound adjacent to the grave shall be completely covered with grass matting.
- At Bexhill Cemetery the grave spoil should be removed to the compound in the Contractors yard.
- Storage on site of small amounts of spoil for use in topping up sunken graves may be allowed, in areas approved by the Contract Officer. On a monthly basis the Contractor must remove any spoil from the site that is more than the original amount agreed, to an approved tip at his own expense.

**Grave Digging Specification/Non-Routine Work:**

- The Contractor will in addition to specified horticultural works be required to undertake works relating to the interment of the deceased.
- In carrying out such work the Contractor and his staff shall exhibit a caring attitude, showing respect to both mourners and staff employed by funeral directors, and others visiting the cemetery or burial ground.
- The Contractor shall provide an efficient communication system throughout the period of this contract, to ascertain the details of any funerals, interment of ashes etc. which may be forthcoming.
- The maintenance costs and charges arising from the use of any communication system shall be the responsibility of the Contractor.
- The Contractor will be informed both verbally and in writing of the date and time of each interment, location, coffin size and depth of burials.



- ***At least 48 hours' notice will be given for burials and 24 hours' notice for the interment of ashes, with the exception of Muslim burials which may, when possible, take place within 24 hours notice.*** (Details re. procedures in respect of interments, will be supplied by the Cemetery Officer).
- The confirmation of the exact location of the grave space is to be agreed on site with the Cemetery Officer after receipt of the above notification.
- The Contractor shall make due allowance in his tendered rates for grave excavation to cover all costs associated with the location of graves prior to interment.
- The Contractor shall have the grave ready for confirmatory measurement at 9am on the day of the interment.
- The Contractor shall confirm these details with the staff responsible for carrying out the excavation, in writing, on a form to be provided by the Cemetery Officer (it is of paramount importance that the Contractor considers the thickness of any timbering, shielding etc.)
- All such works must conform with the current Health and Safety regulations.
- Thorough risk assessments will be carried out prior to commencement.
- On receipt of instructions from the Cemetery Officer the Contractor may be required to excavate a few spare graves within the Cemetery.
- Such works shall be paid for at the Contractor's Tendered Rates which shall include for maintaining the safety of these excavations until such time as they are utilised.
- The location of graves within the Cemetery can be identified by reference to the Cemetery plans held by the Cemetery Officer.
- Prior to carrying out any excavation, turf removal or similar operation the Contractor shall place boards assembled to form 3-sided grave tidy with flooring in positions on the adjacent open space or grave space.
- In the latter case the utmost care should be taken to avoid damage to or contamination of the Memorial.
- Before carrying out any excavation the Contractor shall examine adjacent memorials to ensure that they are in a safe condition, in the event of any memorial being unsafe or damaged the Contractor shall immediately inform the Cemetery Officer.

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- If the monumental mason does not remove the memorial on the grave to be excavated in sufficient time to allow the Contractor to commence the excavation, the Contractor shall immediately notify the Cemetery Officer who may instruct the Contractor to remove the memorial to a place of safe storage.
- Memorials adjacent to the excavation site shall be protected during excavation and back filling operations with boards and tarpaulins provided by the Contractor.
- In the event of there being insufficient space adjacent to the grave to accommodate spoil the Contractor shall remove spoil to a position within the burial ground as directed by the Cemetery Officer. The Contractor shall make sufficient provision within his rates to cover for such eventualities.
- Having first identified the correct location of the grave to be excavated, the Contractor shall lift the turf from the site to the final dimensions of the finished grave, and shall place the turf safely for reinstatement, on an already settled grave.
- The Contractor shall lift the turf from the site to the final dimensions of the finished grave, and shall place the turf safely for reinstatement, on an already settled grave.
- Having removed turf, the Contractor shall now excavate the grave to the required dimensions.
- All spoil excavated shall be stored at least 0.75 metres away from the edge of the grave.
- In carrying out his work the Contractor shall take steps to ensure that no adjoining or underlying remains are disturbed and during excavation the Contractor shall ensure that the grave is adequately shored using tools equipment and materials to be supplied by the Contractor.
- If, during the excavations the Contractor unearths any human remains, then the work shall be suspended, and the Cemetery Officer notified immediately.
- In carrying out his work the Contractor shall take steps to ensure that no adjoining or underlying remains are disturbed and during excavation. The Contractor shall ensure that the grave is adequately shored using tools, equipment, and materials to be supplied by the Contractor.
- Throughout the excavation of the grave the Contractor shall ensure that two members of his staff are in attendance, one to act as banks man and

to assist as required in the event of any accident; except that this requirement shall be deemed not to apply during the excavation of the first one metre depth of the grave.

- Having completed the excavation, the grave shall be securely covered, to remove any element of danger to persons entering the burial ground, this task shall be undertaken on every occasion where a grave is to be left open prior to an interment.
- The cover shall be removed prior to the following operations taking place.
- It is a requirement of this Contract that prior to the covering of the newly excavated grave the Cemetery Officer and Contract Manager shall physically measure the grave to ensure that it complies in all respects with the instructions issued to the grave diggers.
- In Rye cemetery the graves are dug on the day of the burial and therefore a cover is not used.
- The costs of expediting these checks shall be deemed to have been included in the rates submitted for the excavation of graves.
- Prior to the arrival of the cortege the following tasks shall be undertaken, final preparations being fully completed no less than 1 hour prior to the arrival of the cortege at the burial ground.
- The grave shall be emptied of any water that has collected within it during or after excavation, and a layer of grass cuttings or wood shavings shall be spread across the bottom of the grave.
- Stout boarding provided by the Contractor shall be laid both sides of the grave to a minimum width of 400mm to provide a firm footing for the coffin bearers. In addition to this place a large sheet of board 2m x 1m over this also.
- The platform and the grave sides shall now be draped with artificial grass matting provided by the Contractor.
- The matting shall be arranged so that the sides of the grave are completely covered and that the surrounds are covered to an area extending 60cm.
- Beyond the edges of the grave, grass matting shall be pegged as required and shall be neatly and tidily arranged.

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- The matting and webbing will be purchased and supplied by the Contractor and will be always maintained in a clean condition.
- When required the Contractor should make allowance for washing of such matting to keep it presentable.
- Any spoil mound adjacent to the grave shall now be completely covered with artificial grass matting (which will be purchased and supplied by the Contractor), all storage boards being similarly covered. This should be always kept clean.
- The area around the grave shall be cleared of any debris or litter leaving the site in a tidy and presentable condition.
- A quantity of dry friable soil shall be placed at the head of the grave. This should be stored in a wooden container and be supplied by the Cemetery Officer.
- Lowering webbing (normally two pairs, occasionally three) and putlocks (Bearers) shall now be placed in position. Local Funeral Directors require putlocks and webbing to be laid out on ground adjacent to the grave head or foot (whichever the more appropriate access point) for webbing up. A further set of putlocks are also placed across the centres of graves to assist the interment ceremony. Sometimes a 3rd set of webbing may be required and due allowance should be made for this.
- Whilst the grave is uncovered and prior to the arrival of the funeral party a member of the Contractor's staff must remain at the grave side to ensure public safety, until the Cemetery Manager or representative arrives at the grave. This member of staff shall remain present on the site to provide any assistance that may be required in the event of the collapse of the grave or shoring and to ensure the safety of those attending the funeral, consequently, he must remain in such a position that he has a clear view of the grave itself. During the burial any staff not directly required shall remain out of sight of mourners, and no mechanical operations shall be undertaken within the hearing of the mourners. Any tools and equipment shall be out of sight of the funeral party.
- Immediately after the cortege has left the site the grave shall be backfilled. During backfilling spoil shall not be allowed to fall onto the coffin in such a manner that it may cause damage. During the backfilling, spoil shall be consolidated at every 30cm depth. The surface of the grave should finally be mounded to produce a uniform and smooth mound of curved cross-section standing 50cm proud of the surrounding surface and the turf replaced on the grave. All work is to be completed on the day of burial. During June to Mid-September (incl.) the turf removed

from the ground shall not be replaced after mounding, but instead the grave shall be over-soiled and seeded at the rate of 20gms/m<sup>2</sup>.

- On re-opened graves where the Contractor is unable to achieve the legally required minimum of 3ft of soil backfilled above the coffin lid either:
    - i. Where 2ft or more of soil above the coffin lid can be achieved a clay backfill must be made.
    - ii. Where only less than 2ft of soil above the coffin lid is possible a concrete layer midway between the coffin and the grounds surface should be laid as a seal.
- Where subsidence takes place to a depth greater than 100 mm below the level of the surrounding turf on a grave whether excavated by the Contractor or not, then the Contractor shall infill the depression, making good with seed/turf as appropriate for the time of year and shall make do allowance in his Tendered Rates for all such remedial works. This work is to be co-ordinated in conjunction with the Cemetery Officer's requirement.
- The Contractor will be required to compile a list of all sunken graves noticed during his operations and provide such list to the Cemetery Officer in the first week of March and September for retention within the Cemetery records.
  - Having completed tasks associated with the grave all excess spoil shall be removed from the site to a place of storage agreed with the Supervising Officer or disposed of to the Contractor's tip.
  - After mounding, floral tributes shall be carried from the laying out area and placed on the grave in a careful and attractive manner.
  - Any memorial which has been soiled during the excavation or backfilling of the grave should now be thoroughly cleaned as should the area around the excavation.
  - All lowering webbing grass matting and other equipment should now be cleaned and returned to the Contractor's store.
  - All floral tributes should be removed from the grave for disposal 14 days after the funeral or shall be removed at such time prior to the expiry of the 14-day period as they become unsightly.
  - All tools and equipment shall be maintained in a clean and sound condition – all biers, lowering webbing etc must be checked prior to each interment.

- Any defective materials being replaced immediately from stock provided and held by the Contractor.
- All used webbing shall be taken from the Cemetery at the end of each calendar year and shall be replaced with new webbing of a type approved by the Cemetery Manager.
- The Contractor's attention is drawn to the average number of earth burials, which take place at 100 per year.
- The Contractor's tendered rates in respect of the excavation of graves should be based on these figures and on all aspects of the interment processes.
- A client instruction will be raised at the end of each month based on the actual number of graves completed.
- Attendance "out of normal working hours" – at funerals or for the excavation of graves falls into two categories.
- Occasionally the Contractor will be expected to nominate a member of staff to attend a funeral during the lunch time period but will be deemed to have made do allowance in his working arrangements and tendered rates to cover for this eventuality.
- Interments are between the hours of 9am and 3pm (2.30pm between beginning of December and end of February) only. On Fridays between the hours of 9am to 2pm only.

### **Cremated Remains:**

From time to time, as directed by the Cemetery Officer, the Contractor shall prepare and reinstate sites for the burial of cremated remains.

The specification for the work is as follows:

- (a) On receipt of instruction from the Cemetery Officer, the Contractor shall prepare a site in the position required.
- (b) A spoil board should be placed adjacent to the grave and all necessary covers employed to protect any adjacent memorial.
- (c) The Contractor shall now excavate a hole 45cm square and 50cm in depth, the hole to be square, have vertical sides, and a flat and level base. Turf should be carefully removed and set aside for reinstating the grave after interment.
- (d) In the event of water collecting in the hole, this should be removed.
- (e) In the event of there being insufficient space adjacent to the site for spoil to be stored after excavation this should be removed to a site to be specified

by the Supervising Officer, and the Contractor shall make provision in his Tendered Rates to allow for this eventuality.

(f) Having completed the excavation, the site should be left clean and tidy, all covers should be removed from memorials and any spoil mound adjacent to the site should be covered with grass matting.

(g) After the interment of remains the Contractor shall immediately reinstate the site filling and consolidating the soil to leave the surface at such a level that the turf removed is relayed flush with surrounding turf. Re-turfing should follow immediately after the reinstatement of the excavation.

**Headstone Borders/Lawned Cemetery:**

All new areas of the Cemetery are laid out as lawn plots with .6m wide borders running.