



Bishop's Stortford Town Council Grave Re-Use Protocol

1. All grave re-opens in the re-use areas will be undertaken with the utmost dignity, due care, and diligence due to the likelihood of human skeletal remains being disturbed. Where possible this work will be undertaken before the Old Cemetery is open to the public, although there will be occasions, where work will need to proceed during normal opening hours. Grave diggers shall be aware of the need to maintain dignity at all times in the disturbance of skeletal remains and the potential for visitors attending nearby graves being offended. Therefore, work will cease whilst visitors are in close proximity to the grave being re-opened.
2. Any disturbance of human remains shall be noted by the grave digger and sent to the Cemetery Administrator. The details to be recorded shall include the depth at which the remains were found. (This depth must be measured from the top of the lawned area.)
3. Details of the remains found shall be recorded using a six-point scale (full details set out below). This information shall be sent to the Cemetery Administrator for recording.
 - 0 No remains found.
 - 1 Small fragments of skeletal remains found.
 - 2 Significant skeletal remains found.
 - 3 Significant skeletal remains and fragments of coffin found.
 - 4 Clearly defined but damaged coffin and significant skeletal remains found – Not to be used
 - 5 Fully intact coffin found – Not to be used
 - 6 Remains that are not fully decomposed – Not to be used.
4. Points 4,5 & 6 on the scale above are shown in red as at these points re-use of the grave will not proceed, and the grave will be backfilled. Any remaining depth may be used for burial provided the previous coffin / non-decomposed remains are not disturbed.
5. A note of any grave artefacts found during the opening of the grave will also be sent to the Cemetery Administrator together with a brief description of the items found. These are to be recorded in the same grave record with any skeletal remains found.
6. All remains that are disturbed will be re-buried in the same grave in which they are found.
7. All staff required to undertake the re-opening of a grave for re-use will receive an in house induction training course ensuring full understanding of this protocol and any other guidance issued in respect of the work required.
8. The Cemetery Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the day-to-day implementation of the re-use in accordance with this protocol under the guidance of the Chief Executive Officer.
9. A photographic record of any significant findings shall be taken and kept with the grave record on the Burial Authority's files and only be disclosed to those with legal authority to view.