

HELSEBY PARISH COUNCIL

HELSEBY PUBLIC CEMETERY RISK ASSESSMENT

Version 3 as adopted by the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee on 15 July 2024

Revision by the Parks, Cemetery and Allotments Committee due: July 2025

IDENTIFIED RISK	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCE OF RISK	ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT (H/M/L)	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK OCCURRING (H/M/L)	CONTROLS TO MANAGE RISK
Poor management of cemetery	<p>Undue distress to bereft family members.</p> <p>Loss of amenity.</p> <p>Damage to the reputation of the Council.</p>	M	L	<p>Robust internal controls including: records of interment (burials and ashes) and scattering of ashes, cemetery regulations, cemetery plan cross- referenced with burial books and up to date records kept of interments and receipts. Review and update regulations periodically.</p> <p>Staff and councillors to attend relevant training courses. Continue membership with ICCM.</p>
Grass cutting including mowing and strimming	<p>Injury to operator and potentially to members of the public</p> <p>Cemetery left in an untidy condition.</p>	M	L	<p>Contractor to have own risk assessment in place as well as public liability insurance of at least £5m. Contractor to use equipment fit for purpose and ensure it is well maintained and used to manufacturer's specification. Contractor to wear PPE and ensure the area is clear of litter, stones and other debris before commencing cutting and strimming. Contractor's risk assessment to be reviewed at contract renewal. Keep contractor's insurance certificate and risk assessment on file. Paths to be cleared of any arisings. Grass cutting and strimming to be carried out regularly during growing season. Contractor to keep up to date with relevant training courses.</p>

<p>Unstable headstones, gates, railings, grave monuments and surrounds.</p> <p>Damage to cemetery garage.</p>	<p>Death/injury to users of the cemetery</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Nominated councillors and Cemetery Manager (Clerk) to carry out an annual health and safety check. Visual inspections to be carried out by Clerk and contractor when visiting the cemetery. Thorough check of memorials at least every 4 years to ensure stability. Clerk to forward application form to stonemasons, setting out requirements for them to be BRAMM/NAMM registered. Memorials that are unstable and deemed to be of a danger will be laid down.</p> <p>Periodic checks made to the stability of the cemetery garage.</p>
<p>Uneven and/or slippery surfaces - slips, trips, and falls.</p>	<p>Injury to users of the cemetery</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Annual health and safety checks carried out. Contractor to ensure all footpaths are kept clear of trip and slip hazards such as branches, tree roots and dead leaves. Releveling of burial ground to be considered if required. Install relevant safety notices about any hazards.</p>
<p>Grave digging</p>	<p>Falling/tripping into open graves. Injury to grave diggers and users of the cemetery.</p> <p>Graves being dug in the wrong place.</p> <p>Open graves left in an untidy condition during funeral services.</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Council to ensure they employ reliable and competent contractors with their own risk assessments and public liability insurance in place.</p> <p>Council to draw up a policy setting out grave digging procedures and health and safety requirements (e.g. shoring of dug graves, graves to be filled on day of interment). Clerk to have direct contact with grave diggers, rather than through the funeral director.</p> <p>Lowering of coffin into grave space by trained staff only, not mourners</p>

				Grave digging waste to be stored in area allocated in cemetery and cleared periodically. Special arrangements to be made for the disposal of spoil excavated in the course of exhuming human remains.
Weedkilling	Chemical burns/breathing problems. Injury to contractor and members of the public.	M	L	Council to ensure they employ reliable and competent contractors. Contractors to be liable for their own COSHH assessment.
Fees and Charges	Insufficient fees and charges for burials and headstones could lead to insufficient Council reserves for future burial needs. Overwhelming demand for plots if fees significantly lower than other nearby cemeteries	L	L	Review of fees by the PCA Committee at least once a year.
Unstable trees, broken public seats	Injury to users of the cemetery	H	L	Tree survey to be carried out at least every 5 years. Cemetery contractor to ensure benches are kept well maintained and secure.
Wrong plots allocated, interment into incorrect plot, unlawful burials	Plots allocated for interments when already been purchased by someone else. Body goes into wrong grave. Relatives disputing burial rights following burial.	H	L	Robust maps and records to be kept. Insurance cover for any errors and potential exhumations. Clerk to ensure that applicant always has the Exclusive Right of Burial or puts legal documents into place to indemnify the Council. No pre-purchase of plots before death. Maximum number of 3 people to be named on Right of Burial. Funeral directors to complete Council's Notice of Interment to minimise risk any of misunderstandings.

				Clerk or Cllr. to check nameplate on coffin before burial.
Loss of burial records	Loss of records due to fire, theft, flooding, etc.	H	L	Burial records, including historical documents, are kept in a fireproof safe. Some burial records are recorded on Excel and stored electronically in cloud-based storage. Consider digitising all future burial records (Clerk to investigate options available and costs).
Emergency in cemetery	Users unable to locate appropriate personnel in case of emergency	M	L	Name and address of Parish Council on the railings by gates. Postcode of cemetery on notice by gates – required when calling emergency services to site.
Cemetery becoming full	All graves are occupied and there is no space left for the local community to bury loved ones	M	L	Estimate how long grave space will last. Seek suitable land for a second cemetery. Continue allocating funds to earmarked reserves for acquiring land suitable for cemetery use. Ensure that any current remaining space is used effectively. All graves to be dug at least 2 deep (ground conditions permitting).

ACTION PLAN BASED ON ABOVE:

- Nominated councillor(s) and Clerk to carry out an annual health and safety check.
- Clerk to draw up a grave digging policy and share with grave diggers.
- Clerk to investigate options available and costs for digitising cemetery records.