

PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

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29 March 2023

TO: MEMBERS OF THE LEISURE, TOURISM AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
Councillors A P Flide (Chairman), A N Rees (Vice Chairman), Mrs J Colwill,
Mrs J Dawe, M Rickard, Mrs T Walter and vacancy

Dear Member

All Members of the Committee are hereby summoned to attend an Extra-Ordinary meeting of the **LEISURE, TOURISM AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** in the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station House, Padstow** on **Tuesday 4 April 2023** at **6.00 pm** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted as set out hereunder.

Yours faithfully

K E Pemberton

Kathy Pemberton
Town Clerk

Please Note: Start time for this meeting

Agenda **Press & Public are invited to attend**

- 1.** To receive **apologies for absence and announcements (if any)**
- 2.** To receive **declarations of interest** relating to items on the agenda in accordance with Padstow Town Council's code of conduct.
- 3. Public Participation:** to receive submissions from members of the public relating to items on the agenda, in accordance with the Council's code of conduct & standing orders.
- 4. Padstow Cemetery Regulations:**
Children's Graves: To give consideration to this matter following referral by Council following a request made by the member of public and subsequent deferral by Committee and discuss and decide on way forward. (p 1-11)
- 5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC:** To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution: That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.
- 6. Padstow Cemetery Regulations:** To note confidential papers relating to agenda item 4.

LEISURE TOURISM AND OPEN SPACES: 4 APRIL 2023

AGENDA ITEM 4): PADSTOW CEMETERY REGULATIONS: CHILDREN'S GRAVES [REISSUED FROM 14 MARCH, AGENDA ITEM 7 ii)]

1. Background

- 1.1 At the November meeting of the Full Council it was "**RESOLVED** to i) *recommend that the Leisure, Tourism and Open Spaces Committee look at the issues of children's graves as outlined in 5.3 of the agenda report in the "to follow" papers..."*
- 1.2 Paragraph 5.3 of the agenda report referred to above, outlined *"the significance and comfort that is brought to parents who are able to keep their children's graves bright places to visit, surrounded by special items which help them to mourn" and that " this approach is supported by the charity SANDs (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)."*

Subsequently a letter has been received detailing the personal experience of a member of the public and what a change in regulations would mean to them. Due to the level of personal detail, this letter has been shared with Committee members under separate confidential cover.

- 1.3 There are currently no specific regulations covering children's graves in the Padstow Town Council Cemetery Regulations. This includes the lack of a regulation relating to the maximum height of a child's headstone. At present, children's graves are regulated in the same way as any other grave and the following applies:

"The placing on graves of glass containers or shades, items of pottery, tins, plastic or wire mesh fences or other items of metal, plastic or other material are forbidden and will be removed by the Council without notice. Temporary wooden crosses are permitted."

- 1.4 Padstow Cemetery has 4 designated children's areas (2 of which can accept further burials. Attached is a map outlining these areas (appendix 1). There are also children interred in other areas of the cemetery, not specifically for children.

Children have been interred in the old cremation area, the cremation extension area and the main cemetery extension. Often the reasons for interring children outside of the children's area are due to a parent's wish to be interred with the child in the future, or a desire for the grave to be close to other family members.

2. Children's Graves As A Place of Comfort

- 2.1 Council have been made aware that parents find enormous comfort in the little items and mementoes placed on a child's grave and that this helps make it an easier place to visit. It has been suggested that without these mementoes, a grave can look sad and morbid as it has nothing special to show how loved the child is.

- 2.2 Photographs have been received showing examples of children's graves understood to be permitted in other cemetery's (locations unknown) which are brightly decorated and adorned with objects. These are depicted in appendix 2.
- 2.3 The academic paper *Death, Memory and Material Culture* written by Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey (provided by SANDS) has also been received. Council has been asked to note the extracts highlighted in appendix 3 as evidence of research undertaken on the importance of how graves are kept. The extracts refer to "memory making" through "objects" and their importance as "systems of recall for persons and social groups that have been.....traumatised by loss".
- 2.4 The article further suggests that of toys placed on the graves of children - *"such ritualised placement of objects maintains the material culture of childhood as though the children were still alive"*. Of objects left at graves generally, it suggests comfort is derived from *"continued material contact established at the grave, which is expressed through the process of gift giving or the assemblage of specific objects sustaining the 'everyday lives' of the departed"*.
- 2.5 SANDS also advocate through their bereavement literature the importance of making memories as a way of supporting bereaved parents and make a number of suggestions as to how a family may do this, one of which is of course tending to a graveside memorial. However, it is only fair to note that in respect of grave memorials, SANDS do advise parents *"there may be restrictions on what you can place on and around your baby's grave. Please contact the cemetery for more information"*.

3. Existing Support For Individualised Memorial Spaces Within The Regulations

- 3.1 Also referenced in *Death, Memory and Material Culture* is the rising trend by families to create *"increasingly differentiated memorials that aptly capture or express aspects of individuals to whom they are dedicated"*. For example, through the engraving of memorial stones with pictures or images which hold personal meaning or even photographs of the deceased in life.
- 3.2 The article suggests that "displaying a living likeness at the grave sustains a publicly visible face that has been selected as the preferred memory form....establishing the headstone as a distinctive physical presence that 'lives'.....and shapes memory making at the graveside".
- 3.3 This type of memorial is permitted in Padstow Cemetery, subject to the stone complying with size and material regulations. Indeed, there are presently children's memorials in the cemetery with photographs included on headstones and tablets as well as children's memorials with individualised images of meaning such as baby footprints.

4. Specific Regulations For Children's Graves

- 4.1 It would be fair to say that the memory practices associated with the leaving of mementoes on graves "infuses these material objects with a

high degree of subjectivity” for those who leave them. However, the Council, as the burial authority and guardian of the public space, does have a duty to ensure that the space remains a reverential and welcoming place to all who visit it. It must therefore bear in mind that not all who visit may consider mementoes and objects in the same way. Furthermore, part of keeping the cemetery a respectful place means ensuring that routine grounds maintenance can and does take place, in order to do this the cemetery needs to be free of obstruction and hazard.

- 4.2 To understand how the regulations currently applied to children’s graves in Padstow Cemetery compare with cemeteries in the surrounding area, the Support Officer contacted a number of other cemeteries for information.
- 4.3 In total, 9 individual Councils were contacted as well as Cornwall Council who are responsible for a number of cemeteries across the county. They were all asked whether they have separate regulations relating to children’s graves and, if so, what these are, as well as whether they have a specific children’s area.
- 4.4 Of the 9 responses, 5 had specific baby/children’s areas but none of the individual cemeteries had separate regulations for the graves of babies/children except some in relation to the size of headstones only. The exception to this was Cornwall Council. Cornwall Council do have different regulations relating to children’s graves however, this reflects the fact that the children’s area is kerbed and so there is not a list of non-permitted items such as the one found in the regulations relating to their lawned cemeteries. The regulations covering the children’s area do however specify that in relation to placing items on the grave, permission must be sought from the registrar who’s decision is final.
- 4.5 Given the lack of specific children’s regulations in the cemeteries that responded, it was thought that in order to further understand the comparability, or not, of Padstow Cemetery it would be helpful to look at the general regulations of these cemeteries. In particular, regulations in respect of items and mementoes placed on graves. These regulations are listed in the table in appendix 4 and members will note they are all broadly similar to Padstow Cemetery.
- 4.6 The common theme that came through in the responses from other cemeteries was pragmatism given the sensitive nature of children’s graves. This too aligns to the approach currently taken in Padstow Cemetery.
- 4.7 The exception to 4.6 is the Cremation Extension Area. This area has been more strictly enforced in order to uphold the Council’s original design concept for a formal and attractive place of remembrance with cremation tablets of 15” x 12” in size with an integral vase hole in the upper left hand corner only.

5. Information From The ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management)

5.1 The Support Officer also sought information from the ICCM, of which Padstow Town Council is a member. The ICCM advised of the following approaches which are adopted by some cemeteries in respect of managing children's areas:

- i) Permitting families to leave whatever they want within the grave space as long as it isn't dangerous, offensive to anyone else, or encroaching on anybody else's space. However, this is on the understanding that the cemetery are not able to maintain the grave, and that the family therefore need to. If at any point the family feel unable to continue maintaining the area, they should advise the cemetery who will move items to the head of the grave and take over the maintenance;
- ii) Reducing the burden of maintenance by replacing grass with gravel. (For this to be most effective, this would require graves to be kerbed, something not presently permitted and which would also cause expense to families as well as an ad hoc look to the cemetery itself); and
- iii) Placing a wooden shed or shelter in the children's section where families can leave things like teddies, so that they don't get wet and dirty when left on a grave.

6. Alternative approaches

6.1 As well as the approaches highlighted by the ICCM, there are a number of other approaches that could be considered such as:

- i) Permitting some mementoes in a way similar to 5.1 i) but limiting the amount.
- ii) Permitting mementoes provided that they are kept on the headstone plinth, either unlimited upon the space or limited to a specified number.
- iii) Setting a defined memorial area immediately in front of the headstone for mementoes not exceeding a specified area or height.

7. Considerations

7.1 Would Committee like to see the introduction of regulations specific to children's graves which would allow for special items to be placed on a grave?

If so, does Committee wish:-

- i) this to apply to children's graves solely within all 4 children's area's or
- ii) to all graves in which a child is buried irrespective of the grave's location?

7.2 If i) above, Committee may wish to give further consideration to what impact this would have on children's graves not in the children's area;

If ii) above, Committee may wish to give further consideration to whether any specific regulations would differ between burial plots and cremation plots.

In the case of either i) or ii) above, Committee may wish to give further thought to:

- The type, style and size of item/s permitted;
- How any changes will impact visitors to adult graves for whom the regulations would not apply;
- How any graves without headstones might be impacted or disadvantaged;
- Whether any changes would have any financial implications for the families of existing graves.

7.3 Clearly as outlined in this report there is much to consider and any significant change to the regulations would need to be carefully communicated to EROB owners and the wider cemetery users. If minded to make changes to the regulations in respect of children's graves, it may be helpful for Committee members to agree "in principle" how they would like to approach this important matter with a view to then working up any change in more detail for consideration at a future meeting. Any changes to regulations would ultimately need to be a recommendation to Council.

Padstow Town Council






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Padstow Cemetery

SCALE: DATE: 18/03/2015
MAP FILE REFERENCE:
Padstow Cemetery

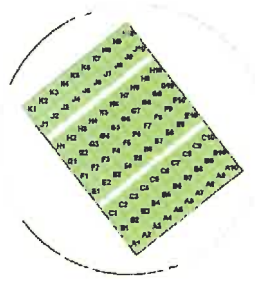
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- Key**
-  Burial Plots
 -  Cremation Plots
 -  Common Graves
 -  Children's Burial Plots
 -  Queries

 Roadside Extension

Enlarged Cremation Plot



Children's Area

Children's Area
Future interments possible.

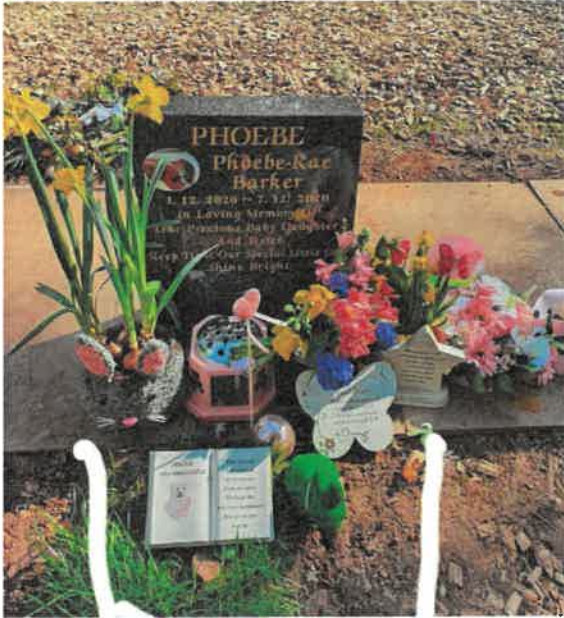
Children's Area
Future interments possible.

Car Park

B 3276

Car Park

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPENDIX 2



Death, Memory and Material Culture:

Extract 1:

Memory Materials in Cultural and Historical Perspectives

In the absence suggested by death we find potent cultural materials and strategies, including objects, visual images and texts that constitute systems of recall for persons and social groups that have been threatened or traumatized by loss. Throughout the book we analyse the materiality of things at the edge of social life – the ways in which social disappearance has been perceived and counteracted. In many instances, death is provided with a visibility through material cultures and we analyse the cultural politics and social repercussions of this visibility. Cultural preservation, of persons or objects, requires investments and these might be economic, political and emotional so that the cultural practices involved in memory making exist at macro as well as micro levels of societies. Memory, in relation to death, can be seen at work in public spaces, sacred sites, Church institutions, state bureaucracies, national museums as well as in locations devoted to personal collections, including domestic interiors. Thus we explore the spaces of death and memory, observing their internal organization and symbolism together with their external connections and references to wider social and cultural formations – these are spaces of immense as well as intimate proportions. Responses to death and the evocation of memories during processes of dying, grief and mourning have been rendered in the form of the large-scale monument and the miniature memento – here we attend to the implications of scale and substance. In tracing the formation and practice of memory we explore its temporal dimensions. How is the material culture of death instrumental in the

Extract 2:

as a presence that manifests an absence (quoted in Vincent 1991: 203). The ways in which this absence is dealt with through material objects owes much to the cultural apparatus devoted to memory. Memory sites are often, although not exclusively, those associated with the body of the deceased, as Vincent asks:

What lies beneath the durable marble headstone that loved ones like to visit and decorate with flowers? A body . . . Attention has been shifted, in a kind of metonymy from the contents to the vessel. How can the memory of the deceased be preserved while the state of the decomposing body is forgotten? With photographs, films and tapes – the modern ways of preserving information. (1991: 267)

Forty makes a similar point with regard to the function of separation at death as performed by material objects such as tombs which contain and are substituted for the decaying physical body (1999). Again,

material objects are relied upon to provide concrete renderings of what is deemed culturally acceptable to remember. As we show, however, attitudes to bodily processes in death are culturally and historically specific and these inflect the nature of memory objects as well as their ritual contexts. Experiences of bodily decline, decay and preservation shift over time and are displayed, masked or made visible in a variety of ways which shape memories of death.

Extract 3:

Memory making through the production, manipulation and reorganization of material objects, as well as the embodied actions engaged in these processes, also involves further complexities which we have highlighted throughout this study. Relations of gender, social status and wealth are often marked and articulated through the materialization of memories. In the maintenance of memory spaces, the care of memory objects and in the ritualized making of memories at the site of the body (see Chapter 9), women's participation has often been significant. Yet in order to recover this significance, attention has to be paid to those spaces, materials and ritualized practices beyond those of the public and the institutionalized.

Throughout this book we have sought to explore relationships between death, memory and material culture, primarily in Western contexts. That memories are generated and experienced through material forms and as part of social and cultural processes is a central

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPENDIX 4

Regulations Relating To Items	
Padstow Cemetery	<p>The placing on graves of glass containers or shades, items of pottery, tins, plastic or wire mesh fences or other items of metal, plastic or other material are forbidden and will be removed by the Council without notice. Temporary wooden crosses are permitted.</p> <p>For grave spaces, memorial vases must be integral to the headstone.</p> <p>Free standing vases and/or any other structures or ornaments are not permitted.</p> <p>Fencing around the headstone and/or grave is not permitted.</p> <p>For memorial plots, vases must be placed within the dedicated areas. Free standing vases and/or any other structures or ornaments are not permitted.</p> <p>The Burial Authority reserves the right to clear and re-instate any grave following the:b) placing of any grave furniture that is a risk to public safety; impedes the maintenance of the cemetery or is incongruous with its surroundings; c) placing of any unauthorised grave surrounds.</p>
Bodmin Cemeteries – Bodmin	<p>Wind chimes, wind mills, solar lights, soft toys, ornamental stone chippings, picket fences etc are not permitted and the Council reserves the right to remove, without notice, any of these items in order that the routine grass cutting and grounds maintenance work can be carried out and should such tributes restrict access to and encroach onto neighbouring graves or interferes with the routine grass cutting and grounds maintenance of the site.</p> <p>Additional 'free-standing' / unattached plinths or non-fixed stonework etc will not be permitted.</p>
Truro Public Cemetery - Truro	<p>The placing of glass containers, shades, items of pottery, toys, tins, plastic or wire mesh fences or other items of metal, plastic or other material on graves are forbidden and will be removed by the Council without notice.</p>
Meadowside Cemetery - Stithians	<p>In order for the Cemetery to be laid out and maintained as a lawned cemetery, there shall be no kerbstones, planting or other ornamentation on graves in front of the plinth.</p> <p>No plastic flowers will be permitted in the Cemetery.</p> <p>No receptacles other than flower vases (non-glass for safety reasons) specially designed for the purpose may be placed on grave spaces and then only within the limits of the of the headstone plinths.</p> <p>Anything placed on a grave not in compliance with Clauses 1.1 – 1.4 above will be removed and disposed of without recourse to the registered owner(s) of the grave. The Council acknowledges, however, that mourners may wish to place mementos and other tributes on the grave immediately following the interment. This clause will therefore not be implemented, except for health and safety reasons, for a period of four months after the interment.</p>
Cornwall Council	<p>Requests for placing of items on the grave shall be submitted to through the Registrar for consideration by the Registrar of Cemeteries. The decision of the Registrar of Cemeteries shall be final.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPENDIX 4

Cemeteries (East)	<p>The Council reserves the right to remove any item placed on or near a grave that does not conform to the regulations.</p>
Launceston Cemetery	<p><i>NB this relates to kerbed graves which have a reduced maintenance burden.</i></p> <p>Anything placed and planted on any grave other than a memorial becomes the property of the Council and may be removed and disposed of at the Council's discretion.</p> <p>Flowers and wreaths will be cleared from the grave after two weeks unless otherwise agreed with the Town Clerk. Badly damaged or faded artificial flowers will be removed during routine maintenance.</p> <p>Glass containers are prohibited as are metal pins or hooks. The Council reserves the right to remove any receptacle for flowers, damaged wreaths or broken ornaments which it considers unsuitable without notice.</p>
Tavistock Cemetery	<p>The dressing of graves is not permitted. This includes scarves, ribbons, toys, ornaments, tinsel etc. Any such items found on a grave will be removed and disposed of by Town Council staff.</p> <p>No Astro-turf, vase, planter or pot plant may be placed on a memorial, without the permission of the Town Council, or which interferes with the maintenance and upkeep of the Cemetery.</p> <p>Glass containers are not permitted because they pose a risk of injury to staff and visitors when accidentally damaged or broken. Any such items found will be removed and disposed of by Town Council staff without notice.</p>
Weston Mill Cemetery - Plymouth	<p>No other item [except memorial tablet] may be placed on or around the space. Any such unauthorised item will be removed and disposed of.</p>