



Amble Town Council

Charter for the Bereaved

This Charter:

- is a commitment to improving the service.
- is intended to define some rights of individuals who experiences bereavement
- will set standards of service related to burial and funerals generally

The Charter identifies the following rights:

Burial procedure

- It is your right to have a burial organised and conducted in a dignified and orderly manner, supported by competent professional and caring staff.
- It is your right to inspect statutory cemetery records.

Grave choice

- It is your right to buy a private grave for a period of not more than 50 years. (This "Right of Burial" is a grave for one or more burials upon which you can place a memorial. An interment fee is also payable).
- It is your right to choose to be buried in an unpurchased grave. The plot will be of the Council's choice. You cannot reserve the right for future burials in this plot nor erect any memorial. **Unrelated burials are allowed** at a future date. Each burial incurs an interment fee.

Cemetery memorials

- It is your right to place a memorial on a purchased plot or to leave the grave unmarked.
- It is your right to use a Memorial Mason of your choice provided he is approved by the Council
- The Council is flexible to widen choice of wording on a memorial so as to give the bereaved control over cost and design. We appreciate that terms such as 'mum' and 'dad' and some nicknames are suitable for inscriptions.
- It is your right and responsibility to maintain a memorial upon a grave during the period of grave rights granted to you. The memorial cannot be disturbed or moved during this period without your permission, unless it poses a safety hazard.
- The safe erection and maintenance of the memorial is your responsibility.

Ceremonies and belief

- It is your right to hold a burial service, defining the type of music and ceremony.
- It is your right to define the type of religious or secular (non-religious) format of the service.

Coffins and alternatives

- It is your right to choose the type and design of coffin, within the constraints of regulations and safe procedures.

Communication

- It is your right to receive a prompt response to any form of communication within the times specified by the Council.
- It is your right to be given a table of cemetery fees upon request.

Social and community aspects

- It is your right to receive a service that recognises your needs, without unfairness or discrimination, e.g. religious belief, ethnic needs, disability, etc.

Using a funeral director/ without a funeral director (independent funerals)

- It is your right to use the services of a Funeral Director. A fee will be payable.
- The Council allows independent funerals of cremated remains but urges advice from a Funeral Director regarding legal proceedings.

Maintenance of grounds and grave-digging

- It is your right to be shown a specified standard of grounds maintenance. Where standards fail to meet the specification, you have the right to complain.

Grave choice

- The Council offer three grave designs;
- the lawn type with a headstone;
- the cremated remains section;
- and a natural option.
- There is a specific designated section for Babies and small Children; however you can choose to purchase a full size plot within the cemetery.

Environmental issues

- The Council will strive to improve the natural environment of the cemetery to encourage wildlife and use nature as a key part of the bereavement experience.
- It is your right to be made aware of any known environmental issues relating to the interment process.

Maintenance of grounds and grave-digging

- The Council set minimum national standards of maintenance.

Regulations

- It is your right to be given a list of regulations set by the Council.
- It is your right to be given a written explanation of the reason why a regulation has been used to restrict or otherwise influence your rights.

Staff and expertise

- It is your right to receive a quality service. Where service standards fail, you have a right to question the level of expertise shown and to receive assurances regarding the ability of those involved.

Grievance procedure

- It is your right to use the Complaints procedure if you are dissatisfied about any service provided by the Council. You can complain 'on the spot' if you have the opportunity. Copies of the Complaints procedure are available from the Council.

Conclusion

We want this Charter to improve funerals and we would like to take your views into account. Also, anything that interests you or leaves you feeling worried is important to us. You can send your comment to the Town Clerk.

Agreed: