

## Seapatrick Parish - St Patrick's Cemetery, Banbridge

St Patrick's Cemetery is a private burial facility, owned and managed by the Catholic Parish of Seapatrick. The Cemetery is administered by the Parish Office, currently located within the Parish Centre, Edenderry Road, Banbridge. Enquiries regarding the Cemetery should ordinarily be directed to the Parish Office.

While the provision of burial places is primarily the responsibility of the local municipal authority, Seapatrick Parish will facilitate the burial of parishioners within St Patrick's Cemetery for as long as it can feasibly do so. Given, however, that the Cemetery has progressively expanded in size - and has become a relatively large amenity - its upkeep and maintenance place growing demands upon the Parish and its increasingly limited resources.

Moreover, there are significant insurance and public liability implications for a facility which strives to accommodate visits by members of the public on a daily basis, regular burials and associated funeral rites, and various works undertaken by monumental sculptors and other kinds of contractors.

In light of this - and in order to meet the demands placed upon it - the Parish requires support and cooperation from all who have an interest in St Patrick's Cemetery, or who may seek to carry out business there. To this end, a close adherence to the following regulations is asked of all concerned.

### Burial Plots - Purchase & Titles

A new plot will be assigned, upon request, at the time of a loved one's death. Ordinarily, the Funeral Director will make this request to the Parish - on behalf of the relatives /representatives of the deceased - and is responsible for forwarding payment for the plot to the Parish Office. The plot assigned will be the 'next in line' in the part of the Cemetery where new graves are being opened at that time. The precise location of the plot *cannot* be selected by those seeking to purchase a new grave. **Please note that plots cannot be 'booked' or purchased in advance of a death.**

On 'purchasing' a plot, the buyer becomes its Titleholder. This is traditionally understood as giving them the 'right to bury' there. In practice, it means that the Titleholder (or their representatives) can decide whose remains may be buried within that particular plot - until the point where it is judged to have reached its capacity in terms of burials.

**Please note that the 'right to bury' does not imply ownership of a particular piece of ground within the Cemetery and *all* land within St Patrick's remains the Parish's property.** All plots, therefore, must be maintained in a way which is in keeping with Cemetery regulations. Furthermore, while a Titleholder may wish to maintain and care for a plot allocated to them, they cannot obstruct representatives of the Parish in carrying out maintenance upon that same plot where the Parish has judged this to be necessary.

Once a plot has been purchased, the Parish Office will issue a *Certificate* to the Titleholder.

The Certificate will record:

- The Titleholder's name and address
- The plot's dimensions and its location
- The amount paid to the Parish
- The date the Certificate was issued

The Certificate should be kept safely by the purchaser as evidence of their title to a particular plot. Circumstances may arise in the future where it may need to be presented. It would be prudent for a Titleholder to make their next-of-kin (or whoever may be expected to eventually act on their behalf) aware of the whereabouts of any such Certificate.

*Upon the death of a Titleholder, the Parish will normally expect their next-of-kin to determine to whom the title has passed.*

### **Burial Plots - Dimensions & Costs**

When purchasing a new burial plot within St Patrick's, a parishioner currently has two options:

A plot 122cm / 4 feet in width - which should normally accommodate three burials\*

A plot 214cm / 7 feet in width - which should normally accommodate six burials\*

*\*It may occasionally arise that - due to the nature of the underlying terrain - a particular plot cannot be dug as deeply as first envisaged. This will become evident once the digging of the grave has begun. In such circumstances, the Parish will assess the situation in liaison with the Funeral Director. An adjoining/additional plot will likely be made available to the purchaser, in these circumstances, by way of recompense for any deficit in the burial capacity of the purchased plot.*

A 122cm / 4 feet wide plot - for the burial of the remains of a Seapatrick Parishioner (resident within the Parish at the time of death) - currently costs £300\*

A 214cm / 7 feet wide plot - for the burial of the remains of a Seapatrick Parishioner (resident within the Parish at the time of death) - currently costs £600\*

The above mentioned 122cm-wide plot may be purchased for the burial of the remains of a non-parishioner, for a current cost of £600\*

The above mentioned 214cm-wide plot may be purchased for the burial of the remains of a non-parishioner, for a current cost of £1200\*

### **Existing Plot - Burial Fee**

Where burials occur within an existing (*previously purchased*) plot, an administration fee of £50\* is payable to the Parish. This payment affords those using St Patrick's Cemetery - for the burial of a relative/friend - the opportunity of making a modest contribution towards the high costs the Parish faces in maintaining and administering the Cemetery. It is *additional* to grave-digging costs and is to be forwarded to the Parish Office by the Funeral Director on behalf of the relatives/representatives of the deceased.

## **BURIAL OF ASHES**

In respect of the burial of cremated ashes, please note the following:

The Catholic Church does **not** permit the dividing or scattering of ashes - except in very particular circumstances. Such circumstances do not typically apply in our cultural context.

If a family would like a loved one's ashes to repose within the Cemetery, therefore, those ashes must be buried within a recognised grave plot and should be buried in their entirety.

Ashes may be buried within an *existing* plot - with the prior agreement of anyone who has rights to that plot.

If no such plot is available, a new plot must be purchased for any burial of ashes. \*\*

Families may wish to engage the services of a **Funeral Director** to arrange and oversee a burial of ashes. Where a new plot is required - in such circumstances - the Funeral Director will arrange the purchase of that plot with the **Parish Office** and make payment to the Parish for the plot. The Funeral Director will also arrange the opening and closing of the burial plot and source and pay a grave-digger.

Where the ashes are to be buried within an *existing* plot, an administration fee of **£50** will be charged by the Parish Office and invoiced to the **Funeral Director**.

Alternatively, families may wish to arrange the burial of ashes - without the involvement of a Funeral Director. If this is the case, then a representative of the deceased **must make contact with the Parish Office and agree arrangements with the Office before proceeding**. In these circumstances, the Parish will oversee the opening and closing of the burial plot, will source a grave-digger and will charge a grave-digging fee of £50.

Where - in such circumstances - the ashes are to be buried in an *existing* plot, an additional administration fee of **£50** will be charged by the Parish Office.

The representative of the deceased - who makes the arrangements with the Parish Office for such a burial of ashes – will be invoiced by the Office for such fees as arise.

While a Funeral Director - or a family - may make payment for a new plot in advance of the burial of ashes, that plot will only be allocated by the Parish **at the point when that burial is about to take place**. i.e. a specific burial plot cannot be 'held over' - awaiting the burial of ashes at a later stage.

*\*\*Such plots must be purchased in the normal way, via the Parish Office. Dimensions & Costs are those which are detailed on page 2 of this Cemetery Policy*

*\*All the above charges are subject to ongoing review/revision by the Parish Finance Council*

## **HEADSTONES/MEMORIALS & THE DEMARCATION OF PLOTS**

When arranging the construction *or replacement* of Headstones/Memorials within St Patrick's Cemetery, please observe the following:

In order for a grave to 'settle' following a burial within it, the Parish strongly recommends that ***at least six months*** be allowed to pass from the date of a funeral before the commencement of any substantial kind of work upon the plot concerned.

**Plans/drawings for any new/replacement Headstone/Memorial to be constructed must be forwarded to the Parish Office - *for approval* - before any work can commence. (Monumental Sculptors must take care to observe this regulation)**

The following are the ***maximum*** dimensions permissible for a Headstone/Memorial:

### **122cm (4 feet) plots**

Maximum width: 107cm (3.5 feet)

Maximum depth: 23cm (9 inches)

### **214cm (7 feet) plots**

Maximum width: 199cm (6.5 feet)

Maximum depth: 23cm (9 inches)

It is vital - for the smooth running of the cemetery - that bases/foundations for headstones do not exceed these dimensions or infringe, to any extent whatsoever, upon adjoining plots.

Please note: To facilitate general maintenance, **plot 'surrounds' are not permitted within several of the sections of St Patrick's - including the newer sections of the Cemetery.** A headstone (and its base) is the only kind of memorial permissible within these sections. No kinds of stone, wood, rope or chain may be used to 'enclose' an individual plot in these sections. Nor may paving slabs, kerbs, flower holders or any kind of ornament be used for such boundary-marking purposes. Items may not be placed on a plot which might obstruct regular grass cutting and/or maintenance. Where such obstructions arise, the Parish will be unable to maintain the plot.

A Titleholder may not place items of any kind ***outside*** the perimeter of the plot allocated to them - or attempt to use or modify, in any way, ground adjoining or bordering their particular plot. This regulation applies to ***every*** section of the Cemetery.

While Seapatrick Parish maintains the Cemetery grounds and routinely attends to the overall care and good order of the site, it will not accept responsibility for the maintenance of headstones or memorials, or for the repair or replacement of floral displays, baskets, vases or other objects placed within a particular plot. Neither will the Parish accept responsibility for any damage to headstones or memorials caused by water, ground-shifting, defective foundations and/or inadequate design or construction.

## Visiting St Patrick's Cemetery

Entry to St Patrick's Cemetery is entirely at a visitor's own risk. Seapatrick Parish is not responsible for any injury, damage or loss to persons - or their property - while visiting the Cemetery.

Dogs *are* permitted within the Cemetery - but on the pathways only. Moreover, as St Patrick's is the kind of amenity routinely visited by members of the public, dogs must be kept on leads **at all times**. Meanwhile, dog owners should take special care to 'clean up' after their dogs, where appropriate.

## REFUSE/WASTE MANAGEMENT

Titleholders and those *voluntarily* attending to graves within the Cemetery should use the bins provided there, where refuse (e.g. discarded flowers, weeds, small amounts of grass) arises from the tidying of a family plot. The bins are located close to the boundary with the Dromore Road, on the country side of the Cemetery. *On occasions where these bins are found to have reached their limits, visitors are asked to take any further refuse away with them and dispose of it by other legitimate means.* Please note: these bins are **NOT** to be used for the disposal of soil or sods.

Contractors - and those undertaking work (including grass cutting) in a paid capacity - are responsible for dealing with any refuse arising from their work and **for bringing it out of the Cemetery** for safe and proper disposal elsewhere.

## Future Review of Cemetery Policy

The Parish Priest and the Finance Council of Seapatrick Parish will keep the above regulations under review and reserve the right to revise, update, or amend these, as circumstances require. The most recently updated version of this policy will apply in any given situation and shall supersede any such previous documents or policy statements.

*Trustees of St Patrick's Cemetery, Banbridge*

*1<sup>st</sup> July 2023*

*First Revision February 2025*

**FUNERAL DIRECTOR GUIDELINES**

Before a new - or existing - burial plot is opened within St Patrick's Cemetery, a Funeral Director (or grave-digger operating on their behalf) must contact either the Parish Office or (outside Office Hours) the Cemetery Caretaker. The precise location and dimensions of the proposed grave are to be clarified - and agreed with an authorised representative of the Parish - before any digging commences. Those contracted to open graves must be appropriately covered in respect of public liability insurance.

Please note that, in the case of an existing family plot - while the next-of-kin of the deceased may initially advise as to its location - confirmation of this must be received from an authorised representative of the Parish before grave-digging can proceed.

Please, also, note that where a Funeral Liturgy/Mass is to take place elsewhere - and the Burial Rites *alone* are within Seapatrick Parish - the Funeral Director must make contact with either the Parish Office or the Cemetery Caretaker, to seek the abovementioned authorisation for the opening of the plot concerned and (where a visiting clergyman is officiating) to agree an approximate time for the burial.

In respect of new burial plots within St Patrick's Cemetery, the following options are currently available:

A plot 122cm / 4 feet in width - which should normally accommodate three burials\*

A plot 214cm / 7 feet in width - which should normally accommodate six burials\*

*\*It may occasionally arise that - due to the nature of the underlying terrain - a particular plot cannot be dug as deeply as first planned. This will become evident once the digging of the grave has begun. In such circumstances, the Parish will assess the situation in liaison with the Funeral Director. An adjoining/additional plot will likely be made available to the purchaser, in these circumstances, by way of recompense for any deficit in the burial capacity of the purchased plot.*

A 122cm / 4 feet wide plot - for the burial of the remains of a Seapatrick Parishioner (resident within the Parish at the time of death) - currently costs £300\*

A 214cm / 7 feet wide plot - for the burial of the remains of a Seapatrick Parishioner (resident within the Parish at the time of death) - currently costs £600\*

The above mentioned 122cm-wide plot may be purchased for the burial of the remains of a non-parishioner, for a current cost of £600\*

The above mentioned 214cm-wide plot may be purchased for the burial of the remains of a non-parishioner, for a current cost of £1200\*

### **Existing Plot - Burial Fee**

Where burials occur within an existing (*previously purchased*) plot, an administration fee of £50\* is payable to the Parish. It is *additional* to grave-digging costs and is to be forwarded to the Parish Office by the Funeral Director on behalf of the relatives/representatives of the deceased.

Following a burial, the Parish Office will invoice the Funeral Director involved, detailing the relevant fees. The invoice will indicate the date for settlement.

Funeral Directors should direct their gravediggers to remove **all excess soil** - and any other kind of waste material - from the Cemetery, following a burial there. Grass, soil or rubble arising from grave digging must **never** be placed in the Cemetery bins or discarded elsewhere within the site. Should any damage accidentally occur in the course of grave-digging - to a memorial, pathway, railing or any kind of fixture - it must be reported to the Parish Office at the earliest opportunity.

*\*All the above charges are subject to ongoing review/revision by the Parish Finance Council and Funeral Directors will be notified as appropriate.*

## **STONEMASON/MONUMENTAL SCULPTOR**

Monumental contractors/sculptors must contact the Parish Office before undertaking any work within St Patrick's Cemetery. This includes the replacement of monuments *and work on existing headstones*.

**A plan must be submitted to the Parish Office, in advance, detailing any proposed work.** *Where necessary, a member of Parish Staff will arrange to meet the contractor - or their representative - at the plot concerned, to discuss the work being proposed.* A copy of the contractor's public liability insurance will also be required by the Parish Office beforehand.

Work undertaken at any plot must adhere to the plan submitted to the Parish Office.

*Parish Office Opening Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 9am - 1pm*

*Telephone: 028 406 62136*

*Email: [seapatrickcemetery@dromorediocese.org](mailto:seapatrickcemetery@dromorediocese.org)*

## **HEADSTONES**

The following dimensions are the **maximum size** for the headstone:

### **122cm (4 feet) plots**

Maximum width: 107cm (3.5 feet)

Maximum depth: 23cm (9 inches)

### **214cm (7 feet) plots**

Maximum width: 199cm (6.5 feet)

Maximum depth: 23cm (9 inches)

It is vital - for the smooth running of the Cemetery - that bases/foundations for headstones do not exceed these dimensions or infringe, to any extent whatsoever, upon adjoining plots.

Please note that plot 'surrounds' are only permitted in certain parts of the Cemetery and **not** in the newer sections. The Parish Office will guide families/monumental sculptors in this regard.

A headstone (and its base) is the only kind of memorial permissible within these sections.

*No kinds of stone, wood, rope or chain may be used to 'enclose' an individual plot in these sections. Nor may paving slabs, kerbs, flower holders or any kind of ornament be used for such boundary-marking purposes. Neither should items be placed within plots, in these sections, with might obstruct regular grass-cutting and/or maintenance.*

A contractor/sculptor must not attempt to use or modify, in any way, ground adjoining or bordering a particular plot on which they are working - or construct anything outside of the perimeters of that plot. This regulation applies to **every** section of the Cemetery.

All waste material - including grass or soil removed in the course of work on any plot - must be taken **from the Cemetery** by the contractor and properly disposed of **elsewhere**. No refuse of any kind is to be left anywhere within the Cemetery - nor placed in Cemetery bins.

Contractors must take care not to damage pathways within the Cemetery, in the course of their work, or any other memorials or Cemetery fixtures. Any accidental damage must be reported to the Parish Office and be repaired at the earliest opportunity.

*Seapatricks Parish will take action against a contractor failing to adhere to the terms of this policy - which may result in their being prohibited from undertaking further work within St Patrick's Cemetery.*