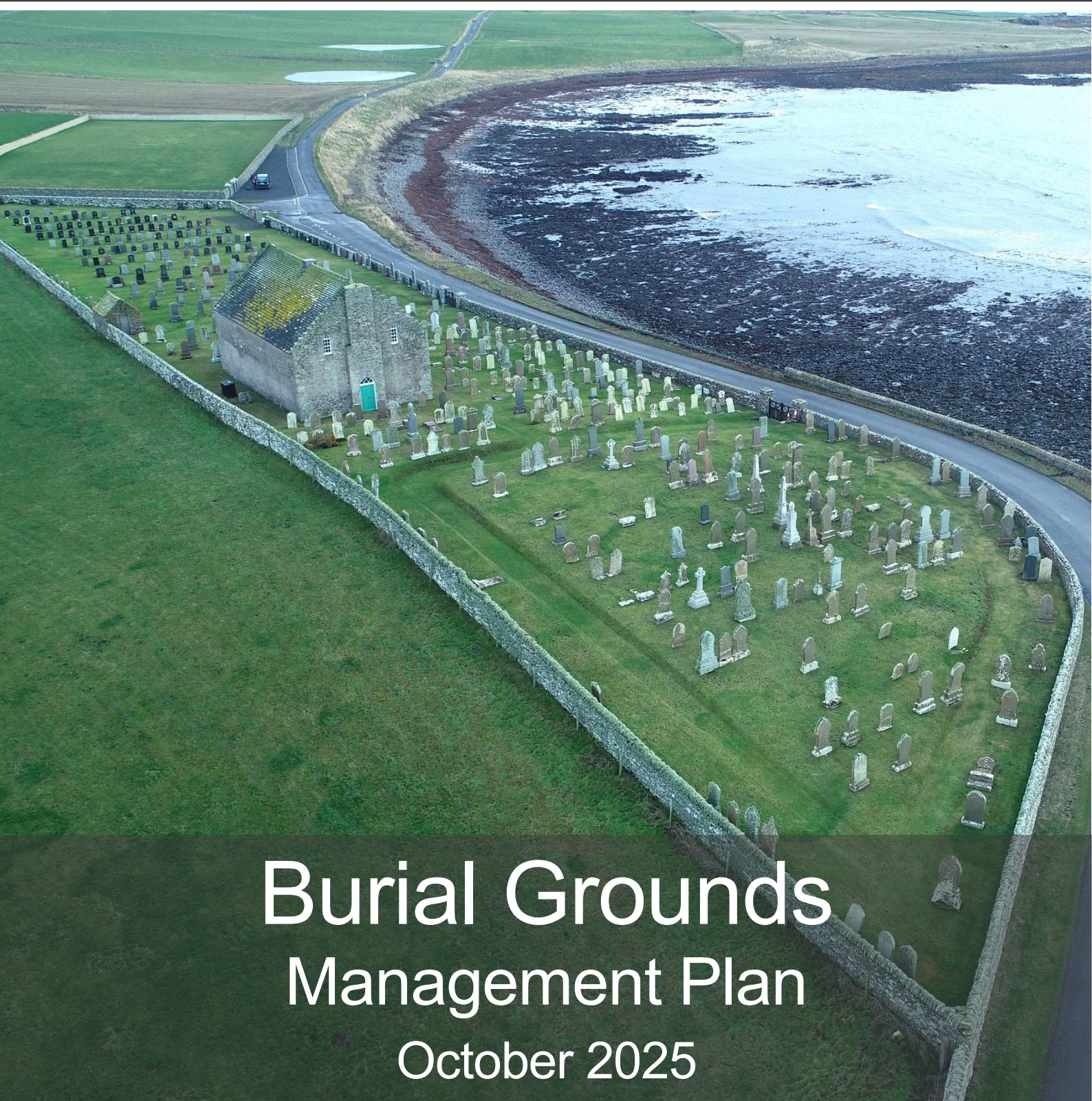




ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



Burial Grounds Management Plan October 2025

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Contents

Contents	2
Section 1 - Document Control and Council Approval.....	3
Section 2 - Contact Details	4
Section 3 - List of Orkney Islands Council Burial Grounds	5
Section 4 - Introduction.....	10
Section 5 - Interpretation of Terms	11
Section 6 - Roles and Responsibilities	12
Section 7 - Policy Drivers and Operational Procedures	14
Section 8 - Exclusive Right of Burial.....	16
Section 9 - Burial Record Procedure	18
Section 10 - Lairs and Burials Procedures.....	19
Section 11 - Burial Grounds Maintenance Standard.....	21
Section 12 - Burial Grounds and Memorial Inspection Procedure	23
Section 13 - Memorial Safety Procedure	24
Section 14 - Resilience Planning	27
Section 15 - Contingency Planning.....	28

Section 1 - Document Control and Council Approval

Version Number / Date	V2 / 8 October 2025
Approved by Council	Development and Infrastructure Committee 11 November 2025
Next Update Due	October 2026 The Scottish Government Burial Management Regulations state that this plan must be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is up to date and relevant.
Summary of Changes 08/10/2025	Code of Practice Document merged into Burial Management Plan and further information added to comply with new Scottish Government Burial Management Plan Regulations. Formatted using brand template.

Section 2 - Contact Details

Address	Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY
Telephone	01856 873535
Email Addresses	burialgroundsofficer@orkney.gov.uk registrar@orkney.gov.uk
Website	https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/law-and-licensing/births-marriages-deaths-and-burials/burial-services/

Section 3 - List of Orkney Islands Council Burial Grounds

All burial grounds are open access for pedestrians.

An interactive [‘Burial Grounds Location Map’](#) can be found on Orkney Islands Council website.

No.	Ward (Alphabetical)	Island / Town / Area	Cemetery Name & Address	New Burials Accepted	Listed / Scheduled Monuments
1	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	Burray	St Lawrence Cemetery Ness Road, Burray, KW17 2TA	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B Old Burray Kirk
2	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	Deerness	St Ninian's Cemetery Deerness, KW17 2QJ	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B St Ninian's Church (not OIC) Including Walled Churchyard and Railings
3	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	Holm	St Nicholas Cemetery Cornquoy Road, Holm, KW17 2SD	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B St Nicholas's Church (not OIC) Including Walled Churchyard, Gatepiers and Outbuilding
4	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	South Ronaldsay	Flaws Cemetery Halcro Road, South Ronaldsay, KW17 2RW	Coffin and Ashes	None
5	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	South Ronaldsay	St Mary's Cemetery A961, Burwick, South Ronaldsay, KW17 2RW	None	Listed Category B St Mary's Kirk (not OIC), Kirkyard and Kirkyard Gateway
6	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	South Ronaldsay	St Peter's Cemetery Kirkhouse Road, South Ronaldsay, KW17 2TJ	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category A St Peter's Kirk (not OIC) and Kirkyard
7	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	Tankerness	Hall of Tankerness Cemetery Tankerness Hall Road, Tankerness, KW17 2QS	None	Listed Category B Burial Ground and Baikie Burial Vault

No.	Ward (Alphabetical)	Island / Town / Area	Cemetery Name & Address	New Burials Accepted	Listed / Scheduled Monuments
8	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay & Burray	Tankerness	St Andrew's Cemetery Churchyard Road, St Andrews, KW17 2QU	Coffin and Ashes	None
9	Kirkwall East	Kirkwall	St Magnus Cathedral Cemetery Broad Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1DH	None	Listed Category A St Magnus Cathedral (not Burials), Including Boundary Walls, Railings, Graveyard and War Memorial
10	Kirkwall West & Orphir	Orphir	Round Church Cemetery Gyre Road, Orphir, KW17 2RD	Coffin and Ashes	Scheduled Monument St Nicholas's Round Church and Burial Ground
11	Kirkwall West & Orphir	St Ola, Kirkwall	St Olaf's Cemetery Orquil Road, St Ola, Kirkwall, KW15 1SA	Coffin and Ashes	None
12	North Isles	Eday	Old Eday Cemetery Kirk Road, Eday, KW17 2AA	None	None
13	North Isles	Eday	St John's Cemetery B9063, Eday, KW17 2AA	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category C Eday Kirk (not OIC), Boundary Wall and Gatepiers
14	North Isles	Egilsay	St Magnus Church Cemetery Pier Road, Egilsay, KW17 2QD	None	Scheduled Monument Church and Part of Adjacent Burial Ground
15	North Isles	Faray	Faray Cemetery Faray Island, Eday, KW17 2AB	None	None
16	North Isles	North Ronaldsay	Holland Cemetery Main Road, North Ronaldsay, KW17 2BE	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B Old Kirk (not OIC) Including Boundary Walls and Gatepiers

No.	Ward (Alphabetical)	Island / Town / Area	Cemetery Name & Address	New Burials Accepted	Listed / Scheduled Monuments
17	North Isles	Papa Westray	St Boniface Cemetery Central Road, Papa Westray, KW17 2BU	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category A St Boniface Kirk (not Burials) Including Kirkyard and Boundary Walls Scheduled Monument Below ground remains of St Boniface Kirk (not Burials), part of the surrounding burial ground and a hog-backed tombstone
18	North Isles	Rousay	Brinian Cemetery Brinian Road, Rousay, KW17 2PU	Coffin and Ashes	None
19	North Isles	Rousay	Glebe (Kirknoust) Cemetery Rousay, KW17 2PR	None	None
20	North Isles	Rousay	Scockness Cemetery Scockness Road, Rousay, KW17 2PR	None	None
21	North Isles	Rousay	Wasbister Cemetery Wasbister Road, Rousay, KW17 2PS	Coffin and Ashes	None
22	North Isles	Rousay	Westside (St Mary's) Cemetery Westside Road, Rousay, KW17 2PS	None	Scheduled Monument Westness Church
23	North Isles	Sanday	Cross Cemetery Howe Road, Sanday, KW17 2BJ	Coffin and Ashes	Scheduled Monument Cross Parish Church
24	North Isles	Sanday	Lady Cemetery B9069, Sanday, KW17 2BL	None	None
25	North Isles	Sanday	Scar Cemetery Sanday, KW17 2AZ	Coffin and Ashes	None
26	North Isles	Shapinsay	Shapinsay Cemetery Sands Road, Shapinsay, KW17 2EA	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B Shapinsay Kirk (not OIC) and Balfour Burial Aisle
27	North Isles	Stronsay	Lady (Bay) Cemetery Bay Road, Stronsay, KW17 2AE	Coffin and Ashes	None
28	North Isles	Stronsay	Leaquoy Cemetery Holland Road, Stronsay, KW17 2AJ	Not Yet In Use	None

No.	Ward (Alphabetical)	Island / Town / Area	Cemetery Name & Address	New Burials Accepted	Listed / Scheduled Monuments
29	North Isles	Stronsay	St Nicholas's Cemetery Holland Road, Stronsay, KW17 2AJ	None	None
30	North Isles	Stronsay	St Peter's Cemetery Old Cemetery Road, Whitehall, Stronsay, KW17 2AR	None	None
31	North Isles	Westray	Cross Kirk Cemetery Tuquoy Road, Westray, KW17 2DR	None	Scheduled Monument Cross-Kirk (not OIC, in Scot Gov Care) and Burial Ground
32	North Isles	Westray	Lady Kirk Cemetery The Quarry Road, Pierowall, Westray, KW17 2DF	Coffin and Ashes	Scheduled Monument Pierowall Church (Lady Kirk) (not OIC) and Part of Adjacent Burial Ground
33	North Isles	Westray	Rapness Cemetery B9066, Westray, KW17 2DE	Coffin and Ashes	None
34	North Isles	Wyre	Wyre Cemetery Russness Road, Wyre, KW17 2QA	Coffin and Ashes	Scheduled Monument St Mary's Chapel and Burial Ground (in Scot Gov Care)
35	Stromness & South Isles	Flotta	Flotta Cemetery Church Road, Flotta, KW16 3NP	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category C Flotta Church (not OIC), Including War Memorial, Boundary Wall and Gatepiers
36	Stromness & South Isles	Graemsay	Graemsay Cemetery Kirk Road, KW16 3NG	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category C Graemsay Kirk (not OIC) Including Graveyard
37	Stromness & South Isles	Hoy	North Hoy Cemetery B9047, Hoy, KW16 3NJ	Coffin and Ashes	None
38	Stromness & South Isles	Hoy	Osmondwall Cemetery Cantick Road, Hoy, KW16 3PQ	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B Moodie Mausoleum and Graveyard
39	Stromness & South Isles	Hoy	St John's Cemetery B9047, Hoy, KW16 3NY	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category C St John's Church (not OIC), Including Boundary Wall

No.	Ward (Alphabetical)	Island / Town / Area	Cemetery Name & Address	New Burials Accepted	Listed / Scheduled Monuments
40	Stromness & South Isles	Stromness	Warebeth Cemetery Warebeth Road, Stromness, KW16 3JW	Coffin and Ashes	None
41	West Mainland	Birsay	Birsay Cemetery B9056, Birsay, KW17 2AQ	Coffin and Ashes	None
42	West Mainland	Birsay	St Magnus Cemetery The Palace, Birsay, KW17 2LX	None	Listed Category B Birsay (St Magnus) Kirk (not OIC)
43	West Mainland	Evie	Evie Cemetery A966, Evie, KW17 2PH	Coffin and Ashes	None
44	West Mainland	Evie	Old Evie Cemetery Aikerness Road, Evie, KW17 2PH	None	None
45	West Mainland	Finstown	Firth Cemetery A965, Finstown, Firth, KW17 2UB	Coffin and Ashes	None
46	West Mainland	Harray	St Michael's Cemetery Church Road, Harray, KW17 2LD	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category B Harray Kirk (not OIC)
47	West Mainland	Rendall	Rendall Cemetery Gorseness Road, Rendall, KW17 2PB	Coffin and Ashes	None
48	West Mainland	Rendall	Rendall Old Cemetery Hinderayre Road, Rendall, KW17 2EZ	None	Scheduled Monument South Aittit, Rendall Parish Church
49	West Mainland	Sandwick	Sandwick Cemetery B9056, Sandwick, KW16 3LS	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category A Sandwick Kirk (St Peter's) (not OIC)
50	West Mainland	Stenness	Stenness Cemetery Churchyard Road, Stenness, KW16 3JY	Coffin and Ashes	Listed Category C Stenness Kirk (not OIC)

Section 4 - Introduction

- 4.1.** Orkney Islands Council, through the requirements of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016, is responsible for the overall management of Council-owned burial grounds. The Council provides its burials service to the public and to funeral directors through the Council's Burial Ground Clerks and Operations Team, administered locally by burial clerks in some areas. The policy, operations and physical assets are currently managed by Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

- 4.2.** The Burial Grounds Management Plan outlines the procedures and practices for interments and the management and operation of burial grounds. Earlier versions of the rules and regulations which apply to individual burial grounds are superseded by this plan.

Section 5 - Interpretation of Terms

In this Management Plan, the following words and expressions have been used with the following meanings assigned to them:

“The Burial Authority” and “the Council” refer to Orkney Islands Council.

“Lair” refers to the piece of ground within the burial ground under the control of the Council in which the Exclusive Rights of Burial are granted by a certificate.

“Certificate” refers to the Certificate of Right of Burial granted by the Council or its statutory predecessors.

“Owner” refers to the person to whom the Certificate of Right of Burial is granted and their heirs.

“Memorial” refers to any headstone, monument, tombstone or grave marker placed on a lair.

Section 6 - Roles and Responsibilities

Set out below are the key day-to-day functions managed through this plan and the principal roles of each party.

Developing, implementing, reviewing and monitoring all aspects of policies, strategy and operational procedures relating to provision and upkeep of the burial grounds.

Ensuring that all burial grounds are safe and accessible, and any work therein is undertaken to appropriate standards.

Ensuring that prescribed inspections are undertaken and any subsequent necessary action taken to ensure public safety.

Ensuring where possible, lair owners are contacted in advance of any required maintenance work.

Ensuring the process of undertaking a burial is done in accordance with Council guidelines and in line with prevailing legislation, regulation or guidance.

These functions are fulfilled by several parties, as listed below.

6.1. Infrastructure Services - Burial Grounds Team

- 6.1.1. Asset Management – lair provision, major and general maintenance, associated operational management policy and strategies.
- 6.1.2. Compliance with legislation, regulation, statutory guidance or advisory best practice.
- 6.1.3. Fees and Charges – pricing for purchase of right of burial and any other interment cost issues.
- 6.1.4. Manage queries from the public through the Burial Grounds Officer.
- 6.1.5. Ensure the ongoing inspections of burial grounds and memorials to address public safety and coordination of all associated maintenance works.
- 6.1.6. Ensure Historic Environment Scotland is contacted in relation to any works required to memorials in line with Class V of the Class Consent Order 1996 (relating to urgent works on historic monuments).
- 6.1.7. Communication and engagement with Council Services, Community Councils and other organisations wishing to work within the burial grounds.

6.1.8. Setting the terms and conditions for sale of Rights of Burial.

6.1.9. Ensure any mason commissioned to erect or repair a memorial is appropriately qualified, trained and approved to do so.

6.2. Environmental Services – Operational Services (Gravediggers)

6.2.1. Liaise with the Registrars and Funeral Directors on grave digging, filling requirements and associated burial arrangements.

6.2.2. Provide maintenance services as directed by the Burial Grounds Officer.

6.3. Registrars and Burial Ground Clerks – Corporate Governance

6.3.1. Registrars perform two roles, firstly, Death Registration, ensuring that deaths are correctly registered within the National Records of Scotland systems and second, as Burial Ground Clerk for a number of burial grounds. The two functions are linked but separate.

6.3.2. The administrative process of getting approval to carry out a burial, including close liaison with Funeral Directors to achieve this in a timely manner.

6.3.3. The administrative processes in managing lair ownership including keeping accurate records, amendments, cancellations and renewals of certificates.

6.3.4. Keeping accurate records of all purchases and any subsequent amendments of Right of Burial Certificates and burials including updating burial grounds plans.

6.4. Education, Communities and Housing – Performance and Business Support

6.4.1. The administration of appropriate community-based works.

Section 7 - Policy Drivers and Operational Procedures

- 7.1.** The Infrastructure and Organisational Development Directorate holds responsibility for the provision of lairs, major and minor improvements. The service is the custodian of the policies, strategies and procedures relating to the general provision and upkeep of the burial grounds. This is discharged by the Infrastructure Services Team, principally through the Burial Grounds Officer.
- 7.2.** Our approach ensures that we comply with current legislation, regulation and relevant guidance. In addition, our associated delivery of policies, strategies and operational procedures address all aspects of compliance. This Management Plan and associated documents are available for reference on the Council's website and clearly set out our approach across several function areas, including but not limited to:
- 7.2.1. Regular inspections of burial grounds, including memorials, adopting a rolling 5-year programme.
 - 7.2.2. Follow-on processes to address a memorial risk (e.g. marking up, cordoning, laying flat, possible repair, communication etc).
 - 7.2.3. Set standards for placement, maintenance and repair of memorials.
 - 7.2.4. Setting lair owner's rights and responsibilities (e.g. their need to act on notification of an issue) or, if being unable to make contact, noting the action has needed to be taken in accordance with current Scottish Government guidance.
 - 7.2.5. The Customer Charter – the conditions of sale requirements for the owner of the Right of Burial, but also the service they can expect from the Council in their management of the burial grounds.
 - 7.2.6. Pricing schedule to reserve or purchase a Right of Burial for a lair.
 - 7.2.7. Setting maintenance standards, subject to available funding, for contracted works such as grass cutting (cuts per year, height etc). This includes supporting Community Councils that may manage and set their own maintenance standards for a specified burial ground.
 - 7.2.8. Managing and facilitating reporting processes for damages, deterioration and other issues that may need investigation, including remedial works.
 - 7.2.9. Access and egress requirements for vehicles entering a burial ground (i.e. normally restricted to hearses, maintenance vehicles and in special circumstances vehicles for disabled persons).
 - 7.2.10. Access and egress requirements for pedestrians entering a burial ground.

7.3. The day-to-day administration of these policies and operational procedures are managed by the Burial Grounds Officer, in close liaison with others noted in Section 6 above.

7.4. The Burial Ground Clerk is the first point of contact for the reservation and/or allocation of lairs. They record reservation and burial details on the burial ground register and plan, ensuring that records are up to date and accessible. They liaise closely with the Burial Grounds Officer to make the records available.

7.5. The Council is responsible for the provision of burial grounds and for the maintenance of the assets within, excluding memorials which remain the property and responsibility of the burial rights owner. This is a maintenance function to ensure that such assets are safe and fit for purpose. This does not include replacement unless beyond economical repair and does not necessarily include any betterment (upgrade). If replaced that will be on a “like for like” basis. Maintenance may include, but is not limited to:

- Grass Cutting.
- Access Paths.
- Boundary Walls and Fences.
- Access Gates.
- Car Parks.
- Any buildings (unless formally taken over by other parties).
- Digging and refilling of graves.
- Settlement (depressions or hollows forming).
- Signage (including warnings or other advice on access).
- Pest Control.
- Drainage Systems.

Section 8 - Exclusive Right of Burial

- 8.1.** Reservation of lairs is made by application to the Burial Ground Clerk responsible for the preferred burial ground. Reservation of a lair can be made in person with the Burial Ground Clerk, or by telephone. When the reservation has been made and the relevant fee paid, the Burial Ground Clerk shall issue a certificate giving the named person and their heirs the Exclusive Right of Burial in the reserved lair. The fees are published on the Council's website and reviewed annually.
- 8.2.** The Exclusive Right of Burial applies in perpetuity. The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 enables regulations that could stipulate that rights can only be sold for an initial period of 25 years. Should these regulations come into force their implications will be considered by the Council.
- 8.3.** Registry Certificates for lairs will be issued by the Burial Ground Clerk for the burial ground, in full consideration of the available capacity remaining. Requests for lairs will be accommodated within the sections of the burial grounds currently being used for burials.
- 8.4.** Joint ownership of the Right of Burial in any lair is prohibited, only one person shall be registered as the owner of any one lair. The owner is not entitled to sell any Right of Burial, though the lair can be relinquished to the Council through the appropriate Burial Ground Clerk, who will update the relevant records. Where a lair is relinquished, the Council will refund the fee paid at the time of purchase of the lair.
- 8.5.** Owners shall not allow any person, other than members of their family, to be interred in the lair, except with the consent of the Council.
- 8.6.** The owner is permitted to request a change to the lair for which a certificate has been issued by applying to the appropriate Burial Ground Clerk.
- 8.7.** The Burial Ground Clerk will provide records of all burials, including the interment of ashes and the scattering of ashes, together with a list of any lairs which have been reserved, to the Burial Grounds Officer who will ensure records are maintained appropriately.
- 8.8.** To ensure lairs are available for immediate burials it may be necessary for the Council to retain capacity in cemeteries with insufficient long-term lair space. In this situation, advice will be given on alternative locations with space.

- 8.9.** Enquiries regarding the interment of a cremation urn or casket, or the scattering of ashes must be made to the Burial Ground Clerk for that burial ground. A lair is required for the burial of a cremation casket or ashes. These remains can be interred in an existing family lair or through the purchase of a new lair. Scattering of ashes within a burial ground can only be carried out on an existing family lair with the prior approval of the Burial Ground Clerk, they cannot be scattered indiscriminately within a burial ground.
- 8.10.** Owners of the Right of Burial are responsible for any memorial erected on the lair and are therefore responsible for the maintenance of that memorial. The Council undertakes periodic inspections of burial memorials, and an owner must act within three months once a risk has been identified by either themselves or through the Council inspection programme. The owner must appoint a suitably qualified and insured specialist to undertake any repairs deemed necessary, who has the required permit to work on the memorial within our burial grounds. The approved stonemasons are listed on the Burial Ground Memorials page on the Council website. Please see Sections 12 and 13 for further information about memorial inspections and safety.

Section 9 - Burial Record Procedure

- 9.1.** A Funeral Director is usually engaged for individual burial arrangements. The Burial Ground Clerk will liaise with the Funeral Director to ensure all burial details are communicated and recorded. In some circumstances, a relative or friend of the deceased may assume this responsibility, in which case some of the obligations of the Funeral Director, will apply to that person.
- 9.2.** A burial can be recorded by the Burial Ground Clerk once a Right of Burial has been established for the required lair. This may have been purchased in advance or will be purchased at the time of arranging the burial.
- 9.3.** Requests for burials will be processed Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 17:00. Requests can be sent via email at the weekend and will be picked up by the duty officer on Monday. However, urgent requests can be accommodated if necessary.
- 9.4.** Burials can normally take place Monday to Saturday (excluding some public holidays) with dates and/or times agreed depending on availability of resources. Burials on certain days may be subject to surcharge.
- 9.5.** Final requests for burials must be submitted on the correct Scottish Government standard statutory burial form and include all relevant information. Funeral dates will not be agreed until all required information is supplied.
- 9.6.** A Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14) or a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth (Form 8) is issued by the Registrar to the Funeral Director, or person acting in this role, after the Death Registration. At the time of burial, the Funeral Director, or person acting in this role, should give a Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14) or, in the case of stillborn child, a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth (Form 8) to the gravedigger. In the case of interment of a cremation urn or casket, the original Certificate of Cremation should be submitted to the gravedigger as soon as possible.
- 9.7.** It is the responsibility of the Burials Service to ensure that the Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 8 or 14) and the Notice to Keeper are kept for retention by the Council as a complete record of the burial.

Section 10 - Lairs and Burials Procedures

- 10.1.** Each burial ground is divided into sections and further sub-divided into lairs which can accommodate one or more burials. Details of these sections are recorded in a Burial Ground Plan. Currently, lairs measure nine feet by four feet (2750mm by 1200mm), in older burial grounds dimensions of lairs will vary. Some lairs can be identified by concrete plinths on the ground, but plinths will generally not be provided for new lairs in the future.
- 10.2.** Owners of a Right of Burial have the exclusive right of burial in the specified lair.
- 10.3.** The first burial in a lair confers the right of a subsequent burial in the lair, subject to ground conditions and the specifications relating to the minimum depth of burial. The right of consequent burial is not subject to further charges other than those relating to the re-excavation of the grave. The details of such charges are published on the Council's website and reviewed annually.
- 10.4.** The grave must be identified and marked out in accordance with the location specified on the certificate.
- 10.5.** Graves will be excavated in accordance with Council health and safety requirements. Further details regarding lair preparation, excavation, shoring, dressing and backfilling are held by the Burial Grounds Officer and the Burials Foreperson.
- 10.6.** All Council owned equipment used in the burial process, or for maintenance of burial grounds, is serviced and maintained according to manufacturer instructions, records are kept by Fleet, Orkney Islands Council Depot, Sparrowhawk Road, Hatston Industrial Estate, Kirkwall, KW15 1GE.
- 10.7.** Personnel attending a burial for the purpose of re-filling the grave shall wear suitable clean attire and while waiting to complete the burial, staff and their equipment shall remain as unobtrusive as practicable in terms of their physical presence and that of tools, equipment and/or vehicles from the proximity of the graveside.
- 10.8.** In some circumstances, technical requirements may restrict access, and an alternative may be considered. In the rare situation this arises, the owner of the Right of Burial should discuss with the Burial Ground Clerk for an alternative at no additional cost.

- 10.9.** Burial of a deceased person must include the use of a suitable coffin.
- 10.10.** No coffin shall be laid nearer to the surface than three feet (900mm). When two interments are intended in the same grave, the first coffin shall be at a depth of six feet (1800mm). A second burial can then be made at a depth of four feet six inches (1400mm). No coffin shall be removed from any grave with a view to making room for an additional interment.
- 10.11.** Before a lair is full, ashes caskets will be buried two feet deep at a bottom corner of the lair. Once the maximum number of burials has been reached for the lair, caskets can be buried elsewhere in the lair, top, middle or bottom, left or right.
- 10.12.** For ease of maintenance and grass cutting, tributes should be placed on the concrete plinth, where available, or as near to the memorial base as possible. Placing flowers and wreaths on a grave is done at the person's own risk and the Council is not liable for any loss or damage due to weather, wildlife, theft etc.
- 10.13.** To maintain the appearance of the burial ground, all tributes shall be removed from lairs after a one-month period and withered tributes may be removed from lairs earlier. This includes natural and artificial Christmas wreaths and tributes which will be removed from lairs and disposed of from 26 January onwards. This is to allow the grass to recover and grass cutting operations to begin in spring. Burial Rights owners may wish to collect their Christmas tributes before 26 January.
- 10.14.** Requests for any variation from the normal grass/turf finish are generally not permitted, such as fences, railings, kerbs/copes, gravel, corner stones, trees and shrubs, noting that these additions pose substantial operational risks. Maintenance of any variations installed prior to the introduction of this plan remain the full responsibility of the Burial Rights owner. In addition, the owner may be asked to absolve the Council of any liability regarding accidental damage. Any unauthorised memorials, artefacts, vases or planting are liable to be removed by the Council and the costs recovered from the lair owner.
- 10.15.** Trees, shrubs or flowers planted prior to the introduction of this plan will not be allowed to encroach on neighbouring ground and the Council reserves the right to cut back all such plants or to remove them permanently.
- 10.16.** Any memorials which are erected on a lair must be done in accordance with the requirements set out in this plan. All memorials remain the responsibility of the lair owner.

Section 11 - Burial Grounds Maintenance Standard

- 11.1.** The Council is responsible for maintaining burial grounds in a fit and proper condition. This responsibility may be discharged in whole or in part to other groups. War graves are managed through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- 11.2.** With mutual agreement, a Community Council may, on behalf of the Council, undertake the tendering process, award contracts and supervise burial grounds maintenance works such as grass cutting. The agreed scope of works will be invoiced and paid from the fixed annual budget, noting that such tenders would need to be accommodated within the agreed revenue budget with any shortfall being met by the Community Council, or the specification changed to meet available funding.
- 11.3.** Where other routine maintenance is requested and is not within the scope of works agreed for the Community Council to fund and undertake, this will be reported to the Burial Grounds Officer and scheduled for action, subject to its priority and availability of funding.
- 11.4.** The Council will use contractors for specific works on the basis that those contractors are trained and qualified to undertake the work and have appropriate equipment, risk assessments and safe ways of working documentation in place. Qualified contractors will be advised of any Listed Structures or Scheduled Monuments, to ensure they are maintained on a 'like for like' basis using appropriate materials.
- 11.5.** The standard of maintenance in a burial ground is dependent upon the frequency of visitors, the general use of the burial ground and the available budget. Should sufficient budget not be available, operational decisions will be taken to deliver a reduced service within the available budget.
- 11.6.** Maintenance may include grass cutting, weed control, trimming of established trees and shrubs and leaf clearance. Grass cutting is conducted by contractors; specifications vary and are detailed in the maintenance contract for each burial ground.
- 11.7.** Maintenance work to walls, fences and gates will be programmed and implemented as resources permit. Boundary walls or fences will be kept intact and in good order to reduce entry to the burial ground by livestock or wildlife. Gates will be painted or treated as required, hinges and catches will be oiled to ensure ease of use and wire mesh will be provided to prevent access by rabbits where necessary.

- 11.8.** Bins, water taps, Council-owned benches, pathways and signage will be maintained as resources permit.
- 11.9.** Visitors are not allowed to bring dogs into the burial grounds, unless they are assistance dogs on a lead.
- 11.10.** Visitors are not allowed to bring vehicles into the burial grounds; a car parking area or roadside parking may be available. Visitors with a Blue Badge may drive into the burial ground, if necessary, as long as they drive slowly, only drive and park on the paths and take extreme care manoeuvring near memorials. They should report any accidental damage to the burial ground or memorials to the Council. The driver will be responsible for the cost of any necessary repairs. Please be aware that the Council accepts no liability for any vehicles in or parked next to burial grounds.
- 11.11.** Burial Ground car parks are for legitimate users such as Funeral Directors and funeral attendees; Council staff; stonemasons; families and friends visiting graves; and visitors researching their genealogy and local history. The use of Burial Ground car parks and nearby Council ground for overnight parking, camping and motorhoming is not permitted.
- 11.12.** Levelling of graves will be carried out as required.
- 11.13.** Substantial items of plant and equipment may be required at burial ground sites for ongoing maintenance such as repairs, drainage, and excavation of lairs. Works will be undertaken carefully and sympathetically by the Council and contractors, particularly in relation to protecting adjacent lairs.
- 11.14.** If damage arises, unintentionally, through the actions of the Council, the lair owner can contact the Burial Grounds Officer, and all attempts will be made to remedy the damage at no cost to the lair owner.

Section 12 - Burial Grounds and Memorial Inspection Procedure

- 12.1.** Each of the Orkney Islands Council managed Burial Grounds are formally inspected in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Burial Grounds Inspection Checklist. The inspection considers public safety risks associated with the condition of the general features of the Burial Ground, for example, walls, access gates, paths, Council-owned buildings and structures, vegetation and memorials. The Memorial Safety Procedure is detailed in the next section of this document.
- 12.2.** Inspections are driven by risks reported to the Council and risks identified at previous inspections, otherwise inspections are conducted at least once every five years.
- 12.3.** The record system will note all inspections and subsequent actions for each location. These records will include full details of the work completed by the qualified team, including before and after photographs.

Section 13 - Memorial Safety Procedure

- 13.1.** A memorial is defined as any form of headstone or grave marker, of any size or type, within a burial ground, excluding mausoleums. The design, construction and materials used for memorials across Orkney over time is diverse.
- 13.2.** The erection of a memorial shall only be permitted on purchased lairs, and lair owners must have a Memorial Permit from the Council. No artefacts, painting or other installations of any kind will be permitted.
- 13.3.** Memorials should be constructed in accordance with BS 8415:2018. Those undertaking the work should be suitably trained, qualified and certified to the COSVR 194 SQA Unit HA1J-04 Fix and Secure Memorial Masonry Award, or equivalent. In addition, they should have appropriate public liability insurance and have obtained a Memorial Permit from the Council.
- 13.4.** Any memorial should have the relevant section and lair number cut plainly on the left side of the memorial at the expense of the person erecting the memorial. No other method of marking e.g. painting is allowed.
- 13.5.** The owner of the Right of Burial for a lair is the owner of any memorial on that lair and must maintain the memorial in a safe and proper condition, of which the Council will be sole judge. The owner is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the memorial. They are therefore also liable for any incident or damage arising from failure to maintain, or any damage sustained to the memorial e.g. through vandalism or acts of nature.
- 13.6.** All memorials are inspected and tested at least once every five years, in accordance with national guidance. Memorials identified as medium risk (i.e. at a height over 1.5m or require more frequent monitoring) are inspected at least once every two and a half years.
- 13.7.** Memorials will be inspected by a Council employee trained, qualified and certified in the SQA Unit J1N8 45 Manage and Maintain Cemetery and Burial Ground Memorials, or equivalent.

13.8. Prior to carrying out a scheduled inspection, the Council will liaise with the Communications Team to notify the public:

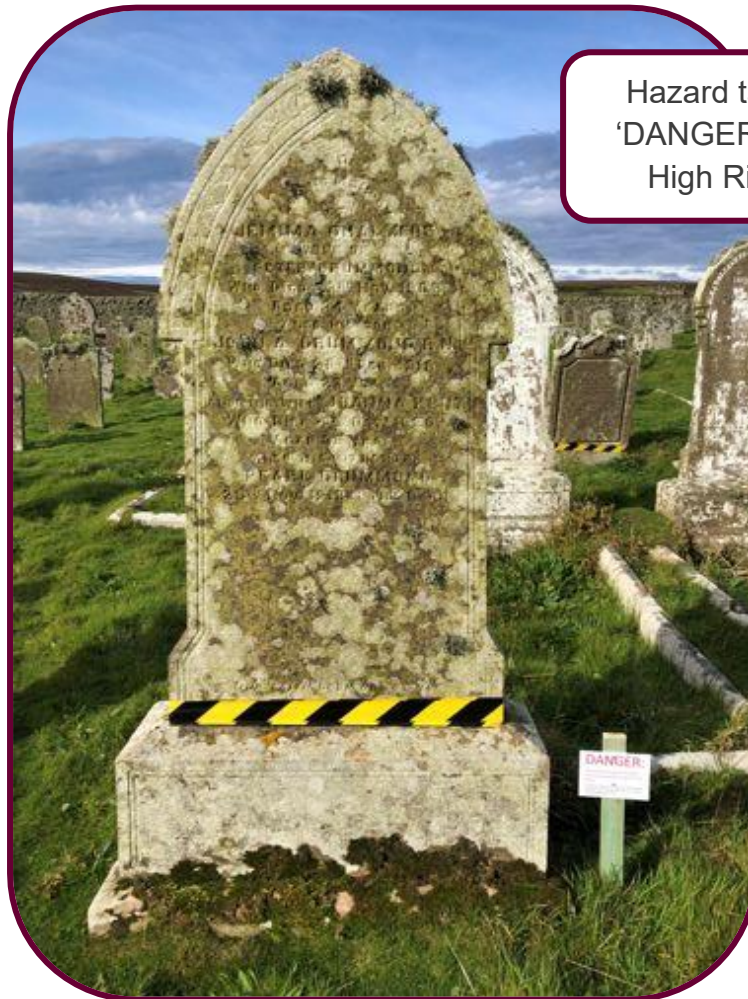
13.8.1. Of the likely date range of the inspection, weather dependent, via online notices and signs at the Burial Ground.

13.8.2. That, as a result of the inspection, the Council will take steps in the table in Section 13.10 below, to make safe any memorial that the inspector considers to be a safety risk.

13.9. The Council will attempt to identify and notify the owner if the memorial on the lair is considered unsafe and requires attention. The owner has 21 days in which to respond to the notification, and three months in which to arrange appropriate work. If the Council does not receive any communication from the owner after 21 days, or the required work has not been completed within three months of the notification, the Council will be entitled to carry out either the repair of the memorial, removal of memorial, or laying down of memorial and recover such costs from the lair owner. Additional efforts to ensure that owners are aware of any potential issues may include working with the relevant Community Councils, and possibly local funeral directors, to attempt to trace the owners.

13.10. Memorial risk will be categorised in terms of public safety, with categories and interventions listed in the table below:

Risk	Risk Definition	Intervention
High	Memorial is dangerous e.g. very unstable or major deterioration.	The memorial will be made safe in the first instance (e.g. with barriers or hazard tape and a sign) and an attempt will be made to contact the family. If the family cannot be found, the stone will be repaired or laid flat.
Medium	Memorial is not dangerous but requires monitoring e.g. some movement, cracking.	An attempt will be made to contact the family. The memorial is inspected more regularly, every two and a half years.
Medium (Tall Memorial)	Memorial is over 1.5m tall.	Memorial is inspected more regularly, every two and a half years.
Low	Very minor or no defect identified, memorial is stable and not likely to become dangerous in the next five years.	Routine reinspection in five years.



Hazard tape and small 'DANGER' sign marking High Risk memorial

- 13.11.** If the Council considers, in their judgement, that a memorial is in a dangerous condition, the Council will be entitled to, without notice, take any action deemed necessary to make it safe. The owner of the memorial will be liable for any costs incurred by the Council. If the Council, after due and diligent enquiry, cannot ascertain the contact address of the owner, the Council can, without prejudice to its right to recover any costs associated with safety works undertaken, repair, remove or lay flat the memorial.
- 13.12.** Any works undertaken by the Council must be appropriately recorded including before and after photographs.
- 13.13.** The owner shall not remove a memorial or part thereof from the cemetery without notification to the Council, and the appointment of an authorised and trained specialist who has the required Memorial Permit from the Council. This protects all parties from challenge of theft or risk of injury.

Section 14 - Resilience Planning

- 14.1.** If no Registrars are able to work, any death in Scotland can be registered anywhere in Scotland, so help would be sought from others in Scotland.
- 14.2.** If the Burials Foreperson and Chargehand are both unable to work, a Burials Operative would act up, or the Burial Grounds Officer could cover their duties.
- 14.3.** If one or more Burials Operatives are unable to work, trained staff could be deployed from another service, agency staff or a contractor hired.
- 14.4.** The intention will always be to meet the wishes of the deceased and their family with regards to place and location of burial, but if an event causes sustained inability to carry out burials in a burial ground, for example due to major flooding, coastal erosion, police incidents or falling masonry, burials may need to take place in an alternative Burial Ground until the issue is resolved. The distress that this could cause families is recognised and is a decision that would not be undertaken lightly.

Section 15 - Contingency Planning

- 15.1.** Please refer to the '2025 Burials Service - Contingency Plans for Excess Deaths' document held by the Burial Grounds Officer, for arrangements for an increase in burials due to additional deaths such as a sudden increase in winter deaths or a pandemic.
- 15.2.** Please refer to the '2023 Intensive Excess Deaths Plan (Mass Fatalities)' document held by Safety and Resilience, Environmental Health, for arrangements for an emergency event causing mass fatalities on Orkney. Please also see that document for details of other agencies likely to be involved.