

Mary Tavy Parish Council

It seems to have come as a surprise to a very small minority of local people that regulations are in place for the proper and effective operation of our parish cemetery. Regulations have been in place for the last 15 years and have remained largely unchanged despite the annual review process carried out by most Parish Councils in that time. The regulations are far from arbitrary and have always been based on best practice drawn from the regulations of the Diocese of Exeter and neighbouring Burial Authorities, such as Tavistock Town Council, and quite frankly plain common sense. The regulations are very limited in number (15 in total) and are simple and straightforward. They are designed to provide a balance between the needs of the bereaved and our duty as a Burial Authority to ensure that our cemetery offers a safe, tidy, respectful and dignified environment for all.

I have been asked to make it clear that the parish cemetery is Council property and control of it and its operation is totally in the hands of the duly elected and co-opted members of MTPC. Councillors expect that all those who purchase an Exclusive Right of Burial or who apply to erect a headstone with an inscription will comply with the cemetery regulations. It would obviously be irresponsible of us and indeed counter-productive to allow individuals to pick and choose the regulations they agree with and to allow them to ignore those they find inconvenient. The same level of compliance is required of all visitors attending graves in the parish cemetery where the regulations are on display.

While all parishioners have the right to elect to be buried in the parish cemetery, agreement by the Parish Council is dependent on the purchaser accepting the regulations in force at the time and any subsequent amendments made to them. All those who purchase any of the Rights relating to a burial are of course given a copy of the Charges and Regulations booklet when they do so. It has always been the policy of MTPC to view the Charges and Regulations booklet as, in effect, being the Terms and Conditions which govern any sale of Rights.

As several weeks elapse between the occurrence of a death and the interment we are reassured to note that bereaved families are able to cope with this aspect of a burial. As our Burial Clerk is readily available to give advice and clarification prior to an interment those who find our rules unacceptable should seek to use an alternative burial ground. They will of course discover that alternative venues have much the same rules as we do. It is our firm belief that our insistence on regulatory compliance is the only certain way of ensuring that people will use the cemetery respectfully and with due regard for the sensibilities of other parishioners.

Councillor Peter Jarvis, Vice-Chairman, Mary Tavy Parish Council