

LOUGHGALL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GRAVEYARD RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Kirk Session and Congregational Committee of Loughgall Presbyterian Church welcome everyone and ask that the peace, dignity and reverence of our historic burying grounds are respected and are in keeping with the long-established Christian ethos which has existed on this site for over four centuries.

No service or burials may be conducted in the Church property or graveyard without the permission of the Minister, Rev. Philip McKelvey (07834533451) or if unavailable, Clerk of the Kirk Session, James MacQueen (07711546564).

All contractors working in the graveyard for whatever reason must hold public liability insurance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The regulations in the following pages have been created and agreed by the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee of Loughgall Presbyterian Church, to ensure that the older part of the graveyard (referred to as the Historic Graveyard) and the newer graveyard (referred to as the Lawn Graveyard) are managed and used in a sensitive and appropriate way for everyone. It is recognised that these are communal spaces for quiet reflection and for remembering loved ones.

Loughgall Presbyterian Church reserves the right to remove, or have removed from their property including graves, anything that is not in keeping with these rules and/or Christian Ethos as defined by Kirk Session & Congregational Committee.

A person purchasing the exclusive right of burial in a grave on doing so shall bind himself and his successor to take all responsibility and to conform to all the rules and regulations in force or hereafter to be made by Loughgall Presbyterian Church for the regulation, management and control of the burial ground.

2. HISTORIC GRAVEYARD

The historic graveyard has been used since the establishment of the church in 1704.

- (i) No headstones are to be erected without permission first being obtained from the Graveyard Committee.
- (ii) No headstone inscription can be altered or erased without special permission of Kirk Session & Congregational Committee.
- (iii) No glass wreaths, urns, flowerpots etc. which would hinder grass cutting are to be placed on graves.
- (iv) Loughgall Presbyterian Church will not be responsible for any loss, injury or damage which may happen to headstones, wreaths, flowers, and flower containers on the graves.
- (v) The use of non-decomposable urns for cremated remains is not permitted for burial.
- (vi) In the event an item breaches the Rules & Regulations of the graveyard it may need to be removed and where possible, the owner will be informed.
- (vii) A person laying the memorial tablet must ensure that it is bedded firmly into the lawn with the upper surface level with the soil surface and that the ground surface on which it is to be laid has been compacted sufficiently to avoid subsidence. Concrete, stones or other solid material must not be placed under the tablet to form a permanent foundation.
- (viii) Immediately upon completion of the work, the person or their agent must remove any spoil or waste material.

3. LAWN GRAVEYARD

The more recently established Lawn Graveyard is laid out in rectangular sections with flat lawn-style grass, accessed by pathways leading to all sections and it is designed to allow easy access for grass maintenance.

- (i) No headstones are to be erected without permission first being obtained from the Graveyard Committee.
- (ii) No headstone inscription can be altered or erased without special permission of Kirk Session & Congregational Committee.
- (iii) Headstones **must not** exceed:
 - a. Height = 3' 3" (1m)
 - b. Width = 3' 0" (0.91m)
 - c. Base = 3' 6" (1.06m) x 1' 6" (0.46m)

- (iv) NO HEADSTONE SURROUNDS ARE PERMITTED.
- (v) No glass wreaths, urns, flowerpots etc. which would hinder grass cutting are to be placed on graves.
- (vi) No plants, shrubs or trees to be planted on graves.
- (vii) Loughgall Presbyterian Church will not be responsible for any loss, injury or damage which may happen to headstones, wreaths, flowers, and flower containers on the graves.
- (viii) The use of non-decomposable urns for cremated remains is not permitted for burial.
- (ix) Surrounds, railings, hoops, fences or garden edgings (or similar) are prohibited. In addition, stone chippings, peat or wood chippings must not be placed on or near a grave.
- (x) Following a burial, flowers and wreaths can be placed at the burial plot for up to 20 days, after which they should be removed to allow for the ongoing maintenance of the graveyard. Christmas wreaths should be removed at the beginning of February.
- (xi) In the event an item breaches the rules & regulations of the graveyard it may need to be removed and where possible, the owner will be informed.

4. FUNERAL DIRECTOR / OPENING GRAVES FOR BURIAL

When there is a death the Funeral Director must liaise with the Graveyard Convenor Mr Colin Martin (07713 678651 or 02838 891576) on behalf of the family of the deceased to arrange for the opening of a grave. The Funeral Director is responsible for furnishing families of the deceased with a copy of this policy.

Funeral Directors should note that the cortege should not enter the church premises via the main gates but via the next entrance, over the cattle grid and then around the southern end of the church, to arrive at the front door facing down hill.

Graves are to be dug to a minimum depth of 6ft (1.83m) and no graves should be reopened for a period of at least 20 years. However, if the previous opening was to a depth of 12ft then this would not apply except for a 3rd and subsequent opening.

5. OWNERSHIP OF BURIAL RIGHTS TO A GRAVE

- (i) The trustees of Loughgall Presbyterian Church retain ownership of the land and graves. Burial rights are established through historical means or through prior purchase of a plot
- (ii) Only the Registered Owner can authorise the opening of the grave for burial, erection of a memorial and the cutting of an inscription.
- (iii) Only one person shall be registered as the owner of the burial rights.
- (iv) Loughgall Presbyterian Church will not become involved in family disputes relating to the burial rights or transfer of burial rights.
- (v) In the event of the death of the Registered Owner there will be an automatic right to burial.

6. MONUMENTAL SCULPTORS

- (i) Monumental Sculptors must not carry out any work until written approval has been received from the Graveyard Convenor.
- (ii) A Monumental Sculptor who places a structure on a grave must cause as little disturbance as possible and must immediately remove all surplus materials from the graveyard on completion of the work. No disturbance must be made to any adjoining plots. In the event of damage to adjoining graves the costs will be charged to the Monumental Sculptor to rectify the damage.
- (iii) The responsibility for maintaining a headstone and surround in safe condition is that of the owner. Loughgall Presbyterian Church reserves the right to take action where memorials are found to be unsafe in the interests of health and safety, up to and including removal.
- (iv) Headstones, surrounds and memorial tablets must be of natural stone, granite, marble or other approved material and must be placed on a solid foundation of the prescribed dimensions.
- (v) Headstones and surrounds must be dowelled and pinned and not glued.
- (vi) Concrete tops inside surrounds can only be to a maximum depth of 2 inches (50mm).

7. CATERING/ORGANIST

The Presbyterian Women of Loughgall Presbyterian Church have an overall responsibility for all catering on the church premises and will be

given first option to providing catering at any funeral. However, if this is not possible, a list of Approved Caterers can be obtained from the Graveyard Convenor.

8. RESPECT IN OUR GRAVEYARD

Our graveyard is a place of quiet reflection, which should be respected at all times.

We request that you do not:

- (i) Place candles, images, ceramic portraits or photographs of the deceased
- (ii) No items that would not be in keeping with the overall ethos of the graveyard should be placed on a grave such as balloons or sports shirts
- (iii) Interfere with any headstone
- (iv) Damage any trees, plants or shrubs
- (v) Use a metal detector
- (vi) Allow children to use it as a playground - While it is good to get children used to paying respects at a graveyard, they often don't fully understand the meaning of everything in the graveyard and the pain of loss that other visitors may currently experience.
- (vii) Allow pets to run around the graveyard without a leash
- (viii) Consume alcohol in the graveyard or car park
- (ix) Park overnight in the car park

9. GRAVEYARD FEES

Members:

- New plot = £150
- Grave Opening (18+) = £100
- Grave Opening (<18) = No Charge
- Burial of Ashes (18+) = £80
- Burial of Ashes (<18) = No Charge
- Erection of headstone = £80

Non Members:

(this may include descendants of those already interred in the graveyard)

- New plot = £500
- Grave Opening (18+) = £250
- Grave Opening (<18) = No Charge

- Burial of Ashes (18+) = £200
- Burial of Ashes (<18) = No Charge
- Erection of headstone = £200

ADDITIONAL FEES

If the church premises (ie Meeting House and/or Church Hall) are required for a funeral service, there will be an associated cost for heat / light and also for the services of the Church Organist. Details of these costs are available from the Graveyard Convenor.

10. OUR RESURRECTION HOPE

St Johns Gospel Chapter 11 v 25-27

(Jesus comforting Martha following the death of Lazarus)

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”