

# **Rules governing Moira Presbyterian Church Graveyard**

## **General**

- The Graveyard is the property of the Education Board of Dromore Presbytery and is primarily intended for the use by members of Moira Presbyterian Church(MPC). As such the Property Committee reserves the right to give privilege to the burial of members of the congregation.
- The Property Committee are responsible for the operation of the Graveyard. In all cases of dispute concerning the allocation of burial plots or any matter relating to the graveyard the decision of the Property Committee shall be final and binding
- The Point of Contact for all Graveyard matters is Allen Gamble, contactable at Tel: - 07712839755; Email: - allengamble@btconnect.com
- Specific definitions are used for common terms in these rules. These are defined in the Definitions Section.
- Moira Presbyterian Church will not be responsible or liable for any injury, loss or damage caused in any way by or to railings, monuments, wreaths, headstones, inscriptions or lettering associated with burial plots
- Moira Presbyterian Church reserve the right to revise or amend any or all of these rules, regulations and fees without notice.

## **Specific Rules**

- Allocation of and qualification for burial plots
  - Only members of the congregation, of 3 years standing or more, are eligible for allocation of burial plots on payment of the appropriate fee.
  - When a person ceases to be a member of the congregation they forfeit the right to a burial plot unless they pay an annual fee in line with that given in the fees table below or a one of fee at the time of burial which shall equate to the number of years since they ceased to be a member to the date of interment times the former member annual fee.
  - Allocation of burial plots is solely the responsibility of the MPC Property Committee which will define the location and boundary of such plots.
  - Members are restricted to one burial plot per family and only one person shall be registered as the holder of a burial plot. The MPC Property Committee shall maintain a register of burial plots and their status.
- Opening / Closing of burial plots
  - Only the MPC Property Committee or person appointed by it, shall have the right to authorise opening of graves.
  - Applications for the opening of a grave and interment shall be made to the Graveyard Point of Contact, giving adequate notice, typically 2 days before interment. No grave shall be opened until such approval is obtained.
  - Persons requesting the opening of a grave shall pay all necessary fees in advance to Moira Presbyterian Church via the nominated Graveyard Point of Contact
  - All interments must be performed under the supervision of the Graveyard Point of Contact or their nominated representative.
  - Upon closure of the burial plot approximately 4" to 6" of soil shall be left above normal ground level to allow for settlement. Following a period of

settlement the surfaces of all burial plots will be levelled and returned to grass by Moira Presbyterian Church

- It is the responsibility of burial plot holders or their representatives to remove all wreaths within 28 days of burial
- Marking of burial plots & erection of headstones
  - Burial plots may only be marked by a simple headstone. Graveyard surrounds, of any description, are not permitted. No shrubs or trees shall be planted on burial plots and glass wreaths are explicitly prohibited.
  - Dimensioned plans for any headstones, inscriptions and lettering, including location within the burial plot, must be submitted to the MPC Property Committee for approval with the appropriate fee. No works shall be carried out in connection with any burial plot until such approval has been obtained in writing.
  - Contractors or other persons erecting a headstone, carrying out works or making alterations to burial plots must do so only in accordance with the approved plans and must remove all surplus materials from the graveyard after such works are completed.
- Transfer of Burial Plots
  - Burial plots cannot in general be transferred. The only exception to this is that transfer is permitted to members of the burial plot's holder's Immediate Family. All such transfers must be registered with and are subject to approval by the MPC Property Committee
  - Burial plots cannot be transferred to someone who already has 3 or more plots
- Maintenance of Burial Plots / Headstones
  - Moira Presbyterian Church shall maintain the burial plots and reserve the right to remove any burial plot markings / adornments / memorials not in line with these rules.
  - A number of existing graves in the graveyard do not meet the requirements of these rules in terms of surrounds / boundary markings. As far as possible these shall be left as is but the Property Committee reserve the right to modify these if required to allow sufficient burial plots to meet the needs of the congregation or if they represent a Health and Safety Hazard in the graveyard.
  - Upkeep / Maintenance of any Headstones shall be the responsibility of the Burial Plot Holder
- Funeral services in the Graveyard and / or in the Church are entirely in the hands of and can only be conducted by the Minister of Moira Presbyterian Church or someone authorised by him. He must be personally consulted, giving adequate notice, typically 2 days, before any arrangements are made for funerals in the graveyard.
- Graveyard Records - The Property Committee are responsible for maintaining the authoritative records associated with the Graveyard. These include the Graveyard Lease Book which shall be maintained, capturing the allocation of burial plots along with a Graveyard map showing the location of burial plots. All Graveyard Records are the property of Moira Presbyterian Church and, in accordance with Charity Commissioner's Direction, shall be kept in the fireproof safe at the Church.

## Graveyard Fees

The following fees apply in respect of the graveyard. All fees are to be paid, to Moira Presbyterian Church, in advance of any activity taking place.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Former Member</b>	<b>Non-Member</b>
Acquisition of Burial Rights	£150	Contribution of at least £150 per year since ceasing to be a member. Min. contribution of £500.	n/a
Maintainance of Burial Rights	£150 minimum combined F.W.O. contribution per year to MPC	Annual Contribution at least equal to £150 per year	n/a
Grave opening for Interment	£150	£300	£750
Approval of plans for burial plots	£50	£100	£100
Transfer of burial plot to immediate family member	£100	n/a	n/a

## Specific Definitions for the purposes of these MPC Graveyard Rules

- **Member** of the congregation is defined as someone who annually subscribes to the Free Will Offering - a combined minimum qualifying amount per family per year as defined in the Graveyard Fee's table and is a regular attender at Church services or participant in the CD ministry.
- **Former member** of the congregation is defined as someone who was previously a Member and has maintained burial rights through either the payment of an annual contribution from the time that they ceased to be a Member or a one of payment at the time of burial in line with the graveyard fees table
- **Non-member** is someone who has never been a member of the congregation but who has previously acquired burial rights. No new non-Members shall be created after the issuing of these rules.
- **Immediate Family** is defined as spouse, son, daughter, brother, sister, nephew or niece.
- **Burial Plot Holder** is defined as the registered holder of the burial plot
- **Authoritative Record** - The only recognised valid source of information
- **Burial Plot** is a plot of ground in Moira Presbyterian Church Graveyard that meets the requirements as defined in these rules. In particular the surface area of a burial plot shall be 8 feet by 3 feet with 3 graves.

**Approved by Moira Presbyterian Church Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019**