

St Mary's Drumagarner Graveyard Policy

St Mary's Graveyard

Our Parish Graveyard in Drumagarner is a holy place of prayer and remembrance. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our graveyard is also a testament to our faith in the Resurrection, Reverence and Respect for our dead. As part of the graveyard policy, we need to ensure that space within the graveyard is adequate to meet the needs of parishioners now and going forward. The new extension has only been made possible with the support of parishioners of Kilrea and Desertohill.

St Mary's Graveyard is owned by Kilrea Parish for the use of its Parishioners.

Our Parishioners live within the boundary of our Parish and are registered on our Parish Census. There are also people who live outside the boundary of our parish whom we refer to as Parishioners because they are active members of our Church community insofar that they are regular attenders at Mass and actively contributing to Church life as volunteers eg readers, eucharist ministers, sacristans, and who contribute through weekly envelopes.

Eligibility Rules

St. Mary's graveyard has the following eligibility criteria for burial: -

These rules outline those who qualifies for burial at St. Mary's graveyard under different circumstances.

1. Parishioners of Kilrea are eligible for burial.
2. Non-Parishioners, ie who live outside our Parish, may be eligible if they have an existing close family grave where there is available space and there is family agreement.
3. Non-Parishioners, ie who lived outside our Parish, without dependents, such as students, single adults and other couples, are eligible for burial in St Mary's when their parents who are Parishioners of Kilrea and have yet to acquire their family grave.
4. Children (all those under 18) are eligible for a new family grave when their grandparents are Parishioners whilst their parents are not.
5. The Parish may allow **exceptions** to these rules for non-parishioners, subject to an extra charge (refer to the "cost of a grave" section).

Capacity

The graveyard extension is open and available to our Parishioners and others who meet the above eligibility rules. The existing graveyard is now closed to all NEW graves; however, three spaces have been reserved for deceased priests.

The depth of a new grave will be 1.9 meters (75") as long as the ground conditions permit. No coffin shall be laid in any grave nearer to the surface of the ground than 1.0 meter (39") measured from the upper surface of the last interment. All burials shall be separated from the other coffin by a layer of earth not less than 0.15 meters (6"). The number of burials that can be accommodated in a single grave space is dependent on several factors including ground conditions. Up to two burials may be possible in a standard plot. The parish will only guarantee one interment in any one plot. There may be limited capacity owing to the existence of rock, or other obstructions found.

Opening a Grave (in both the current graveyard and the graveyard extension)

Each family must nominate a custodian responsible for a grave. Only one person can register as the custodian of the family grave. A new grave will only be allocated on the occasion of a death, with agreement between the custodian and the Parish through the family appointed Funeral Director. The reopening of an existing grave will only be permitted when there is an agreement between the custodian and the Parish through the appointed Funeral Director.

If it is certain that a burial cannot take place, the parish will invoke the following process: - Check that the policy is being met including width, depth and plot direction. Check current ground conditions. Check the depth of the remaining top cover. The custodian will be informed through the relevant Funeral Director. The Parish decision is final.

If an existing grave cannot be reopened, a new plot must be located and agreed with the Parish via the appointed Funeral Director (There is a charge for all new plots in the extension to the graveyard, please note the policy on the cost of a grave).

The Burial of Ashes

The burial of ashes can be arranged directly with the Parish by the Custodian and the appointed Funeral Director, the fee for the burial of ashes is the same as a traditional burial and the eligibility rules will apply.

The Cemetery Extension

The extension of the graveyard, which also has access to the Drumsaragh Road, is set up and laid out in a similar system to the existing graveyard where the graves are arranged with a headstone and surrounds. However, the graves will be regulated by both the width of graves and size and width of headstones.

In the graveyard extension each grave space will be 1.22 meters (48"/4ft) for a single plot and 2.13 meters (84"/7ft) for a double plot **and** both plot types will be 2.60 meters (102"/8ft6") long. The gap between the surrounds of adjacent graves will be no more than 0.15 meters (6"). The gap between back-to-back headstones will be 0.30 meters (12"). These gaps must be concreted by the monumental masons or sculptors as part of their work in installing the surrounds and headstone.

Monumental Masons and the Permit

All memorial headstones and surrounds must be made of stone or other non-perishable material such as marble or granite. Wooden memorial crosses and surround can be erected temporarily for a limited period but must be replaced with non-perishable material.

All monumental masons and sculptors must contact the Parish through the Custodian's appointed Funeral Director prior to the start of any work where the Parish will issue a memorial permit for the memorial mason to initiate their work activity. The permit which is signed by both the Custodian and the monumental masons includes details of the approved headstones and their surrounds for both the extension and the existing graveyard and includes the following: -

Maximum Height of Headstone (Inc. base/subbase) 1.22 Meters (48")

For a Single Plot; Maximum Width of Headstone (Inc. base/subbase) 1.07 Meters (42"), Width of surrounds outside to outside 1.22 Meters (48") and Length of surround outside to outside 2.60 Meters (102") for the graveyard extension and 2.44 Meters (96") for the existing graveyard.

For a Double Plot; Maximum Width of Headstone (Inc. base/subbase) 1.22 Meters (48"), Width of surrounds outside to outside 2.13 Meters (84") and Length of surround outside to outside 2.60 Meters (102") for the graveyard extension and 2.44 Meters (96") for the existing graveyard.

The Parish will NOT allow the installation of memorials that fall outside these dimensions. The cost of the modification or the removal of the out of specification headstone and surrounds will be charged to the Custodian.

When erecting a memorial or completing necessary remedial works, the monumental masons and sculptors must remove all debris from the graveyard immediately following completion of their daily work tasks. They must also make good any damage that they may cause to other graves, pathways, shrubbery or grass etc. at their own expense and to the satisfaction of the Parish.

Responsibility and Maintenance of our Graveyard

The Parish will not accept responsibility for any memorial headstones and surrounds (new or existing) or their safety and security. Once a memorial is erected it remains the property of the Custodian and their family. It is the responsibility of the Custodian to maintain their grave, headstone and surround. If the memorial is damaged or in a dangerous state of repair and because of injury caused to a third party, the responsibility lies with the Custodian.

If a headstone or a surround within our graveyard is of an age and is in a poor state of repair or maintenance or is unsafe, the Parish will endeavor to locate a family member (custodian) in order that they will make the headstone and or its surrounds safe at their own expense. The family member (custodian) may use the grave provided there's space and as detailed in the paragraph "Opening a Grave".

This policy also clarifies the Parish's course of action when no Custodian is available to maintain or repair a headstone and its surrounds. This is particularly relevant if the headstone is of age and is damaged or at risk of falling. The Parish will act, which may include laying the headstone flat or reinstalling the headstone, all at a minimum cost to the parish. The grave will then be considered closed to any future burials.

The Parish will not allow the planting of shrubs or trees within graves. The Parish requests that Parishioners be considerate when placing articles and objects within grave surrounds, being mindful that the graveyard is a holy place of prayer and remembrance. These rules aim to maintain the sanctity and respectful atmosphere of the graveyard.

Bins

Waste bins are placed in the vicinity of St Mary's Graveyard; these bins will not be used for the disposal of household waste or heavy waste such as soil or turf.

Cost of a Grave

1. The cost of a new grave to our Parishioners is as follows: -

Single grave £100:00

Double grave £200:00

There is no charge to our Parishioners to reopen an existing grave.

2. Cost of reopening of an existing grave to those who no longer live in the Parish but have an existing family grave is £100.00.

3. The cost of a new grave for those who qualify under eligibility rule five (non-parishioners granted an exception) for burial in St. Mary's graveyard is £1,000.00. and the cost of reopening it will be £500.00 per burial.

This revised Policy will be effective as from the 1st July 2025.

The Parish reserves the right to modify the Policy at any future date.