

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Cemetery and Churchyard safety report 2016

Introduction

Every five years, the Parish Council must audit the safety of memorials. The last audit was in 2014. Essentially, the audit is of headstone stability and safety. Memorials erected from 1945 pose most risk since their design is weak and stability depends on the integrity of butt joints. Most memorials now erected are to British Standard 8415, which anchors the headstone to its foundation.

Some faults require urgent action (Priority 1), others do not present an immediate danger to the public and so we monitor their condition each year (Priority 2).

Responsibility for individual memorials rests with families who own the rights to the grave. When these rights expire or if we can find no relatives, the Parish Council has to decide what to do.

Action since 2014

The 2014 audit identified 112 *Priority 1 & 2* faults affecting 92 graves in the Cemetery and Churchyard. Sixteen were unstable headstones repaired by families (11) or Parish Council (8) by March 2015. The audit found some headstones that rocked but did not fall (see *2016 situation*, below).

Most of the remaining faults were minor (for example, loose kerb joints) that did not require action.

The Council now has a register that lists memorials recording their type, condition and safety. This register records all the faults identified in the 2014 audit. I attach the registers. The key is on page 1 of the Cemetery register.

The Council has also agreed an updated burial policy that incorporates good practice for safety audits recommended by the *Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Managers*.

2016 situation

From the 2014 audit, one unstable (*Priority 2*) memorial in the Cemetery has deteriorated and now needs repair. Mr William and Mrs Gladys **Norman** (died 1972 and 1985) lie in Cemetery grave 68. The Normans died childless and there are no known relatives.

The 2016 5-year Survey of Holy Trinity Church identified two more memorials in the Churchyard that need repair. Mrs Lily and Mr Victor **Parsons** (died 1946 and 1973) lie in grave NE/32. Mr Charles and Mrs Sarah **Attwood** (died 1941 and 1955) lie in grave SE/25.

Diane has asked for an estimate to repair all three memorials to BS 8415.

Six other headstones are loose but secured by ground anchors (3) or dowel pins (2) or monolith foundation (1). They rock but do not fall. They need an annual check.

Richard Higgins
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