

Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management

POLICY - Reuse of Graves

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Institute recognises the sensitivity of the proposal to change the law to permit the selective reuse of graves. Reuse in the context of this policy refers to the disturbance of human remains and re-interment at a greater depth within the same grave, and should not be confused with the reuse of graves whereby only the remaining depth in graves is reused.
- 1.2 **Should reuse of graves become a lawful option** for the creation of vitally needed new burial space the Institute will provide the training and educational programmes required to ensure that this practice is carried out with due attention to reverence respect and dignity to those deceased persons whose remains are affected.
- 1.3 The Institute recognises the rights of registered owners of exclusive rights of burial and that full consultation should take place with such owners prior to any action being taken in respect of individual graves for which rights exist.
- 1.4 The Institute strongly believes that reuse should not be permitted without consideration being given to environmental impact. Authorities wishing to reuse graves should be in possession of a comprehensive conservation management plan designed to protect heritage, biodiversity, landscape and fabric of the cemetery.
- 1.5 Established burial sections containing memorials of architectural and historic importance should only be reused where the conservation management plan requires the reuse and refurbishment of such memorials.
- 1.6 Existing burial sections containing memorials of a lesser importance or in fact no memorials (such as public grave areas) may be set aside for the establishment of new burial sections where new memorials will be permitted without undermining the conservation of the historic cemetery landscape.
- 1.7 Graves should only be reused where the full history of previous use exists within the cemetery records and registers.
- 1.8 Only graves in which the last interment took place over 75 years ago should be selected for reuse.



2 Staff and Expertise

- 2.1 The Institute recommends that only ICCM trained and qualified staff should be engaged in the practice of reuse of graves and that qualification is a required condition of any licence/permit to carry out the reuse of graves.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 All graves subjected to reuse should be excavated in accordance with the ICCM Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries. Precautions as detailed in the HSE guidance on exhumation should be adopted.
- 3.2 Excavation down to the last interment should take place with due care so as to ensure that all remains present may be collected and placed within a new container. Should multiple interments have taken place further excavations should take place to reveal, collect and re-containerise remains individually.
- 3.3 Once all remains have been removed and re-containerised additional depth should be excavated and the containers placed back within the grave. The new depth and position of each container so replaced within the grave should be entered in the cemetery records and registers.

