



Dog Walking Policy

The current policy adopted by the management of Brookwood Park Ltd, is to prohibit dogs within the Cemetery with the exception of registered assistance dogs. The policy was already in place when the Cemetery was acquired by the Council in 2014 and signage installed has re-affirmed this policy.

Our policy is in keeping with the aim of ensuring that the Cemetery remains a place of peace and tranquility for all visitors. This regulation has been adopted by many other Cemeteries across the country and is a sentiment supported by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. The Charter for the Bereaved, produced by the Institute states that 'All cremation and burial facilities shall be managed with competence and efficiency, to ensure that the entire bereavement experience occurs without error or insensitivity, and meets the religious, secular, ethnic and cultural needs of the bereaved'.

As a working cemetery, it is felt that by allowing visitors to bring dogs into the Cemetery, the dignity of the site could be compromised, particularly when funeral services were taking place. The Cemetery serves a number of different religious faiths and cultures and within some of these cultures' dogs may be seen as impure and therefore their presence within the Cemetery would be unsettling particularly at a time of bereavement.

A change of policy to allow dogs on leads within the Cemetery would require stakeholder and faith consultation, the provision of dog waste bins and signage requiring dog owners to pick up dog faeces. This would also incur additional capital costs for installation as well as revenue costs for waste collection. The relaxation of the current policy could also encourage commercial dog walkers to use the site and enforcement of a dogs on leads policy would put additional pressure on site staff, that would be difficult to police considering the vastness of the 220-acre site. The site has a wealth of wildlife interest and the presence of dogs could also have some negative impact on deer and on ground vegetation.

There are adequate alternative open spaces where dogs can be walked in Woking, and as Brookwood Park Ltd strives towards bringing the site back to its original glory and increasing the purpose of the cemetery, with a considerable amount of ongoing development works, it would not be considered appropriate to review or change the policy at this time.