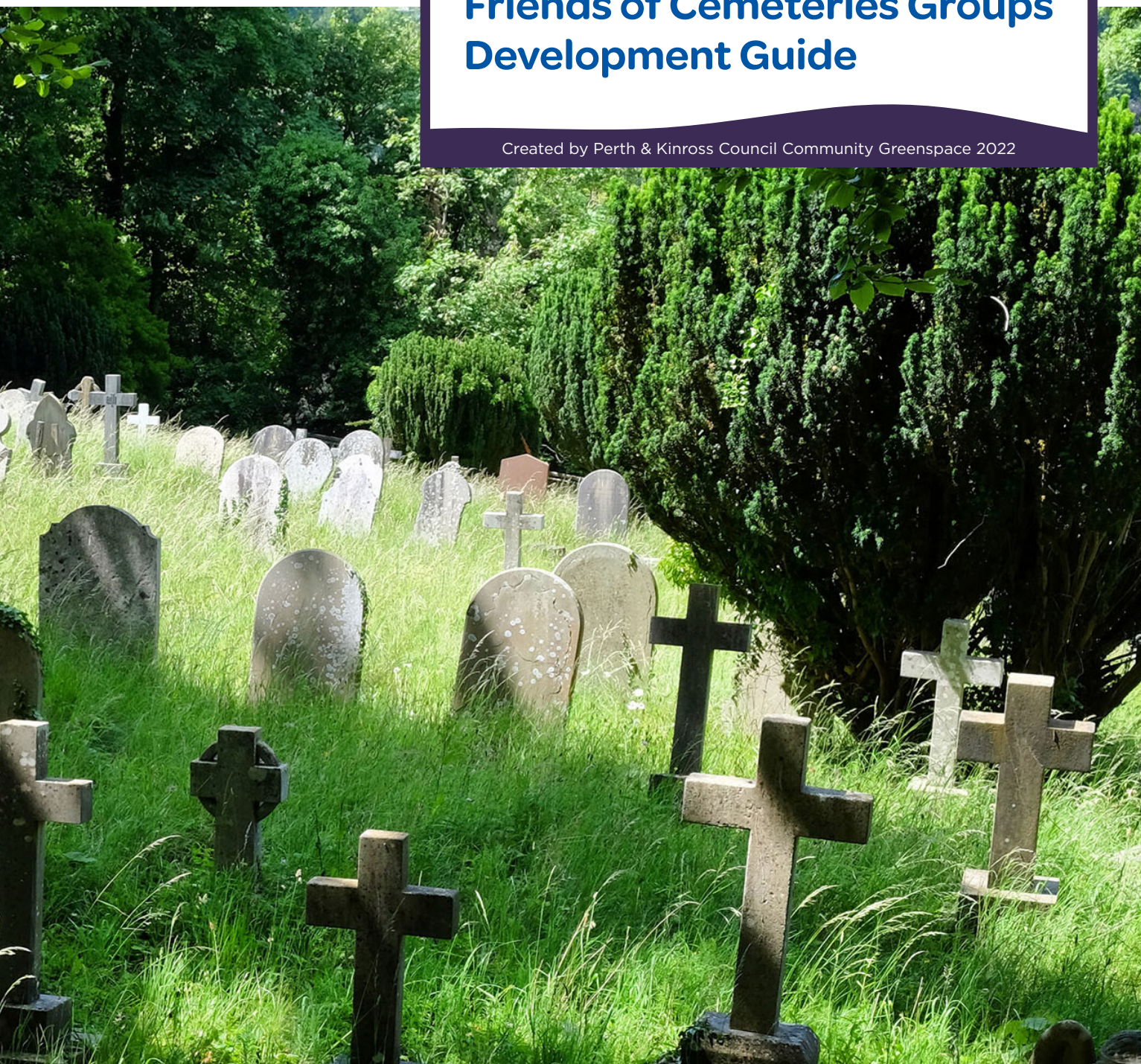


Perth & Kinross Council Friends of Cemeteries Groups Development Guide

Created by Perth & Kinross Council Community Greenspace 2022



Community
Greenspace

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Introduction

This guide contains guidance, contact details and links to further information with the aim of supporting appropriate and effective community-led actions in cemeteries in Perth and Kinross. Our intention is that this booklet a useful guide and pathway to those who are establishing a Friends of Cemetery Group and also to communities who are already active in helping to look after their local cemetery. We aim to support you with details on how to form a group, what's involved in running your group and information on the tasks and projects might wish to undertake.



What is a Friends of Cemetery Group?

Friends of Cemeteries (FoC) Groups are a growing network of volunteers across the region engaged in practical work to help us look after cemeteries owned by Perth & Kinross Council, with the support of Community Greenspace.

There are many benefits of a well-maintained cemetery, reaching beyond the positive visual impact that a cared-for site provides. In giving these important sites the attention to detail they deserve, cemeteries can be a focus for community involvement at many levels. Not everyone will want to be closely involved in running or managing a group but by organising community events to help with particular aspects, you will raise awareness and encourage pride of place and a sense of ownership.

It is important to note that community needs, aspirations, expectations and capacity vary greatly, and groups should develop at their own pace. We are here to help and to work with you.

A small grant can be provided by Community Greenspace to help support you with equipment, materials and even fuel for power tools. We can also provide training on the safe use of tools, arrange insurance cover and give a wide range of advice in getting started - this booklet explains how we can help.



Starting Out

How our cemeteries are managed

176 cemetery sites across Perth and Kinross are managed by the Council's Bereavement Services Team. These Officers manage burials and hold burial registers for the region as well as operating Perth Crematorium. They are also responsible for the Council's Headstone Stabilisation Programme, an ongoing initiative which will have assessed and made safe over 90,000 headstones when complete.

Bereavement Services are responsible for the management of cemeteries, making them a key partner in shaping the activities that your group will undertake. By their nature, cemeteries are sensitive sites and need to be managed appropriately, and in a different way to other green spaces.

A Cemetery Management Plan will be written for each site with a registered Friends Group. This will take into account the site's unique historical, cultural and biodiversity value, and set out any future development plans. The aim is to give all parties a clear understanding of who's who, and what they're responsible for. We would expect Groups to work within this plan, and in time, help to inform future plans for the site.

Burials and grounds maintenance such as grass-cutting and hedge-trimming are carried out by the Council's Direct Services Operations Teams, with instruction from Bereavement Services. Friends of Cemeteries Groups are not intended as a replacement for the operations team - they will continue to carry out their vital role alongside the activities of volunteers.





The need for a Friends of Cemetery Group

Perth and Kinross Council own, manage and maintain 176 burial grounds in 132 different locations across the Perth and Kinross Area.

With limits on capacity within the council maintenance regimes, having a Friends of Cemetery Group will undoubtedly support and enhance the care of the cemetery grounds. Perth & Kinross Council have been supporting environmental volunteer action since the early 1990s and we value community involvement, the power of volunteering and the rewards that can be gained.

Often it takes a catalyst to bring people together with a shared purpose and this could simply be you want to see an improvement in the way the cemetery grounds are managed.

Establish what is already going on in your area

Before starting to make plans for your local cemetery, try to find out if anything is happening already in terms of community action and whether there have been past attempts that you could learn from.

To do this you could:

- Contact Perth & Kinross Council Community Greenspace to find out if there are other like-minded individuals in your area.
- Make contact with your local Community Council who may also be able to help with knowledge of past, present or future plans - you can find details of how to contact Community Councils in Perth and Kinross at www.pkc.gov.uk/communitycouncils
- Establish if there are groups or individuals in your area who are working on their own plans for your local cemetery. News of this might be available via local press or social media.

Setting up a Friends of Cemetery Group – What You Need to Know

Firstly, it is essential to contact **Community Greenspace** regarding your aspirations for the site. They will be able to advise if there is any other interest in the site, or if a Friends Group is already in place.

Group Structure

It is important to have a well-structured, organised group to inspire confidence in your activities. It is important that everyone involved in the group should have an equal say, and the group's work will run more smoothly if different individuals take on specific roles. As a minimum, each group should ideally appoint a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

Registration

We ask that all groups are registered with Community Greenspace - this enables us to keep in touch with any news, funding opportunities and to share information about upcoming events. It also ensures that we can arrange for appropriate insurance to be in place - only registered Groups can be covered.

Any Group intending to carry out practical tasks must have received confirmation of registration before any on-site work can begin. If a Group wishes to register for a cemetery where there is already a registered Group, we will advise that Groups work together.

Constitutions

Voluntary Groups are not necessarily required to be formally constituted however it is helpful to do so for several reasons:

- Many funders will only give financial support to constituted groups
- A constitution sets out the group's objectives in a clear format
- It enhances your group's identity
- It provides rules to ensure that the group is run and managed effectively

Perth & Kinross Council Community Greenspace can provide advice on this and a template constitution. Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS) can also offer advice and support at www.pkavs.org.uk

If your Group is seeking financial support, you will be required to keep appropriate records and to ensure that any conditions attached to grant funding are met.

Partnership Agreement

When a Group registers, they also agree to the terms of our Friends of Cemeteries Partnership Agreement - this is a brief document which clearly sets out what Perth & Kinross Council will offer to Groups, and the guidelines which those Groups are expected to work within.





Health and Safety

Health and Safety is of paramount importance so the first thing to ensure is that the site is safe - we are undertaking a headstone stabilisation programme so the site must first be assessed by our team to ensure that the stabilisation programme has been completed in the cemetery in question.

It is also important that volunteers undertaking practical tasks within cemeteries work safely. The following are the main issues to keep in mind:

- [Appropriate tool use and maintenance](#)
- [Clothing and personal protective equipment](#)
- [Lone working arrangements](#)
- [Access to first aid](#)
- [Weather conditions](#)
- [Working around the public](#)

Community Greenspace can offer advice on precautions to take to ensure that your Group carries out its work safely and legally. We can also provide:

- [Examples of risk assessments](#)
- [Insurance cover](#)
- [Training on use of tools and equipment](#)
- [Insurance](#)

Community Greenspace can provide insurance cover under the Perth and Kinross volunteers policy which provides personal injury and £5m public liability cover and the Council will fund the cost of that. Additional cover for tools or stores/sheds can be arranged as well for a small charge, fees are depending on the value of items to be insured.

Valuing Volunteer Time

Recording volunteer hours is a really worthwhile exercise, particularly when seeking external funding or grants. Your volunteer time has a value, and this can often be used to attract match funding or for demonstrating your commitment to a project when applying for grants. By recording your hours and adding them together with the rest of your Group's efforts you will soon see this as a useful tool. Volunteer hours have a monetary value which is nationally recognised by funders (currently £60 per 6-hour day for unskilled tasks).

Funding

The availability of funding sources is constantly changing - Perth & Kinross Council Community Greenspace CommunityGreenspace@pkc.gov.uk and PKAVS www.pkavs.org.uk are able to help you identify funding opportunities available in your local area.



Establish What you Want to Achieve



It is sensible to define objectives before you start. It is important to set out what you want to achieve and to define realistic limits to that.

It could be that you want to see the maintenance of your cemetery enhanced or to increase the biodiversity of the cemetery. It could be to promote the area as an area for quiet reflection and enjoyment by the community. A good starting point would be to do an audit or survey of the site to see what tasks are required to achieve this, and to cross-reference this with the Cemetery Management Plan.

What do you want to achieve?

There are many simple tasks that your Group can undertake to support the site, examples include:

- Clearing fallen leaves
- Clearing debris/vegetation from paths
- Path edging and replacing gravel
- Cutting grass paths
- Planting bulbs, trees, plants or seeds
- Pruning shrubs and maintaining flower beds
- Hoeing weeds
- Litter picking
- Removal of small self-seeded trees
- Strimming around headstones/horizontal shearing

- Cleaning signs
- Painting gates and railings
- Soiling and seeding up grips
- Fundraising for projects such as improved signage, replacing metal gates and railings or installing interpretation panels or large-scale projects such as path improvements or walling (for which a professional contractor would be engaged) .

NB - Works that must not be undertaken are the cleaning or repairing of headstones - these are privately owned property. Other work that is not permitted includes tidying up around headstones already maintained by families, removal of ivy or other vegetation from walls or buildings, and working in areas that have not yet had headstone stabilisation inspection (please be assured we can advise you on this).

We are here to help

Working with volunteers is at the heart of Community Greenspace. We have a proven track record of working with an army of volunteer groups and we can support you with identifying the tasks to be undertaken and how to do them safely. We can support financially with a small grant, insurance cover and provide tools, training and materials to help you achieve your ambitions. We are keen to grow a network of Friends of Cemeteries with each Group being supported by Community Greenspace Officers.



If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000

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如果你或你的朋友希望得到這文件的其他語言版本或形式 (某些時候，這些文件只會是概要式的翻譯)，請聯絡 Customer Service Centre 01738 475000 來替你安排。

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.