



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Lord Greenhalgh**

*Minister of State for Building Safety and Communities*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and  
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Faith & Belief Leaders in England

29 April 2020

Dear Colleague,

### **Burial grounds and cemeteries**

At the daily press briefing on Saturday, the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, highlighted the importance of families having the opportunity to say a respectful goodbye to those that they love. In light of this, the closures guidance is being updated to make clear that burial grounds and cemeteries may remain open, and that grounds surrounding crematoria may also remain open, including gardens of remembrance. You can access government guidance on closures here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>.

My officials have made accompanying technical amendments to the Regulations to dispel all confusion surrounding the status of burial grounds, and people's ability to visit them and similar places. I would urge you to disseminate this information to those running these venues, and to congregants, to make clear they are able to visit their loved ones in a safe manner, consistent with social distancing guidelines. Please see here for the amendments to the Regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/447/contents/made> and here for the original Regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/350/contents/made>.

I recognise the Regulations do not compel local authorities or private organisations to keep anything open, and there are many reasonable justifications for why a burial ground or similar establishment may need to close temporarily – for example when conducting a funeral, or for maintenance. However, I urge you to take all practical steps towards enabling these places to be visited in a safe manner, consistent with social distancing guidelines.

We would urge you and your congregants to continue to adopt social distancing requirements in the most practicable way while allowing people to access to any other publicly accessible green spaces that you own. You can access government guidance on this issue here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces>.

I know many of you have had questions regarding attendance at funerals, so I would also like to take this opportunity to share the latest PHE guidance which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>.

Finally, I would like to extend my own appreciation and thanks for the fantastic work faith and belief communities are doing in these difficult times. Your contribution plays a pivotal role in

helping those in our communities who are most at risk. Thank you for your continued support and efforts.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Greenhalgh', written in a cursive style.

**LORD GREENHALGH**