

# **All Saints Church, Wimbish with Thunderley**

## **Churchyard and Memorials Policy**

### **Introduction**

The English churchyard is a place of quiet and repose, a place where comfort is drawn from the peace provided by being close to God and to his church. In all these burial places, land has been used as the last resting place for the earthly remains of a person who has been laid to rest in sure and certain hope of resurrection to Eternal Life. "Dust to Dust" and "Ashes to Ashes" has real meaning in a churchyard.

The churchyard at All Saints' Church in Wimbish is particularly peaceful, set in a tranquil and picturesque part of the village. It is appreciated by many walkers passing through as well members of the church family and local community who have a personal connection with the place.

The Parochial Church Council, who have responsibility for looking after the church and its grounds, have agreed this policy to direct the decisions we have to make fulfilling our responsibility to maintain the churchyard and to give initial guidance to those who seek to use it as a final resting place for their loved ones or themselves.

There are clear legal requirements we have to meet in allowing burials and monuments in the churchyard and so these guidelines should be read in conjunction with the latest rules, to be found on the Diocese of Chelmsford website at <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/> in the policies and guidance section.

In the first instance, to avoid frustration and disappointment, any enquires for burials, interment of cremated remains or other matters concerning the churchyard should be made to the wardens or incumbent of the Parish. Contact details can be found on the website <https://www.wimbishchurch.org.uk/> or on the noticeboard in the porch.

### **Burials and interments**

The right to be buried in Wimbish Churchyard is restricted by law to parishioners and people who have died in the Parish. People on the Church Electoral Roll are also permitted. If people have a strong and real connection to the parish, the incumbent, usually with the guidance of the PCC, may in exceptional circumstances grant permission for burial or interment. Permission by Faculty may also be sought through the Chancellor of the Diocese should a particular request fall outside what is allowed to be granted by local means.

### **Headstones and Memorial Tablets for Cremated Remains**

Monuments are also governed by strict regulations. The beauty and calm of the churchyard would not be the same if unsuitable memorials were there. Rules have been evolved over the centuries and although exceptions may be seen in the design and materials of monuments in Wimbish Churchyard, the incumbent and PCC have to ensure current rules are followed. The two stone types permitted currently are York or Portland stone, for either headstones or tablets for cremated remains. It must have an unpolished surface. The sizes, construction and installation of stone memorials are governed by the Churchyard Regulations and the Stonemason you employ will have to agree to follow these carefully.

### **Inscriptions**

The words of the inscription are usually the most significant element of what appears on a headstone. However, some decoration is permissible provided that it is kept in proportion. Because a memorial stone is a record of the life of the person commemorated there has to be formality in relation to the names and dates of birth and death of the person concerned. The person's names are not allowed to be abbreviated but if he or she was usually known by a particular name then this name can be added in inverted commas after the Christian name. Euphemisms should be avoided. Simple, clear descriptions should be used that describe something of the character of the person and that are consistent with the Christian belief of life after death. Incised lettering is longer lasting although any colouring will have to be carefully considered. The Churchyard Regulations give further guidance.

### **Other items of Commemoration in the Churchyard**

Memorial vases and flowers may be permitted within the guidance of the regulations. Artificial and plastic flowers are not permitted, with a few exceptions, eg poppy wreaths for Remembrance. Graves and memorials should be kept neat and tidy and all rubbish taken away. This will help the PCC to maintain the church grounds efficiently.

From time to time, the PCC gets requests for other memorials. There are several benches in commemoration of loved ones already in the church grounds and the PCC will have to consider carefully the balance of any further such memorials in the churchyard. The PCC does not necessarily have authority to grant permission for any exceptional memorial. Memorials other than headstones or memorial tablets for cremated remains require permissions from the Archdeacon or Diocese and should not be taken as a right. Any requests made directly to the PCC or through the faculty process will though be considered carefully and sympathetically.

### **Environmental Concerns**

The church grounds are a wonderful place to spend time in personal reflection and contemplation. Spending just a little while here will make you realise that there is a huge variety of and potential for diverse habitats. The PCC are seeking to actively encourage wildlife by cultivating a wildlife area. The church is currently working with a Bats in Churches nationwide project and will look to work with other more local groups conserving and promoting wildlife habitats and species. We hope this does not affect your enjoyment of the churchyard, nor impinge on its purpose as a burial ground. Please contact the wardens or incumbent for more information or if you have concerns.

### **Care of the Church Grounds**

The PCC takes its responsibility to look after the churchyard seriously. Sometimes, maintenance work is contracted out on a commercial bases but often it is the voluntary work of church members and the local community that help to keep the place clean and tidy. We hope and expect that families are able to keep memorials and graves for their loved ones tidy. In any case, we ask that those who tend the grave and place flowers be kind enough to remove any dead flowers and waste and dispose of at home. As you can imagine, it is costly and difficult to manage disposing of waste from all the graves and memorials. If you wish to support the work of maintaining the church grounds, in a practical way or by making a monetary gift towards its upkeep, please speak to the wardens or incumbent. We seek to be good stewards of the church and grounds and hope it will continue to be a place to enjoy and appreciate, for the current generation and also for future generations.

Wimbish Parochial Church Council

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