

# **CHURCHYARD RULES FOR CARE AND MANAGEMENT**

## **OF THE PARISH CHURCHYARDS OF THE WOODBRIDGE GROUP OF CHURCHES**

**St Michael and All Angels, Brinkworth**

**St James the Great, Dauntsey**

**All Saints, Garsdon**

**St Peter and St Paul, Great Somerford,**

**St Giles, Lea**

**St John the Baptist, Little Somerford**

**Rector: Revd Stephen Wilkinson**

We aim for our churchyard to be "Living Churchyards". This means that as well as providing a resting place for loved ones, the churchyard is managed to encourage native flora and fauna. In most of them this means you can enjoy wild flowers, butterflies and insects when you visit. In others it means carefully navigating around fences which discourage badger activity!

Christians believe that death is not the end, but know that visiting the grave is a very important part of the grieving process; we aim to provide an appropriate setting for reflection in this attractive rural environment.

The regulations concerning burials and the design of monuments are contained in a separate "Interment and Memorials" document. You are encouraged to read these to understand the legalities of burial in this churchyard.

The ownership of the land and the ultimate responsibility for maintenance remains with the Church and its officers, so in order to preserve the dignity of the churchyard and to ease the task of maintaining it, these Management Regulations have been adopted by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of this Parish.

We appreciate that many people like to assist us by keeping their loved one's plot in good condition, and simply ask for your co-operation in the following:

**1. Churchyard Surface** The surface of the churchyard shall be kept level as far as possible and free of grave mounds and obstructions in order that lawnmowers may easily pass over and between graves. The PCC may level any inappropriate mound at its discretion 12 months after the latest interment in the grave. It is not permitted to remove the turf to create a small garden on grave spaces.

**2. Permanent Planting** Spring bulbs and small annual plants may be planted within a grave plot, but need to be kept tidy. Plants and flowers may be placed in a removable container (preferably of metal) sunk into the ground. Shrubs may **not** be planted in the churchyard without

the express written permission of the PCC. Where shrubs have been planted in existing grave plots, please keep these cut right back, within the level of headstones and the outline of the plot. If they die or become too large they should be removed.

**3. Trees.** Trees may not be planted in the churchyard without the express written permission of the PCC. We cannot make new burials underneath a tree so the planting of a tree limits the capacity of a churchyard for its intended purpose. If we agree to the planting of a tree it will be in a location away from the area currently in use for burials.

**4. Flowers** Wreaths or cut flowers may be laid on any grave or in an acceptable vase; but please remove them when they are withered. Artificial flowers are not permitted, as these are not in keeping with the rural surroundings.

**5. Vases and memorabilia** Only one stone container/flower pot may be kept on the grave or ashes plot, providing that it is made from similar materials to the headstone/ashes stone. A metal, stone or earthenware vase or flowerpot may be placed on a grave space preferably sunk into the ground so that it is virtually invisible. Please do not place other memorabilia or adornments on the grave.

**6. Breakables** No glass or china containers are to be used (they are a hazard if broken) and will be removed.

**7. Table tombs.** Most of our churchyards contain ancient 'table tombs'. Some have collapsed and are laid down in-situ for safety. Others are still intact but may be less stable than ideal. These tombs usually form part of the building's listed status, and any work on them is both expensive and difficult to organize. We are taking sensible measures to stabilize these tombs and ask that you do not interfere with them or any plant life growing out of them, as the most likely cause of collapse is by direct human 'assistance'.

**8. Lack of maintenance.** Where graves do not appear to have been tended by families, or the churchyard regulations have been contravened the PCC may authorise appropriate action. We will always try to contact relatives where possible.

The churchyards at Brinkworth and Little Somerford, and the original churchyard at Dauntsey are 'closed churchyards' and are the responsibility of the local Parish Council and/or Wiltshire Council. working with the PCC.

**Signed on behalf of the Parochial Church Council:**

Revd Stephen Wilkinson, Rector

Date