

INTERMENT AND MEMORIAL REGULATIONS

FOR 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

INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the legal regulations concerning burials. This includes the design and size of headstones and of other memorials and permitted grave adornments in our churchyards.

Guidelines for the maintenance and upkeep of the churchyard and individual grave spaces are to be found in a separate "Churchyard Management" document, copies of which are available in the church and on the website of the Woodbridge Group of Churches¹.

These guidelines are based on the full Churchyard Regulations for the Diocese of Bristol.

Please note that no right of ownership is given by either the reservation of or burial in a grave space, the burial of ashes or the erection of a memorial. The ownership of the land and the ultimate responsibility for the churchyard remains with the Church and its officers.

The erection of a headstone or the placement of an ashes memorial is a privilege, not a right, limited authority for which is delegated to the local clergy.

APPLICABILITY

CLOSED CHURCHYARDS: The churchyards in Brinkworth and Little Somerford, and the original churchyard in Dauntsey (in the church grounds) are closed to any new burials, and the maintenance and management of these is the responsibility of the local Parish Council and/or Wiltshire Council. New burials in Brinkworth and Little Somerford take place in the council cemeteries. In Dauntsey there is a churchyard extension for burials and a designated area in the original churchyard for the burial of cremation ashes.

¹ www.woodbridgegroup.co.uk

The churchyards in Garsdon, Great Somerford and Lea and the new churchyard at Dauntsey are open for new burials and the burial of ashes, all under the authority of the Rector.

WHO MAY BE BURIED IN THESE CHURCHYARDS?

In the 'open' churchyards, permission for burial or interment of ashes may be granted:

- For persons registered as living in the ecclesiastical parish at the time of death
- For those cases approved by the clergy after consultation with the local Churchwardens, having regard to the deceased's association with the parish or the church; such approval not to be given unless that association has been close and sustained for some period within the deceased's lifetime.

MONUMENTS (HEADSTONES and ASHES MARKERS)

Permission is legally required from the clergy to approve the design of new monuments. This is done in consultation with your stonemason who will have the appropriate paperwork. Stonemasons should not start cutting stone, nor shall anything be erected or placed in the churchyard until such proposals have received the written consent of the clergy or until further permission from the church authorities ('a faculty') has been received.

It is permissible to place a temporary wooden place marker with a name plate on a grave soon after burial but before a permanent memorial has been placed, in order that family and friends can locate the grave. This marker should be removed when a permanent memorial is installed.

Local clergy have limited authority to approve permanent headstones or marker stones if they meet the following criteria:

- The monument is made of the following material
 - English limestone or pennant stone
 - Unpolished grey granite
 - Nabresina (Roman Stone)
 - English Oak
- The monument consists of
 - a headstone not more than 4' high
 - a cross not more than 4' 6" high
 - an 'ashes plot' marker stone no more than 18 inches square

No identification of the maker shall appear, other than the name of the craftsman or designer in letters not more than half an inch high.

- The following monuments or additions are **not allowed**:
 - monuments depicting books or images

- statues
- chippings or gravel, with or without kerbs
- railings or chains to enclose the grave space
- any other memorabilia, such as, but not limited to, solar lights, photographs, toys, windmills, animals etc.

If designs do not meet the limitations above they cannot be approved by local clergy. In such cases designs should be revised so that they can be approved locally, or you can apply to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Bristol seeking his approval via a 'faculty' application. A fee is payable for this, and your application will need to be supported by the Rector and the local Parochial Church Council.

INSTALLATION OF MONUMENTS

- Headstones shall be spaced at not less than two feet apart.
- For ground maintenance purposes the base upon which any headstone or other memorial is fixed shall be sunk into the ground, for the purpose of stability and avoidance of damage by maintenance equipment.
- It is the responsibility of those commissioning the monument to ensure that this has been achieved by the stonemason, and no responsibility can be accepted by the PCC for damage caused by grounds maintenance equipment if bases or ashes stones are not sufficiently spaced or recessed below the surrounding grass level.

GRAVE MOUNDS

- After burial of a coffin a large mound of earth covered with turf stands above the grave. This will settle with the action of weather and subsidence over the course of six to twelve months. After this period the turf should be rolled back and excess soil removed, leaving the surface of the churchyard level as far as possible in order that lawnmowers may be easily run over and between graves. Families are encouraged to do this at an appropriate time. Excess soil should be placed carefully in the appropriate place in the churchyard and should not be removed from the churchyard (it is illegal to do so!)
- It is not permitted to remove the turf to create a small garden on grave spaces.

EXTENT AND APPLICATION

- These Rules are subject to any Diocesan Faculties, Orders or Regulations.
- These current Rules supersede all previous rules.
- Where these Rules appear to have been contravened the Parochial Church Council will always attempt to contact relatives to request the situation be rectified before taking any further action.

Signed on behalf of the Parochial Church Council:

Churchwardens

Rector

Date