

St Nicolas, Itchingfield



Churchyard Guidance

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St Nicolas's churchyard has been a place of Christian burial for nearly 900 years. It is a very peaceful and special place, which is reflected in the Conservation Area status of both the Churchyard and the surrounding areas. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are custodians of this ancient and historic site and have produced these guidelines to help in maintaining our treasured churchyard.

All plots in the churchyard remain the ownership of the Church of England. Management of the Churchyard is the responsibility of the PCC and we have an agreed plan of Maintenance with contractors under special guidance from the PCC Member responsible and the various Wildlife/Wildflower Trusts. This ensures we suitably maintain all areas throughout each season to reflect the diversity and beauty of God's creation.

Burials in the Churchyard

After initial discussions with our Rector with regard to the Rules and Regulations laid down by the Diocese, the Churchyard person responsible can advise on all aspects relating to a burial. New graves will be laid to grass when practical. We encourage placement of natural flowers, wreaths, planting of bulbs to naturalize and small "annual" plants on new graves.

For New Graves/Burials small containers (not glass or china) of flowers may be placed along with a small wooden cross or nameplate on the grave until the headstone is in place.

Interment of Ashes

Our Rector will discuss with you the appropriate place where ashes may be interred possibly in a family grave or in the Memorial area. After the decision is formalised the appropriate person can discuss what may or may not be permitted for maintenance purposes.

Graves and Memorials

There is very strict Diocesan Rules and Regulations regarding Graves and Memorials. Nothing can be placed in the churchyard that does not have permission in writing and does not comply with the Rules and Regulations. Incumbents have discretion to authorize the erection of any headstone which falls within the types and classes authorized.

They may refuse to permit the erection of an authorised headstone if they believe it would be detrimental to the churchyard. However, they have no discretion to allow the erection of a headstone that falls outside those authorised. If a family (*or executor*) wishes to erect a memorial which falls outside the Incumbent's discretion, they may apply for a Faculty giving the grounds for their request. The Incumbent will advise them how to approach the DAC.

No memorial should be erected within six months of a burial (*the Incumbent may increase this depending on the type of soil in the churchyard*).

Permission is always required and no work should be ordered or put in hand until permission has been granted. In the event of any memorial being erected or placed in the churchyard without the written consent of the Incumbent or a Faculty granted by the Chancellor, those responsible may be required to remove the same and pay the costs

Management and Maintenance

The PCC may, at its discretion, level the ground at any time more than twelve months after the latest interment in the grave. Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of a grave being within the area previously excavated. Wreaths or cut flowers may be laid directly on any grave or placed in any vase authorized by these Regulations. The PCC may remove flowers and wreaths of whatever kind at their discretion if they judge them to be unsightly and all artificial flowers. Any power exercisable by the PCC may be delegated (*by the PCC*) to a person or persons deputed to care for the day-to-day upkeep and maintenance of the churchyard.

Long grass is not neglect, it is a haven for wild flowers and increases value to insects as well as larger creatures together with providing suitable conditions for a variety of native wildflowers. (See our Churchyard Wildlife and Flora Sections).

Listed below are some 'please do and do not's' to help (keep) the Churchyard retain its Conservation, Wildlife and Flora Status:

Please do NOT do any of the following on Graves or Memorials:

Strim or mow areas around any grave (Due to our RARE wildflowers)

Use GLASS or CHINA vases or containers (Easily broken then become dangerous)

Plant TREES or SHRUBS (Only small "ANNUAL" plants are allowed)

Place Artificial flowers, wind chimes, toys, pictures or Ornaments.

Place or erect wooden frames, cages or nets.

Place weed suppressing mats, loose stone, chippings or loose bark

Use Chemicals or slug pellets

We encourage you to please do the following:

Planting of all seasonal bulbs within the confines of a grave

Place cut flowers, small annual plants in sunken NON-glass containers

Place natural flower wreaths on a grave

Attend and care for your loved ones graves or memorials

Enjoy the peace and abundance of wildlife and flora within our rural Churchyard.

Explore the Guide Books on Wildlife and Flora within our beautiful church.

Ask for any advice required for any aspect on the Churchyard.

Health and Safety

The PCC, together with the Rector, are occupiers of the churchyard for the purposes of the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 - 1984. These Acts place upon the occupiers a duty of care to see that the visitor in the churchyard will be reasonably safe. Therefore, there is a duty to ensure, particularly but not exclusively, that walls, trees and memorials are regularly inspected, and the PCC should take reasonable steps to reduce or minimize foreseeable risk. Such an inspection should typically form part of a regular inspection and should also be carried out following exceptional weather conditions. We ask visitors to always advise us of any problems or safety issues you may become aware of within the Churchyard.

Finally

If you have any concerns, queries or wish to discuss any aspect of the Churchyard, Church or PCC please do not hesitate to email or contact any of the following:

Rector

Rev'd Sandra Hall 01403 790197
rector@stnicolasitchingfield.org.uk

Associate Priest

Rev'd Rosemary Cattell 01403 264396
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Churchwardens

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