

The Churchyard is Church property and its maintenance is paid for by church members with some additional donations from others. It is dedicated and maintained according to Christian principles. No work, memorial or alteration can be permitted that would be harmful to the historical, visual or ecological qualities of the Churchyard or its setting as a Christian site. We urge users and visitors to respect the regulations.

- ❖ It is not allowed for individuals to plant bulbs and plants in the turf, as this also makes grass-cutting more difficult. However this may be done by the PCC if felt appropriate.
- ❖ Flower vases and wreaths must be close to the headstone to facilitate easy mowing and the germination of newly sown grass seed.
- ❖ **Notes and messages may not be left on graves.** These will be removed by the churchyard team.
- ❖ **Ornaments or any other form of decoration may not be left on the grave.** These will be removed by the churchyard team.
- ❖ It is appreciated that some members of the community are conscientious in removing withered flowers from graves in their care. However, it is also common practice for people to visit the churchyard only on loved ones' birthdays and anniversaries and, therefore, may not be available to remove the dead flowers.

- ❖ **Any person *authorised* by the PCC to look after the churchyard may remove withered floral arrangements when they appear untidy.**
- ❖ **No artificial flowers** of any material are allowed in the churchyard other than wreaths for Remembrance Day and at Christmas. These must be removed on the last day of November and January respectively.
- ❖ In the Cremation area, small flower containers or pots of plants are allowed near the relevant cremation plaques, **one container only per plot.** These must be easily moveable so that the area can be mown. **Empty pots or more than one pot will be removed and stored:** unless collected these will be disposed of at the end of March and September each year.



The vicar can only approve a memorial that complies with the Regulations. If they cannot approve it, an application may be made to the Chancellor of the Diocese (via the Diocesan Offices) for a special legal permission called a Faculty.

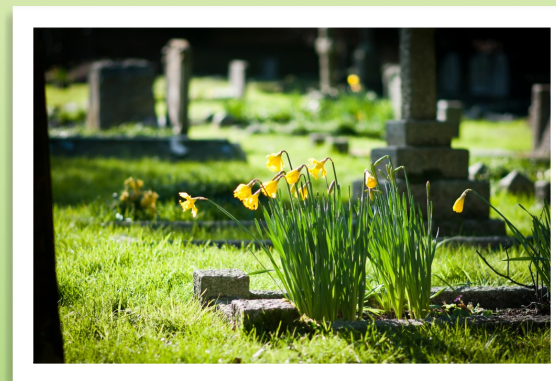
In your own interest, please do not order a memorial with a memorial mason until the vicar's written approval or a Faculty has been received.

*All enquiries should be directed to the Vicar or Churchwardens – details are shown on the church notice board.*

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## GUIDE TO CHURCH YARDS AND MEMORIALS

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**This leaflet explains the regulations governing churchyards and their use. Please read this leaflet fully before you make decisions about your loved one's grave as putting right mistakes at a later date can be very stressful and upsetting.**

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**THE BENEFICE OF STOURDENE**  
**Ettington, Alderminster, Halford,**  
**Pillerton Hersey with Pillerton Priors,**  
**Newbold on Stour with Armscote,**  
**Butlers Marston,**

## Guidelines for the care of churchyards

*The following guidelines are intended to ensure that the churchyard is kept in a beautiful and dignified state that befits our loved ones. We ask that everyone involved in tending the churchyard help to maintain the same high standard.*

From time to time, queries arise regarding what is permitted in the churchyard and who is responsible for certain types of maintenance. Please note the following:

- ❖ when permission has been granted for a loved one's earthly remains to be interred in the churchyard, whether it be a grave-space or a plot in the cremation area, the actual plot does not become the property of the next of kin. The use of the word 'space' in the term 'grave-space' signifies that it is only the actual space that is being made available for a time and season – the fee paid is simply a legal charge and is not to be viewed as the purchase of the plot.
- ❖ the ownership of the land remains under the authority of the Vicar who has the final responsibility for its appearance and upkeep. All matters relating to the churchyard should be directed to the churchwardens.

- ❖ memorials in the churchyard are the property of the family. If a headstone is damaged, or becomes unsafe, it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that remedial work is carried out by a qualified stonemason.



### Memorials

- ❖ There are strict guidelines regulating memorials in churchyards. These include headstones, memorial plaques, vases, inscriptions, etc. It is a legal requirement that whoever is supplying the item must apply to the vicar, in writing, and include a drawing showing dimensions, materials and details of graphics and inscriptions. Because the churchyard is a public space, all new memorials must be approved by the vicar before placement. Fees for the placement of memorials and/or amendments to inscriptions are laid down by the Church of England.
- ❖ After a period of at least twelve months if the earth on the grave mound has not resettled, the mound may be levelled. The ground may be seeded for grass but must not be laid out as a garden.
- ❖ Wooden crosses are only permitted while the grave is settling.

- ❖ Stones in the cremation area, depending on which church, must be no more than either 21 by 21 inches or 15 by 15 inches and must be placed flush to the ground. Built-in flower vases are not allowed.
- ❖ A Faculty (church planning permission) will always be required in respect of any vertical memorials exceeding 4 ft (1200 mm) high, measured from the ground, or more than 3 ft (900 mm) wide.
- ❖ The use of polished granite or dark grey stone is not now acceptable. It should be a natural stone, with a non-reflecting surface, the preference being Hornton or York stone. Black, grey and brown are acceptable embellishments for the lettering of inscriptions. No other colour is allowed on a memorial and all graphics must be etched in the stone and rely on light and shade for their image. It is not permissible to highlight graphics with any additional colouring.
- ❖ Kerbstones around graves are no longer allowed.
- ❖ The wording of inscriptions should be simple, reverent and respectful. The wording must first be approved in writing by the vicar.

**Any person who has lived or died in the Parish may be buried in the churchyard subject to available space.**

