



Churchyard Regulations

Approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Chichester

Pursuant to a faculty dated 13 April 2021

This Churchyard was consecrated in 1928 and provides a resting place for any parishioners' resident in the parish of St Thomas, Groombridge or on the electoral roll at the time of their death. Whether those neither resident nor on the electoral roll, but with a connection to the parish may be interred in the churchyard is a decision for the incumbent and PCC who will decide each case on its merits.

The bereaved should understand that by seeking a burial in this consecrated ground they are submitting to the jurisdiction of the consistory court which regulates the type of memorial which may be erected, full details can be found in the Diocese of Chichester Handbook for the Bereaved which is available on our website or via www.chichester.anglican.org/documents/diocese-chichester-handbook-bereaved

Guidance for new graves, headstones, their care and upkeep, are summarised here by the Parochial Church Council of St Thomas the Apostle (PCC).

1. It is unlawful for a monument, surround or human remains to be introduced into this churchyard without permission. Application forms are provided by the Funeral Director and sent to the Vicar who is happy to be consulted about appropriate design, wording, and appearance.
2. **Notes for the tending of graves:**
 - a. Bulbs and small annual plants may be placed in the soil of any grave, plants or cut flowers may be placed in removable sunken containers, preferably of unpolished aluminum in the soil of any grave.
 - b. Wreaths and cut flowers may be removed when withered by those authorised by the Vicar.
 - c. We regret it is necessary to bring your own water and please take your rubbish home or place it in the bin provided do not throw it over the fencing or down by the stream.
 - d. The temporary introduction of a wooden marker with a brass plaque bearing the name and dates of the deceased is permitted but must be removed upon the erection of a stone memorial.
 - e. The upkeep of a grave or plot is the responsibility of the family of the deceased.
3. **We regret the following are not permitted:**
 - a. Kerbs, railings, fencing, chippings or any type of surround
 - b. Memorials in the shape of vases, hearts, open books or crosses
 - c. Memorials including photographs, portraits or pet names
 - d. Mementoes, windmills, toys, ornaments, although we understand they can be helpful to grieving family directly after a burial, however they must be removed after 40 days.
 - e. Artificial flowers, except for Remembrance Sunday poppies and wreaths
4. Permission in the form of a faculty may be sought from the Chancellor for the erection of a memorial which does not comply with these regulations.
5. As this is a rural Churchyard, we do not permit highly polished memorials or gold lettering. Our preferred stone type is Sandstone, Limestone, Slate or Granite and off-white lettering.
6. Ashes are interred in individual plots; small upright headstones may be no larger than 51cm high, 36cm wide and 5cm thick. Any base must not protrude more than 5cm in any direction and must be fitted flush with the surrounding ground. This is a permitted variation to general provisions of the Churchyard Regulations for the Diocese of Chichester
7. The Archbishops Commission on Rural Areas encourages us to create a natural habitat for wildlife, therefore in the summer we mow around the edges, leaving the wildflowers to seed themselves among the graves.
8. Burials and committals at the Burial Ground must be conducted by an Ordained Anglican priest, Deacon or an Authorised Lay Minister (with the relevant training and permission) who have permission to officiate in the Diocese of Chichester. If the deceased is of a different Christian tradition, the family may request a minister of that tradition so long as they are in good standing and their denomination is affiliated to CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland).