

A Final Word

We apologise for the quantity and detail in these Guidelines, especially to those who read them at a time of recent bereavement, but the details are necessary for the sake of clarity.

Our hope is that your experience of our churchyard will be positive and that you will find strength in the truths which St Paul writes about:

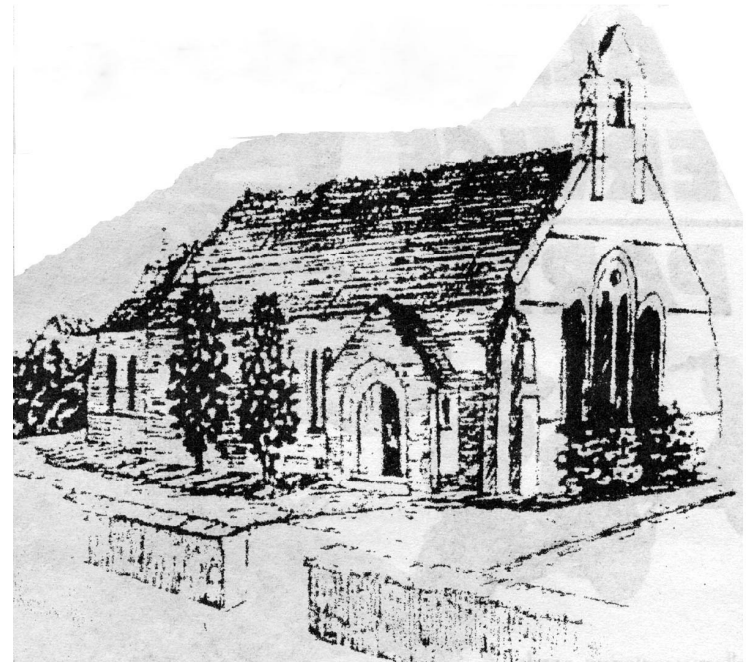
‘I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord’.

(Romans 8:38-39)

Issued by the Vicar, Churchwardens and
Parochial Church Council

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ST ANNE’S, SHEVINGTON, STANDISH LOWER GROUND & CROOKE



Guide to the Use of the Churchyard

Revised 2014

Losing a Loved One

Losing a loved one is a traumatic experience. The person who has been so much a part of one's life is not there anymore. There will be grief and there may be tears to be shed, possibly for some time to come.

If your loved one is to be, or has been, buried in the churchyard, or their ashes are interred there, those who are bereaved may sometimes find it helpful to visit the grave and spend time quietly with their thoughts and memories.

Churchyards not only provide a focal point for present day mourners, but also an historical record for future generations. It is because of all these functions that it is important that the quality and the dignity of the churchyard be maintained for present and future generations. That is why churchyards are governed by various laws and guidelines.

Understandably, families who are newly bereaved may be unfamiliar with what is permissible or desirable in a churchyard, i.e. with what may be placed around or on a grave. The regulations are issued under the authority of the Chancellor of the Diocese of Blackburn and concern the type of memorial that may be erected and its surroundings. The Parochial Church Council control the day to day management of the churchyard including cutting the grass, clearing weeds and generally keeping the churchyard presentable.

We are sure you will understand that the purpose of the regulations is to preserve the rights of the majority and to curb the excesses of the few.

Fees

A standard fee is payable to the Vicar and Church Council when a memorial is introduced into the churchyard, or when an additional inscription is made. (Note that the fee paid to the Vicar goes straight to the Diocese of Blackburn to help pay for the clergy.)

The Vicar and the monumental mason will have details of the amount and it is also on display in the list of fees posted in the Church porch.

This fee is set nationally by the Archbishop's Council. The Parochial Church Council includes an amount within the Fees for Burial to help cover the cost of grass cutting and general maintenance of the Churchyard.

Grave Filling

After a few weeks or months it is normal for the soil level of a grave to subside. Six months after a burial, topsoil will be added and the area re-seeded as appropriate. In consequence, headstones may not be erected until **six months** after the burial. If the grave is not levelled within six months of the burial, please contact the Vicar or Parish Office.

Donations and Endowments

Donations and endowments for the maintenance of the churchyard will be gratefully accepted by St Anne's Parochial Church Council. Please drop them into the Parish Office in the Parish Centre, or deliver them to the Vicarage.

Memorial headstones

The Regulations of the Diocese state the dimensions for a memorial headstone and all monumental/stone masons should be familiar with these.

Headstones should be no larger than 4ft (1200mm) high, 3ft (900mm) wide and 6ins (150mm) thick.

A headstone must stand on a stone base which is an integral part of the design and does not project more than 5ins (125mm) beyond the headstone in any direction.

All new or replaced memorial headstones must have stainless steel fixing pins fixing the plate to the base and the base must be securely fixed by a Ground Anchor System (NAMM fixing system).

Memorial headstones should be made out of one of the materials listed below:

Limestone	Sandstone
Slate	Granite

The following materials are not permitted:

Marble	Synthetic stone
Plastic materials	Metal
Terracotta	Wood

Certain colours will not be allowed, especially **black** and **red**, however dark-grey is acceptable or other lighter colours.

Polishing is only allowed on the face of the memorial headstone which is to be cut for the inscription.

Eligibility for Burial

People are eligible to be buried in the churchyard who, at the time of their death, were **either** resident within the Church parish (or whose last private address—as distinct from hospital or Care Home—was in the Parish), **or** were on the Electoral Roll of the Church (not Parliamentary Electoral Roll).

At the Vicar's discretion, others may be buried in the churchyard if they live within the local authority boundary of Shevington, Standish Lower Ground and Crooke.

Inscriptions

Inscriptions on monuments need a good deal of thought. If it is intended to include more than a simple statement of the deceased's name and dates of birth and death it is strongly recommended that anyone planning an inscription should discuss possibilities with the Vicar **before** approaching the stone mason. The Diocese supports this and reminds us that inscriptions will be there for future generations as well as present mourners, and are a tangible record of residents' lives. An ancient practice which has fallen into disuse but which is well worth reviving is the inclusion of a person's occupation. No abbreviations will be allowed, eg 'yrs' for 'years', nor numbers like 4/4/44 – it needs to say 4th April 1944.

Note that, although all residents of the parish qualify for burial in the churchyard, it is in fact a burial ground consecrated by the Diocesan Bishop for Christian people and therefore no inscription should imply any belief contrary to the Christian faith. **No football symbols or names of teams will be allowed in the future.**

Regulations

The new regulations (2014) of the Diocese of Blackburn state that, ‘**Nothing is to be erected or placed in a churchyard without the authority of a diocesan faculty** (licence).’ However the Vicar, through his written consent, can act for the Chancellor of the Diocese in matters that do not contravene those regulations and where the inscription and images are kept simple. To receive the Vicar’s consent you can write to him direct or do it through a stonemason. However you cannot assume that agreeing something with the stonemason will be acceptable to the Vicar and therefore changes may have to be made.

Plants or cut flowers may only be placed in removable containers which are part of the memorial headstone. Plants should be removed when withered, and flowers after **two weeks**. Remembrance Day poppies and Christmas wreaths should be removed after a period of **four weeks**. Wreaths and cut flowers placed on graves from the time of the funeral until the erection of the memorial headstone must be removed after **two weeks** and if flowers are put to replace them, they must be removed every **two weeks**.

The following are not allowed:

- Pebbles/chippings around memorial headstones
- Anything made of glass or pottery
- Wind chimes or similar objects
- Anything that has sharp or pointed edges
- Plastic flower pots
- Bushes or flowering plants that have roots
- Plastic flowers, other than Remembrance Day poppies

If surrounding your Memorial any of these items above appear, the Church has the right to remove them instantly.

Though plastic flowers are not permitted, a silk flower arrangement which look like real flowers will be permitted on Memorials in the Churchyard.

If you plant daffodil bulbs and/or snowdrops around your Memorial then you must be prepared for them to be cut down when the grass growing season starts, as the firm employed to cut the grass cannot be expected to mow round them.

If you block access to your Memorial with other items on the surrounding grass then the gardening firm employed to do the strimming around each Memorial will not be able to do so. You will then be liable to keep the grass and weeds cut down yourself. If the Church Council deems that you are making the Churchyard look untidy by not doing this work then all objects blocking strimming around a Memorial will be removed and put in the bin.

The Vicar tolerates items next to the Memorial but the Regulations state flowers and other personal items can only be put on the Memorial. Please do not abuse the Vicar’s tolerance, or the Diocesan Regulations will be kept to the letter of the law which could upset a lot of people, including those who at present abuse the churchyard by ignoring the rules set out above.

Flowers must only be put in the pots attached to the memorial headstone and not around the base of the grave. Any pots/vases of flowers around the base of the grave could be removed. Any object that is not secured to the memorial headstone could be removed. Otherwise it is impossible for the gardener to keep the churchyard tidy using the lawnmower and strimmer.

Grave Ownership and Identification

In a municipal cemetery a grave becomes the possession of the family and grave deeds are issued. In a churchyard all graves remain the property of the Vicar acting on behalf of the Diocese.

To confirm the location of graves already used but with remaining space, please contact the Parish Office with at least approximate information of the name and date of the last person buried. The Parish Office telephone number may be obtained from the parish magazine or the Vicar.

Please note that memorial headstones are the responsibility of the family.