

PARISH CHURCHYARD POLICY

RELATING TO

THE CHURCHYARD EXTENSION OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WHITNASH

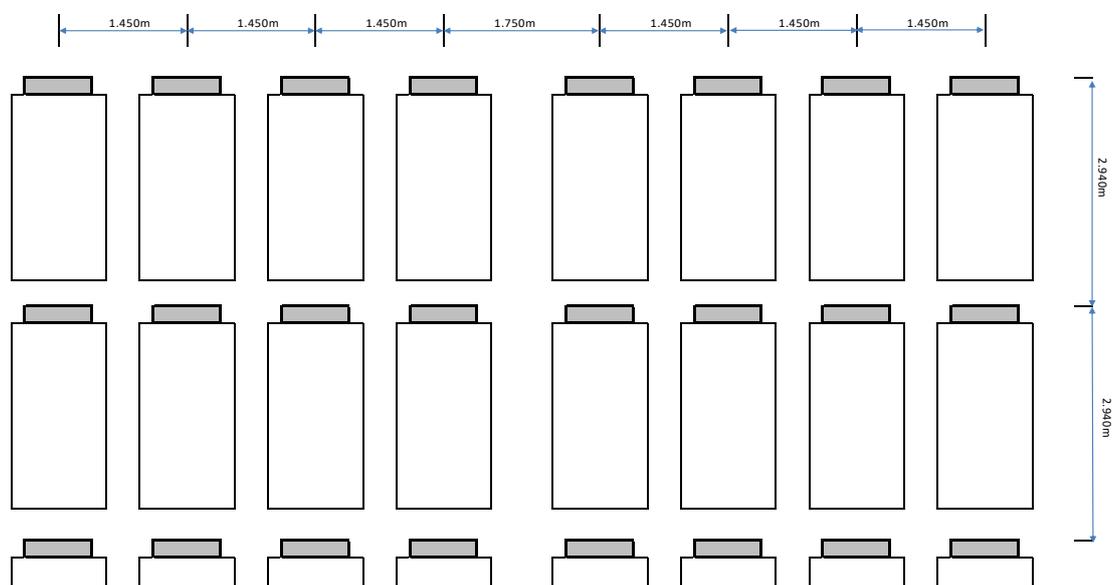
IN THE DIOCESE OF COVENTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Parish Churchyard Policy has been prepared by the Churchyard Committee acting on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St. Margaret's Church, Whitnash.
- 1.2. This policy specifically only concerns the management of the churchyard extension located on Church Lane. (The churchyard surrounding the church building is "closed".)
- 1.3. This policy has been developed following a thorough review of the Church Of England "Guidance Note Burials" dated September 2016 and the Diocese Of Coventry Chancellor's Churchyard Regulations and Churchyard Memorial Regulations which both came into force on 20th April 2025.
- 1.4. The Churchyard Committee concluded that the new Regulations provide comprehensive guidance and support appropriate to the management of the churchyard extension but some matters require additional clarification and bespoke detail. Those matters are specifically:
 - 1.4.1. The setting out of graves with specific policy for the location graves of infants and children.
 - 1.4.2. The size of memorial headstones
 - 1.4.3. The choice of finish to granite memorials
 - 1.4.4. The care of graves in the period after burial and timeframe for the installation of headstones.
 - 1.4.5. The policy for interment of cremated remains including the new garden of remembrance.
 - 1.4.6. The installation of memorial benches
- 1.5. This policy therefore should be read in conjunction with the Churchyard Regulations 2025 and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations 2025.
- 1.6. The regular maintenance of the churchyard extension is carried out by a small number of volunteers from the churchyard committee, church congregation and Whitnash residents. For this document they are hereafter referred to as the "churchyard team".

2. ALLOCATION OF SPACE FOR GRAVES

- 2.1. All future gravespaces will be marked out with consistent dimensions between them in accordance with the diagram provided below. After every fourth grave in a row, the gap is slightly larger to meet best practice guidelines and facilitate maintenance work.
- 2.2. The row to the west side of the central footpath will continue to be allocated solely for graves for infants and children.



3. THE SIZE OF MEMORIAL HEADSTONES

- 3.1. The maximum width of the inscription plate of headstone is 610mm. This is to allow sufficient space between headstones to accommodate mowing of the grass.
- 3.2. The maximum height of the memorial is 915mm to maintain an appropriate visual relationship with the maximum width being 610mm.
- 3.3. The maximum width for the inscription plate of a headstone to a grave in the area allocated to infants and children is 533mm (21 inches). The corresponding maximum height is 762mm. This restriction is to remain in keeping with the other memorials in that area.

4. THE MATERIALS AND COLOUR OF THE MEMORIALS

- 4.1. The choice of materials and colour of memorials will be in accordance with the Churchyard Memorial Regulations with the exception of the following point.
- 4.2. The principal surface of a granite headstone or cremated remains tablet may be polished. *The Churchyard Extension is located some distance away from the church building surrounded by trees and bushes therefore this is not discordant in the context of the church building. The polished granite surfaces also facilitate easier cleaning and removal of tree sap.*

5. THE CARE OF GRAVES AFTER A BURIAL

- 5.1. The family of the deceased will be handed a letter confirming the arrangements for the care of the grave and initial advice on the process for installing a memorial headstone.
- 5.2. Flowers, potted plants and associated memorabilia will be permitted on the whole area of the grave during the period when the ground is settling back down to level.
- 5.3. The churchyard team will monitor the settlement of the grave and add further subsoil and topsoil as and when required. Once the ground has settled to level, and subject to the time of year, the grave will receive grass seed. From this point onwards all flowers on the grave will be restricted to the head of the grave.
- 5.4. The churchyard team will liaise with the memorial stonemason appointed by the family of the deceased to advise on the settlement of the grave and agree on the appropriate time for the installation of the headstone.
(Please note: the time period for the natural settlement of a grave is impacted by the season in which the burial took place and subsequent weather conditions. In general, the headstone is installed 12 months after the burial but can be sooner. However, in accordance with clause 17 of the Churchyard Regulations, no application for a memorial may be determined / authorised within six months of a burial and therefore, considering the time for delivery of a new headstone, there is generally only a small delay.)
- 5.5. Once the headstone has been installed, the churchyard team will make good the ground around it with further topsoil and grass seed as appropriate.
- 5.6. The mowing of grass over and around each grave will be the responsibility of the churchyard team.

6. INTERMENT OF CREMATED REMAINS

- 6.1. When a request is received by the Rector for interment of cremated remains, the first option recommended will be interment in an existing family grave (assuming no further burials will be taking place) or an existing family plot in the area for burial of cremated remains. The second option will be interment in the Garden of Remembrance (opening in September 2026) and the third will be a new plot in the existing ABCR.

- 6.2. Once the existing ABCR is full, that option will not be available. The Churchyard Committee will then consider whether there is a need for a further ABCR and, subject to approval from the PCC, will apply for a faculty to form a new area if there is a demand.
- 6.3. In the case of cremated remains being interred in an ordinary grave, the hole shall be formed immediately in front of the headstone. An additional inscription will then be permitted on the headstone. If there is no available space for an inscription, a flat stone with inscription may be placed over the top of the cremated remains but it must be placed flush with the ground to allow the lawn mower to pass over it. The application for this additional inscription or additional stone may not be determined / authorised until six months after the funeral.
- 6.4. For cremated remains being interred in the ABRC, a cremated remains tablet of maximum 300mm wide x 450mm may be placed over the top of the remains. If the plot is for the remains of more than one family member, the tablet size may be increased to 450mm x 450mm.
- 6.5. For the interment of cremated remains in the garden of remembrance the following policy applies
 - 6.5.1. The lawn is divided into a grid of squares each being 450mm x 450mm in plan.
 - 6.5.2. Each square will accommodate the interment of the cremated remains of one person or two family members.
 - 6.5.3. Immediately after the interment, the name of the deceased will be displayed on the Garden Of Remembrance noticeboard.
 - 6.5.4. A series of plain granite headstones will be placed around the perimeter of the lawn. As soon as several names have appeared on the noticeboard, the memorial stone mason will engrave those names on one of the headstones with years of birth and death against each name. Those names will then be removed from the noticeboard.
 - 6.5.5. A record of all interments in the Garden of Remembrance will be maintained in the church office alongside all other burial records.
 - 6.5.6. Families of the deceased will be permitted to leave flowers in vases or pots around the perimeter of the lawn alongside the memorial stones.

7. PROVISION OF MEMORIAL BENCHES

- 7.1. At the time of writing this policy (November 2025), there are some legacy memorial benches in the churchyard that have been installed and maintained by bereaved families. A number of these benches have been removed recently as they fall into disrepair and become unsafe. The remaining legacy benches will be closely monitored and removed when appropriate.
- 7.2. All new benches in the churchyard will be of commercial quality, purchased by the PCC and maintained by the churchyard team. Each new bench, whether replacing an existing or in a new location, will be subject to approval through the Diocesan online faculty system.