

## Churchyard Policy for St Nicholas Ingrave and All Saints, East Horndon

### **Burial Rights**

In English consecrated churchyards such as St Nicholas and All Saints, every person living within the ecclesiastical parish (details available on St Nicholas web site) has the right of burial irrespective of faith tradition as long as space is available.

Additionally any person whose name is on the electoral roll of the parish church at the time of their death has the right to burial, as with anyone who dies in the parish.

No other person can be buried in the churchyard without the consent of the church. Due to lack of space it is unlikely we will be able to accommodate people who live outside of the parish.

All graves are dug as double graves and the next of kin decide second occupancy of the grave. If a family wish the burial of cremated remains within a double grave occupied by one person, future burial of a body in that space will not be allowed as cremated remains are treated with the same dignity as a body. Consequently we encourage use of the Garden of Remembrance.

Due to the few remaining spaces in the church yard and to be as fair to parishioners as possible, faculty reservation of grave spaces are not being allowed. The church will operate a first needed, first occupied policy along with a strict sequential location order of burials for the ease of maintenance, record keeping and prevention of difficult choices choosing appropriate burial spots. The church considers these points to be the fairest for all concerned.

### **Ownership**

The 'ownership' of the churchyard is vested in the incumbent for the use of the parishioners (in a vacancy the 'ownership' is vested in the Diocesan Bishop)

The exercise of the right of burial, interment of cremated remains or the erection of a memorial do not confer any rights of ownership upon the relatives of the deceased person or upon any other persons in respect of the churchyard itself.

### **Upkeep**

The church respectfully asks families to note the considerable difference in price between a church yard and other burial sites. As such we are unable to employ maintenance staff and ask families to mow and tend to their loved one's grave.

The church would also like to encourage family members to assist those who are unable to tend their loved ones grave through age or ill health, by tending to surrounding unkempt graves.

### **Memorials**

The 'owner' of a churchyard memorial is defined as the person who commissioned the monument in question after a person's death. Following that person's death the legal

owners of the monument are their heir or heirs at law. Therefore the church encourages people to make legal provisions by the use of their Last Will and Testament for the future care of graves.

If the heirs cannot be traced, the church takes responsibility for making dangerous monuments safe.

### **Installation of Memorials**

The installation of a memorial in a churchyard or the alteration or removal of any existing memorial, or the introduction of any new object (such as, but not exclusively benches and containers for flowers) will be considered carefully by the church.

All memorials will be fixed to the current National Association of Monumental Masons Code of Working Practice supporting BS8415.

In order to protect the dignity of the church yard as a sacred space for all the community, faculty permission is required before anything is added or changed. Stone masons and other professionals will be able to offer guidance and assist families in making requests in line with the Chancellor's guidelines (available on church web site and in porch of St Nicholas).

As the Chancellor's guidelines are intended to protect the sacredness and tastefulness of the church yard for all the community, it is with regret that we are required to remove installations and objects that did not follow this procedure.

### **Types of Stone**

Materials, sizes, design and inscriptions of all memorials to be erected in a churchyard are also required to comply with the Chancellors guidelines and details of all proposed memorials must be submitted to the incumbent for approval before any such work is undertaken via a CR1 form (available from Funeral Directors and Stone Masons).

### **Ashes**

Ashes are interred in the designated garden of remembrance and families are given the opportunity to inscribe the name of the deceased on the memorial stone within the prescribed format. Booking for this is strictly via the web site to minimise interpretive error.

For reasons of biodegradability ashes are poured into the ground and containers avoided. Each burial space in the garden of remembrance is precisely placed and recorded. No further burials will take place in an occupied ashes plot except at the request of next of kin for other family members.

The garden of remembrance is available to parishioners or people with a reasonable demonstrable link to the parish. Limited space means we need to take care with the latter.

### **Green Matters**

Planting trees and bushes in the churchyard is at the discretion of the church and details of the type and proposed location of any tree must be submitted via faculty.

Maintenance of trees in the churchyard falls to the church who are responsible to ensure all trees are safe.

The church seeks an ecological balance in the church yard. We will only remove shrubs and bushes planted without prior consent and we will only eradicate wildlife that pose a danger to that balance or threatens the integrity of the church yard. In the unlikely event of eradication we will seek to avoid methods that pose a danger to other wildlife, especially pets.

Bulbs and other seeds intended to germinate flowers on a grave are incompatible with our limited maintenance and mowing abilities and sadly, cannot be permitted.

Taking full advice from authorities and acting within the law, badgers are strategically relocated to prevent dens from hindering burials of parishioners.

During times of maintenance advice is sought to minimise disruption to bats.

For natural maintenance and to support local farming, we periodically use controlled animal grazing methods.

### **Other Matters**

We welcome the throwing of biodegradable confetti in the church yard to celebrate special events.

For maintenance reasons we are unable to allow miscellaneous ornaments and objects that prevent the mower from running smoothly over graves. Floral tributes are to be placed in the grave's designated plinth.

Due to limited space we no longer allow faculty reservation of burial space for future use. The church feels this is the fairest way of allocating remaining spaces.

This policy is in line with national and diocesan church guidelines.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hamilton'.

Rev'd Canon Paul Hamilton  
On behalf of St Nicholas' Church