

The Parish of Burchetts Green

*St Mary the Virgin Hurley
St John the Evangelist Littlewick Green
St James the Less Stubbings*

Churchyard Policy

Parochial Church Council of Burchetts Green. January 2006

*The Parish Office
The Soltau Centre
Henley Road
Stubbings SL6 6QW
bgparish@btconnect.com
www.burchettsgreenparish.org
Tel:01628 820077*

Introduction

On behalf of The Parish of Burchetts Green we would like to assure you of our love, support and prayers following your recent bereavement.

This booklet is intended to guide and help you as you make the important decision regarding the final resting place of your loved one and how we in the Parish can support you.

We hope that it will give answers to questions that you may not have thought of and therefore avoid future unnecessary distress to you and your family

From earliest times a churchyard has been regarded as “God’s acre” and as far as possible it should suggest something in the nature of a garden. Everything in a churchyard, from the memorial stones to the trees and shrubs should be a matter for care and consideration. It is with these thoughts in mind that the Diocese of Oxford has set out guidelines for the care and upkeep and for the style of memorial stones so that churchyards may remain neat and tidy throughout the year. Churchyards are places of peace and this should be respected.

St Mary the Virgin Hurley

Although not yet closed the churchyard is now full and no further full burials are possible. Some second interments and burial of ashes in existing graves will be possible. There are some spaces for the burial of ashes available in the Briggs Memorial Garden.

St John the Evangelist Littlewick Green

It may be possible to use plots in the old churchyard but this is almost full and will soon be closed except for second burials and the burial of ashes in an existing plot. The new churchyard extension to the east of the church building is now in use and burial plots will be used sequentially. An area is designated for the burial of ashes.

St James the Less Stubbings

The churchyard is open. New areas are in use for the burial of ashes and for full burials, plots will be used sequentially. Some further burials may occur in the older parts of the churchyard; this will be at the discretion of the Vicar.

Burials

Residents in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Burchetts Green are entitled, as of right to be buried in any of our churchyards provided that vacant plots are available. Non-residents of the parish may in some circumstances also be buried and application should be made to the Rector. Favourable consideration will normally be given to members of the Parish Electoral Roll and former residents of the parish who lived here for more than five years. The final decision in all such cases will rest with the Rector.

An area of each churchyard is set aside for the interment of ashes. As with burials specific plots cannot be reserved. Burials can be made in such a way as to allow for a second interment. Ashes may only be buried in a wooden casket.

When considering if you wish your loved one to be buried in the churchyard, including the burial of their ashes we ask you to bear in mind the following regulations as these may affect your decision

The burial (including the burial of ashes) in the churchyard is your loved ones final resting place. Subsequently any request to rebury elsewhere in the future is likely to be refused.

Memorials

There is no automatic right in English law to erect any memorial. A churchyard is very different from a local authority cemetery; the rights of individual parishioners are strictly limited. Because it is a churchyard, any memorial must be compatible with the Christian religion.

Permission has to be sought from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Oxford before anything permanent is placed on a grave. For convenience, the Chancellor authorises the Rector to give permission for the erection of a memorial, which must be of an approved design. It is very important that before the stonemason begins work on the memorial, that an application has been sent to the Rector for his/her approval with the appropriate fee, and has been returned to the Stonemason signed, thereby avoiding additional distress.

Under the revised regulations of 2005, the Rector is unable to authorise

- The use of marble
- The use of black, blue or red granite
- The use of polished or painted stone
- The use of kerbs
- The use of any form of chippings, fencing, railings or chains
- Headstones exceeding 4 feet in height
- Photographic and etched images
- Any statues or carved images
- Inscriptions which contain poetry, or any sentiment which appears to be addressed to the person who has died.

No permission may be given for the erection of a memorial until 6 months has elapsed from the date of burial or interment. This is because of the problem of settlement of the excavated ground.

Plastic or artificial flowers are not permitted except:

- Remembrance Day poppies or Christmas wreaths; these must be removed after a period of one month.
- Silk flowers, appropriate to the season; these must be removed when they become faded or bedraggled.

Individual gardens, fencing or shrubs are not permitted, although the Rector may permit the planting of a few bulbs or annuals within the grave.

Memorial are usually made of English Stone and are either “headstones” or, when ashes are buried, “tablets” which are set flush to the ground that do not exceed 18 inches by 18 inches.

The memorials are not the responsibility of the Church. They belong to those who purchased them and therefore the Church does not insure or maintain them. If the memorial becomes unsafe we will if necessary lay the headstone flat on the grave to ensure the safety of everyone using the churchyard. We will attempt to contact the family to advise them that the memorial requires attention.

Toys or other similar ornaments may be left at the graveside for a period of twelve months after the burial or interment. They must then be removed by the family.

Please avoid glass vases as these easily get broken and can be dangerous to those maintaining the churchyard.

A full copy of the Oxford Diocese Churchyard Regulations and memorial application forms are available from the Parish Office.

Fees

Fees are payable to the Rector and the Parochial Church Council for:

- A funeral service
- A burial (including the burial of ashes)
- The placing of a memorial or addition of an inscription on existing memorial
- Certain register searches
- Certified copies of register entries

These fees are not fixed by the Parish but are approved under the authority of Parliament by the Parochial Fees Order.

There is a separate payment for the organist, vergers and heating.

We will confirm with the funeral directors all the fees payable and they will then pay us directly and will include these on your final funeral account.

Bereavement Visitors.

If you would like to talk to one of our church visitors please contact the Parish Office. We would like to help and support you during this time.

All Souls Service

Once a year, around the month of November our Parish holds a Service for the Dearly Departed. In this service we remember all those in the Parish who have passed away in the last year and read aloud any names given to us of those whom you wish to be remembered.

Book of Remembrance

The Parish Office holds a Book of Remembrance in which the names are recorded of those whom you would like remembered with love on the anniversary of their death. These names are listed in the prayer section of the Parish Pew Sheet on the Sunday prior to the anniversary of the death. A form is enclosed in this booklet.

*These regulations apply with effect from January 2006.
Memorials erected prior to this date are not to be taken as a precedent of what will be permitted.*