

The
churchyard
at Edwalton
Church

A guide for the bereaved



This leaflet is intended to guide bereaved families who wish to apply for a burial or the interment of cremated remains in our churchyard, or who wish to place a memorial on a grave. If you have any questions about the contents of this leaflet, our clergy will be glad to offer help or advice.



Churchyard memorials

Our churchyard forms part of our history. It matters to many people, especially those whose loved ones' remains rest here, and it is also important to our parishioners, historians, ecologists, visitors and others. It is consecrated ground, set aside for burials; it is a place for quiet contemplation and remembrance.

To help protect their special character, the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham sets out Regulations for Churchyards and Memorials, giving guidance on what memorials and graves should be like and what is allowed in a churchyard. It is important to remember that the family of the deceased person does not own the land in which a body is buried (the grave) or the plot in which cremated remains are buried, but the land remains part of the churchyard.

Although families do not own the land, they do own any memorial stone placed over the burial and are responsible for its upkeep and repair. A burial may be marked with a headstone or a wooden cross and an interment of cremated remains with a flat memorial plaque

(all the details are in the Diocesan Regulations). Please note that there is no legal requirement to install a memorial marking the burial of a body or interment of cremated remains.

Our churchyard needs maintenance, and is often cared for by volunteers. Graves and memorial plaques must be flat and kept clear of obstructions so that the grass can easily be cut. This means that graves and memorial plaques may not be marked out by kerbs, chains, railings, fences, herbaceous plants or anything similar.



Headstones

Coffin burials may be marked with upright headstones. Care must be taken to see that new headstones fit with their surroundings, so native natural stone should be used; polished granite or marble are not permitted (see the Diocesan Regulations for acceptable dimensions, materials and finishes).

Headstones should be simple in shape but not necessarily all straight lines, eg a rounded top might well be acceptable. However, designs such as stone crosses, hearts or open books are not permitted. A stone receptacle for flowers may be included, so long as it is recessed flush with the ground level and securely cemented into a sunken slab at the head of the grave, adjacent to the headstone. It is allowable to have one or two holes in the plinth into which a metal flower holder and top are placed.

Inscriptions should be composed with care as a gravestone in a churchyard is a public memorial in a public space and may be there for a long time. Inscriptions should use a clear easily-read font. Simple information – full names, dates (the month preferably in words) and relationships – are the most dignified inscriptions.

Any additional words should not be sentimental but simple and compatible with the Christian faith; they should honour the dead, comfort the living and inform posterity. Inscriptions are not permitted on flower receptacles.

If the headstone chosen by the family is in accordance with the Diocesan Regulations, then the Priest-in-Charge may give permission for it be installed.

If the headstone chosen does not comply with the Diocesan Regulations, then an application must be made to the Diocesan Chancellor for faculty permission. There is a charge for applying and there is no guarantee that permission will be given.



Memorial plaques

Burials of cremated remains, either in the area set aside for the burial of cremated remains, or in the existing grave of a close relative, may be marked by a flat stone plaque measuring 305 x 305 x 50 mm (12" x 12" x 2"). Plaques must be laid flush or slightly below the ground level. Upright or 'desk-top' style plaques, and integral flower receptacles, are not permitted.

A separate plaque cannot be used when the interment of cremated remains is in the existing grave of a close relative; any reference

to the recently deceased must be an additional inscription on the headstone of the existing grave.

Plaques should be made from Westmorland Green stone. Rules and guidance concerning inscriptions on plaques are the same as for headstones, above. When cremated remains are buried in the grave of a close relative, an inscription can be added to an existing headstone.



Placing items on graves and memorial plaques

Families and friends may wish to visit graves and leave behind floral tributes to their loved ones. In order to keep our churchyard looking at its best for all visitors, some items are not permitted.

Any items which do not comply with these requirements will be removed.

- ✦ Fresh cut or dried flowers may be placed in flower holes or pre-fixed vases on graves.
- ✦ Fresh cut or dried flowers, bulbs and pot plants in disposable (not glass or ceramic) or bio-degradable containers may be placed on graves and memorial plaques. Suitable disposable containers may be obtained from the Parish Office.
- ✦ Artificial flowers are discouraged.
- ✦ Remembrance Day poppies and Christmas wreaths may be placed on graves and memorial plaques.
- ✦ Flowers plants, bulbs and wreaths will be removed after a maximum of two months, or if they become withered, faded or dishevelled.
- ✦ Shrubs, trees, herbaceous plants and other objects (including statuettes, garden ornaments, food, drink, photographs and plastic memorabilia) are not allowed, and may be removed. However some garden ornaments and memorabilia may be permitted in the case of deceased minors, at Christmas and Easter and during the first six months following burial, after which they will be removed.
- ✦ Flowers and temporary ornaments should not extend beyond the grave or plaque, or encroach onto the adjacent pathways.



And finally...

As you walk around our churchyard you will see several graves and memorials that do not comply with the requirements set out above. We realise that the introduction of a new Policy (based on the recently updated Diocesan Regulations) can be an issue so far as existing graves and memorials are concerned.

Our new Policy will apply to all graves and memorials installed after 1st October 2024, and we hope that people will move towards application of the requirements as much as possible for existing graves and memorials.

For any more information about this or anything in this leaflet, please contact the Church Office by email at office@edwaltonchurch.org or by calling **0115 9234695**.

Information about the Diocesan Regulations for Graves and Memorials may be found at southwell.anglican.org/resources/church-buildings-and-churchyards/The-Chancellors-Regulations-relating-to-Churchyards/



“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you.”

Jesus (John 14:2)



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We gather for
church each
Sunday at
10:15am,
and everyone
is welcome.