

United Parish of Chinnor, Sydenham, Aston Rowant and Crowell Churchyard Policy

1. Which churchyards are open?

Currently, all of our churchyards are open for burials and interments of ashes, although Chinnor is filling up very fast.

2. Can ashes be strewn?

Yes, but currently only in a particular area of the Chinnor Churchyard that has a faculty for the purpose. Cremated remains should be reverently poured into a specially prepared hole in the ground between 18 and 24 inches deep. No plaques may be used, but a book of remembrance is kept.

3. Who has a right to burial?

3.1 Every parishioner has a right of burial in the Parish churchyard, provided there is space available and the churchyard has not been closed for burials by Order in Council.

3.2 Any person whose name is on the church electoral roll at the time of their death also has a right to burial.

3.3 Any person dying in the parish, whoever that person is.

3.4 No other person can be buried in the churchyard without the consent of the incumbent who must have due regard to any PCC guidance. If the incumbent declines to allow the burial of a person who has no right of burial, his or her decision shall be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

3.5 Reservation of spaces for graves or interment of ashes cannot be allowed, except in the case of existing burial plots for multiple burials or where a faculty has already been granted by the Chancellor reserving a grave space in the churchyard.

3.6 The Incumbent cannot grant or assure anyone of a right of burial in a particular place in the churchyard or area for cremated remains.

4. Who owns the churchyard?

4.1 The 'ownership' of the churchyard is vested in the Incumbent (or the Diocesan Bishop during a vacancy).

4.2 The exercise of the right of burial, interment of cremated remains, the reservation of a grave space by faculty, 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.

5. Ownership of memorials

5.1 The 'owner' of a churchyard memorial is the person who erected the monument in question, and after his/her death the heir or heirs at law of the person or persons in whose memory the monument was erected. The primary responsibility for upkeep falls on the owners of the memorial who are the heirs of the person or persons commemorated.

5.2 However, it is the PCC which has responsibility for churchyard maintenance including health and safety. When the heirs cannot be traced, the PCC must bear the responsibility for any dangerous monuments within the churchyard. The PCC must take appropriate steps to deal with any dangerous situation, such as an unsafe monument. Such action will be limited by the funds at its disposal.

6. Who is responsible for the type of monument or gravestone?

6.1 The erection of a memorial in a churchyard or the alteration or removal of any existing memorial, or the introduction of any object (such as, but not exclusively, benches and containers for flowers) into a churchyard is a privilege, not a right.

6.2 Materials, sizes, design and inscriptions of all memorials to be erected in a churchyard must follow and comply with the Chancellor's guidelines, and **details of all proposed memorials must be submitted to the incumbent for approval** before any such work is undertaken. The current Churchyard Rules and Regulations are clearly displayed in the church porches and are easily available online, and **must be adhered to**.

6.3 In law a faculty is required before the erection of any memorial. But in practical terms in exercise of his jurisdiction the Chancellor has delegated limited power to the Incumbent (or in a vacancy to the Area Dean) to permit the erection of grave stones and to allow simple alterations to existing memorials if, and only if, the Chancellor's regulations relating to grave stones are fully complied with.

7. What about cremated remains?

7.1 If the cremated remains are to be interred in a container, it must be of perishable material, preferably wood.

7.2. The scattering of cremated remains is not permitted. The Chancellor's guidelines relating to cremated remains and memorial plaques must always be adhered to.

7.3 Cremated remains may be interred in an existing grave, however, a separate memorial or grave stone is not permitted, instead an inscription may be added to the grave stone.

7.4 Permission from the incumbent is required for the burial of cremated remains and memorial plaques and his/her presence is also usually required at the interment.

8. Whose responsibility are the trees in the churchyard?

8.1 Maintenance of trees in the churchyard falls to the PCC and they are responsible to ensure all trees within the churchyard are safe and steps taken to remedy any unsafe tree within the churchyard.

8.2 Planting of trees in the churchyard is at the discretion of the incumbent and PCC and details of the type and proposed planting position of any tree must be submitted for their approval prior to any such action being undertaken.

9. Are there regulations about the management of family plots?

9.1 The placing of fresh flowers is permitted, but they should be removed when they have perished.

9.2 The growing of grass on a level grave for ease of maintenance should be encouraged.

9.3 Remembrance Day poppies and Christmas wreaths are permitted, but must be removed after no more than two months.

9.4 artificial flowers are discouraged, as they are not biodegradable and soon deteriorate in quality and appearance.

9.5 It is not permitted to have individual gardens, or to plant garden type shrubs or herbaceous plants.

9.6 Solar lights, wind chimes, sentimental objects, and additional vases are not allowed.

9.7 The PCC/Incumbent reserves the right to remove anything that becomes unsightly. In rare circumstances the incumbent may allow a limited number of sentimental objects on a plot for a limited period of time.

Incumbent

Church Wardens

Date