

Please note that the law has changed in recent years, so what can be seen on existing graves might no longer be allowed, for example, kerbs were allowed in the past, but not now.

There is a set of laws and rules governing headstones which are set by the Church of England. Simple designs can be signed off by the Vicar on a form called a "CR1". More complex designs need special legal permission called a "Faculty". Please contact a local stonemason in the first instance, who will explain the rules and help you to complete the paperwork. For further help with headstones, please contact the Vicar (see below).

Headstones remain the property of the family of the deceased, and it is their responsibility to care for the headstone.

### And finally

Long-term, all graves should look something like these:



...with grass, small plants, flowers or bulbs, up to a maximum of 7ft x 3ft for full burials, and 3ft x 2ft for ashes plots (including any headstone and plinth).

Our aim is to create a shared, sustainable and sacred memorial space for us and for the future. Please help us to do this by following the rules, out of respect for the churchyard and its users, and to avoid any unnecessary conflict.

Benches are allowed in the churchyard, but special legal permission is required. Please contact the Church for details.

### Contact details

If you have any questions about the rules, or if we can help you with anything, please contact the Church:

#### Churchwarden and Sexton – Anne Pepper

Anne supervises the churchyard and cares for its users. Please contact her for queries about the rules, grave plot reservations, and for general churchyard enquiries.

E-mail: [sexton@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk](mailto:sexton@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk)

#### Vicar – Revd David Cattle

David is the point of contact for enquiries about funeral services, ashes burials, and headstones; and if you would like someone to pray with you or for you.

E-mail: [vicar@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk)

Phone: 01245 956953

#### Chelmsford Diocesan Registry

The Registry work with the Vicar and Churchwardens to maintain the churchyard and administer the law.

Administrator: Miss Melanie Tucker

E-mail: [ChelmsfordRegistry@wslaw.co.uk](mailto:ChelmsfordRegistry@wslaw.co.uk)

Phone: 0207 593 0314



## Caring for a grave

at the churchyard of

**St Michael & All Angels' Church**

Galleywood Common



**Creating a shared, sustainable and sacred memorial space**

Updated June 2023

## **Our beautiful churchyard**

Our churchyard is a shared memorial space for relatives and friends of those buried here; and also for the local community, for visitors, and as a legacy for future generations. We need your help to care for this sacred place.

The churchyard is owned by St Michael's Church, for the benefit of the whole community, and is the responsibility of St Michael's Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is important to note that individual graves are not owned by the family of the person buried there, but remain the property of the Church, even if you have paid to reserve a grave plot.

The Church pays for the upkeep of the churchyard. We also have a team of dedicated volunteers, led by our Churchwardens, who lovingly care for the churchyard.

As with all graveyards, there is a set of rules governing the use of this shared space, so it can be enjoyed by all users. In the Diocese of Chelmsford, churchyard rules form part of a legal framework which is under the responsibility of the Chancellor of the Diocese. Within these rules, the PCC has some very limited discretion, and has used this to allow the planting of small plants and flowers on graves.

For more details on the rules, please see the Diocesan leaflet "Choosing a headstone", and for full details please see the "Churchyard Handbook": [https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads/docs/Churchyard-Handbook-February2023\\_Edition\\_Master.pdf](https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads/docs/Churchyard-Handbook-February2023_Edition_Master.pdf)

Here is a handy summary of the rules for our churchyard. Our churchyard is...

### **...natural**

You are welcome to plant flowers, grass, bulbs and small plants on a loved one's grave (but not trees, shrubs or hedges, as these grow too big). It is inadvisable to plant anything into the soil until the ground has settled, which takes approximately 6 months. Until that time, you may place plants in temporary pots and lay fresh flowers on the grave.

Flowers from the funeral can be left on the grave for up to 2 weeks after the funeral service. Dead flowers may be removed by the Churchwardens.

### **...green**

Everything placed on graves needs to be biodegradable (i.e., not plastic or artificial). This means that the following items are not allowed and may be removed by the Churchwardens: artificial flowers, plastic wraps for real flowers, wires or pins in flower displays, ornaments, toys, keepsakes, vases, lanterns, solar lights, candles, windmills, windchimes and balloons. There are 2 exceptions to this:

1. We understand that the initial stages of grief mean that personal items on graves are helpful. At St Michael's, we allow these to be put on graves for the first 6-12 months or until the headstone is erected, at which point we ask that they are removed. If removing these items is difficult, we can offer to help you by, perhaps, saying a prayer with you at the graveside.
2. Wreaths or other tributes at Remembrance and Christmas including small Christmas trees, and items for important anniversaries e.g. a loved one's birthday are allowed for up to 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after the event, at which point they may be removed by the Churchwardens.

Please note that the churchyard is a public space, and the Church can't accept any responsibility for items left on graves.

### **...safe**

Please do not put anything made of glass or breakable material such as clay or ceramic pots on graves, as this can be dangerous. These items are removed by the Churchwardens.

Please do not put loose stones, gravel, chippings or pebbles on graves, as these may be flicked up by a strimmer and hit someone. And please do not build kerbs, as these are a trip hazard and impede mowing and strimming.

Please don't leave tools or other objects such as vases, plants or stones behind headstones, as they make it much more difficult to mow the paths between the graves. These will be removed.

Items not in keeping with the churchyard, such as alcohol, will be removed by the Churchwardens.

For everyone's safety and as a deterrent against vandalism, the churchyard is covered by CCTV.

### **...regulated**

No burial (including ashes burials) can take place in the churchyard without agreement with the Church, so that permanent records can be kept. Please do not scatter ashes, as this is illegal in churchyards.

Legal permission is needed for the erecting or replacement of a headstone, and for adding an inscription to an existing headstone (see later).

No other monument or memorial of any kind, including cube vases, plaques or photos, are allowed.