

## Maintaining graves at Elmstead churchyard



*"God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words."*

[1 Thessalonians 4: 14,18]

At Elmstead we try to keep our churchyard as best we can with limited financial resources, and relying on the help of volunteers. In recent years we have introduced small 'butterfly' areas as our contribution to conservation, and we are fortunate there are no overgrown areas in the churchyard. During the winter, maintenance is more difficult but during the spring, summer and autumn we maintain the churchyard so that all may enjoy its tranquil and peaceful atmosphere and views of our medieval church and surrounding farmland.

### Commemorating the Dead

A churchyard is a place where our loved ones are buried. It is therefore a place which has to be treated with honour and respect. Memorials in the form of headstones may be placed at one end of the grave six months after the time of burial, providing that the correct legal permission has been obtained from the Parish Priest, and providing that the headstones are in accordance with the *Churchyard Handbook* published by the Diocese and available from the church. Integral flower vases are permitted so that fresh flowers may be left on the grave. Plastic flowers are not permitted, neither are additional vases or pots containing plants.

### May I plant a garden or place other plants or ornaments on a grave?

The answer to this is, sadly, no. You may see that some graves have such additions, but this is not permitted. The Churchyard regulations, operated by the Chancellor of the Diocese, do not allow the planting of gardens, or the placing of bedding plants, shrubs, trees, pots or ornaments. Graves should left as lawned or grassed areas. You are welcome to place turf on the grave.

### The Burial of Ashes

Long ago, ashes were buried in various places in the churchyard and have been marked out with stone tablets.

Nowadays ashes may only be buried in the *Garden of Remembrance*, set aside for cremated remains. The area is kept as lawn and, as with the rest of the churchyard, it is not possible to plant anything on the site or to place ornaments or artificial flowers.

As a way of recording the names of those whose ashes are buried there, a stone tablet may be placed in the *Remembrance Garden* wall. To arrange for this, please see the clergy or Churchwardens.

Additionally, ashes may be buried in an existing grave which has a headstone. In all cases, arrangements must be made with the clergy. A *Memorial Book* is kept in church, and we can arrange for the name(s) of the departed whose cremated remains are in the churchyard, to be entered in the Book.

### Do the regulations in this leaflet apply to everyone?

**Yes they do.**

*If you already tend a grave, and even if you have tended that grave in a particular way for many years, the Church Council are obliged to ensure that you maintain it in accordance with the information given on this leaflet.*

**THERE IS NO LEGAL RIGHT TO PLACE A MEMORIAL OR ANY OTHER ITEM IN THE CHURCHYARD. PERMISSION HAS TO OBTAINED IN EACH CASE. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BEAR THIS IN MIND — ANYTHING PLACED IN THE CHURCHYARD WITHOUT PERMISSION IS THERE UNLAWFULLY AND CAN BE ORDERED TO BE REMOVED.**

*Churchyard Handbook, August 2000, 5.2.*

## WHAT ABOUT KERB STONES OR OTHER EDGING?

*It is no longer permissible to mark out a grave with stone edging. Kerbstones, fences, concrete slabs, plastic strips, bark, and stone chippings or any other artificial enclosures are not permitted.*

## SO WHAT IS PERMITTED THEN?

*Only a headstone may be placed on a grave after six months has elapsed, and providing the correct procedures have been followed. One flower vase may be included in the headstone. Headstones with special designs may be allowed if the Chancellor of the Diocese has given permission.*

*A wooden cross may be placed on the grave as a temporary memorial for up to three years, but only after written permission has been given.*

*Fresh flowers may be placed on graves at any time. The Churchwardens will arrange for dead or dying flowers to be removed if you would find this helpful.*

## A SUMMARY OF WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED TO BE PLANTED OR PLACED ON GRAVES

Artificial flowers  
Pots & pot plants  
Bedding plants  
Rose bushes  
Conifers  
Shrubs  
Bushes  
Trees  
Photographs  
Letters  
Cards  
Gnomes  
Statues  
Fencing or edging  
Artificial enclosures  
The creation of gardens  
Rocks  
Bark  
Tubs

It is necessary for you to consult the incumbent, a churchwarden, or the secretary of the Parochial Church Council about the rules relating to placing flowers in the churchyard so as to avoid any distress as the result of your doing something which is against the rules. - Rule 4.15

You should bear in mind that any enclosure would be unlawful and would be subject to an order for removal to be made by the Chancellor - Rule 6.1

*Ss Peter and Paul,  
Hockley*

The *Churchyard Handbook*, published by the Registrar of Chelmsford, together with any further information you may need may be obtained by from:

Elmstead Parochial Church Council  
The Parish Church  
Church Road  
Elmstead, Essex  
CO7 7AW

St Anne & St Laurence, Elmstead, Essex

St Anne and St Laurence,  
Elmstead, Essex

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*May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy and love of God, rest in peace.*

Sancta Anna et Sancte Laurenti,  
orate pro nobis