

Flower pots

When choosing your headstone, there is always the option to have a pot sunk into the base of the stone and this we hope will be sufficient for most families. Glass and ceramic pots, which can be shattered by a stone thrown up from a mower or strimmer, are not welcome for these health and safety reasons. Certain other pots may be permitted if completely sunk.

Ornaments

We are aware that there are now many kinds of ornaments on sale by which to remember loved ones. Whilst these may be helpful to individuals, we don't encourage their placement in the churchyard since the main memorial for the churchyard graves are the headstones. We would encourage any such items to be taken home, although one small additional object is likely to be overlooked.

Wild Areas

Areas of the churchyard may at different times be designated as wildlife areas. Please do respect the natural environment and take home any waste, helping to keep the churchyard tidy for all users.

A Final Word

The care of individual graves and the churchyard as a whole is a very sensitive issue. In compiling these guidelines, we have tried to keep in step with the regulations set by the Diocese and also to recognise the needs of bereaved family and friends. We also recognise the difficulty of those first two years of mourning and of the graves of children. We will make every effort to enable families to find helpful and meaningful ways of commemorating their loved ones, within what we are permitted as churchyard trustees.

Further Details

We strongly urge you to look at the Churchyard Handbook published by the Diocese of Chelmsford before making any plans. This can be found on the Diocesan website: https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads/dac-docs/Churchyard-Handbook-February2023_Edition_Master.pdf
A printed copy may be obtained through the Diocesan Office: telephone 01245 294400

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All Saints Rayne Churchyard Guidance



Introduction

This leaflet has been written by the parochial church council (PCC) to help make you aware of the rules regarding graves in the churchyard and to help you understand them at this difficult and sensitive time. We aim to:

- enable families to tend the graves of loved-ones in ways which help express their grief and love.
- allow good access for the mowers so that we can more easily keep the churchyard tidy
- ensure the churchyard is in keeping with its natural setting
- keep the churchyard clear of items that can, if broken, be hazardous to walkers or mowers.

Memorials

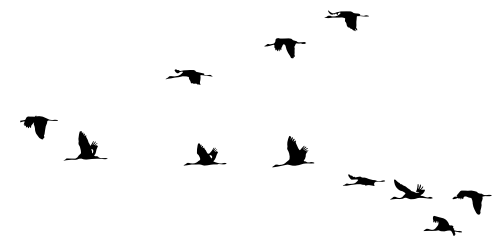
The English Churchyard is a place of quiet and repose, a place where comfort is drawn from the peace provided by being close to God and to God's church. The setting of our churchyard here, overlooking local farmland and village fields, is particularly beautiful and inspiring.

Since the churchyard is consecrated ground there are restrictions on the wording and of memorials allowed for those buried here. In addition, materials need to be in keeping with the historic nature of the building and the natural environment.

Control of the churchyards and suitability of memorials rests ultimately with the Diocesan Chancellor. The local Vicar is only allowed to give permission for memorials which fall within the guidelines; anything unusual will need to be referred to the Chancellor for special permission (called a faculty application.)

When you come to consider a memorial, your stone-mason or funeral director should be able to advise you on what is possible. Full details of the guidelines are available on our website, or alternatively do contact the Rector, Revd Rachel Prior.

Please note that over the years, guidelines have changed and so what you see on a neighbouring gravestone may no longer be permitted or may require a faculty.



Overall maintenance of the churchyard

Ongoing maintenance of the churchyard rests with the local church and its members. We are very much indebted to our Parish Council for the work of the village groundsmen in cutting grass and removing rubbish. However, there is still the need for local volunteers to spend precious time in tidying and keeping the Churchyard in good order. Please do contact the Rector or a churchwarden if you are able to offer any time.

Flowers

Only fresh flowers should be used, as the churchyard is set aside to be a holy place in which flowers and plants grow naturally, in keeping with the seasons. Plastic or artificial flowers of any kind are not permitted as they pose a threat to mowers due to the wire involved in their manufacture, and also, when scattered by the wind, become refuse. There are three limited exceptions: poppies on Remembrance Sunday; wreaths at Christmas and wreaths at the anniversary of the death of the deceased, for a limited period of two weeks.

Planting

Our choice would be for graves to be turfed. We recognise however that many families prefer to use plants, bulbs and shrubs to enhance their graves. If you do, we ask that shrubs be planted as close to the headstone as possible become no higher than 45 cm/18 inches above the ground and are maintained to an adequate standard and that bulbs be planted within the grassed area.

Surrounds

These are not allowed by the Churchyard Regulations and therefore you are asked not to place any in front of the headstone, since they can impede the use of mowers and upon decay can cause a hazard to churchyard users. However, there are existing surrounds in the churchyard which were allowed under previous regulations. If surrounds fall into disrepair, they will be removed.