

## **St. Mary's, Coton in the Elms, Churchyard current situation**

This brief summary should answer some frequent questions

*Q: How many burial plots are there left?*

A: At the moment we have about 15 - 20 plots left.

*Q: Where are the plots?*

A: At the moment we are burying alongside the hedge on the right hand side (looking down the churchyard). There are very limited numbers of plots here and these are having to be dug as 'single depth' due to an unidentified drainage pipe being found in this area. When these are all used, we will recommence burials at the bottom of the churchyard again but it is also not possible to have 'double depth' graves here either due to the high water table.

*Q: What is the consequence of having 'single depth' graves?*

A: What this means is that, if a married/partnered couple wish to be buried together eventually, a spare plot has to be 'saved' alongside the first burial. This will limit the number of plots available still more.

*Q: Can I purchase a Plot in the churchyard?*

A: No sorry this has not been possible since the early 2000's. There are 'saved' plots for family members alongside an interred spouse/partner. These are the apparent 'vacant' plots in parts of the burial areas

*Q: Can the large grassed areas be used for burials?*

A: The grassed areas do have graves below. The oldest graves are near to the road are at least 100 years old. We have asked Derby Diocese whether we can now bury in these areas but they refused to let us do so. They have given permission for interment of ashes in this area.

*Q: How are plots allocated?*

A: This is done as requests come in from the Funeral Directors. At the moment the right hand side plots will be used first but, if a family specifically does not want the deceased to be buried there, we can offer plots in the bottom of the churchyard. When the right hand plots are all used/saved for a partner, the only option is the bottom of the churchyard.

*Q: What about interment of cremated remains?*

A: We only have one plot left in the Cremation Plot in the bottom left corner. For the time being we are already using the gravelled areas near to the Church walls, and then we shall start using the grassed areas. We can inter in existing graves of close relatives

*Q: Who is entitled to be buried in the churchyard?*

A: Someone who has had lifetime or lengthy residence in the village at some point. If the partner of such a person dies first then that partner will be buried and a plot saved alongside for subsequent burial.

*Q: What happens when we run out of space in the churchyard?*

A: This is likely to happen in the near future I am afraid. We have a few options:

1. We could try and get more land for burials. This land has to be approved by the Environment Agency as to being suitable for burials.

2. We could bury at a nearby churchyard such as Christchurch, Linton, where there is space available
3. The final option is to 'Close' the churchyard. This would mean that the Church would not take any responsibility for the general maintenance. Burials in this case would be into 'saved' graves only. 'Closed' Churchyards are usually handed over into the care of the Parish Council. The churchyard would then be classed as a 'Cemetery'. It would be then be the remit of the Parish Council to find additional space for future burials.

Q: *Who maintains the churchyard at the moment and is anyone paid to do so?*

A: The large grassed areas are mown at regular intervals and some areas near to the church building and cremation plot. The roadside areas are mown by volunteers as is the tidying of the areas around the church and unattended graves. No one gets paid at the moment to mow or tidy the churchyard.

Q: *If the churchyard is not maintained by paid workers where does the money go from payments for funeral services, and does this 'BUY' the burial plot?*

A: The fees paid, after paying an organist, heating and lighting costs are taken out, are shared between the church and the diocese approximately 80% / 20%. This money is used for the provision and upkeep of the church and the salaries of the clergy taking the services. The burial plot is no longer 'bought'.

Q: *Why are there no 'Brown' bins in the churchyard?*

A: The South Derbyshire District Council will not empty the church 'Brown' bin since some people were putting non 'green' items, such as plant pots, plastic bags, whole wreathes, etc., into them. This means that these items get into the bin lorry if the crew do not spot them, and then the entire lorry load has to be dumped as general waste instead of recycling. If possible, please take your 'green' waste away and recycle it at home.

Q: *Who is responsible for maintaining and tidying the graves?*

A: The family / friends of the deceased are responsible for keeping their loved one's graves / cremation plots in order and not to allow items any of their items to 'stray' into adjacent plots, especially Cremation Plots. This means removing any dead flowers and faded plastic items as well as trimming any grass in the area. Note that Glass/breakable vases are NOT allowed in the churchyard as they present a hazard if broken. The Diocese will not allow loose statues, toys, solar lights or bells on the plots. We do take an open attitude to this, subject to complaints made to, and upheld by, the PCC.  
**PLEASE NOTE** we are now authorised, by the 2021 regulations, to dispose of dead flowers, wreathes and faded plastic flowers if necessary. Unsafe items could be removed and left near to the water butt for collection by the owners.

For more information and details on what material a Memorial /Gravestone can be made from and on the marking of the edges of plots, please contact me:

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