

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE, GROOMBRIDGE
CHURCHYARD REGULATIONS FOR THE LOWER CHURCHYARD
Approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Chichester
pursuant to a faculty dated 13 April 2021

This Churchyard was consecrated in 1928 and provides a resting place for any parishioners resident in the parish of St Thomas, Groombridge or on the electoral roll at the time of their death. Whether those neither resident nor on the electoral roll, but with a connection to the parish may be interred in the churchyard is a decision for the incumbent and PCC who will decide each case on its merits.

Guidance for new graves, headstones and their care and upkeep, are summarised here by Groombridge Parochial Church Council (PCC),

- 1 It is unlawful for a monument, surround or human remains to be introduced into this churchyard without permission. Application forms are provided by the Funeral Director and sent to the Vicar who is happy to be consulted about appropriate design, wording, and appearance.
- 2 Notes for the tending of graves:
 - bulbs and small annual plants may be placed in the soil of any grave
 - plants or cut flowers may be placed in removable sunken containers (preferably of unpolished aluminium) in the soil of any grave
 - wreaths and cut flowers on graves and plants and flowers in containers may be removed, when withered, by those authorised to do so by the Vicar
 - we regret that it is necessary to bring your own water to top up containers
 - please take your rubbish home with you or place in the dustbin provided; do not throw it over the fencing or down by the stream.
- 3 We regret that the following are **not** permitted:
 - kerbs, railings, fencing or chippings
 - memorials in the shape of vases, hearts, open books, or even crosses
 - memorials incorporating photographs or portraits
 - mementoes, windmills, toys or little animals (although we recognise that such additions may be helpful to grieving families in the short term, but the PCC reserves the right to remove should they become unsightly, or untended).
 - the use of 'pet names' on headstones
 - artificial flowers, except for Remembrance Sunday poppies and wreaths.
- 4 Permission in the form of a Faculty may be sought from the Chancellor for the erection of a memorial which does not comply with these Regulations.
- 5 This is a rural churchyard and we do not permit highly polished memorials or gold lettering. Our preferred stone type is Sandstone, Limestone, Slate or Granite.
- 6 Ashes are interred in individual plots which measure 24" x 24". Small, upright individual headstones may be no larger than 20" high, 14" wide and 2" thick. With Base: 22" x 16" x 2" flush to the surrounding ground. This is a permitted variation to general provisions of the Churchyard Regulations for the Diocese of Chichester.
- 7 The Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas encourages us to create a natural habitat for wildlife and in the summer months we mow around the edges, leaving the wild flowers to seed themselves among the graves.
- 8 The upkeep of a grave or plot is the responsibility of the family of the deceased.
- 9 We are fortunate in having a 'Garden Gang' who maintain much of the woodland surrounding the churchyard, and generally keep it in good order. If you would like to help in any way, please get in touch with Ben Bishop on 07715 003629.
- 10 A link to the full Churchyard Regulations (Issue 5, April 2020) can be found at:
https://cofechichester.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2020/03/Chichester_Churchyard_Regulations.pdf

*Thank you. Revd Sharon Francis (01892 864265)
February 2021*