



# **Churchyard Policy 2026**



## **1. THE OPEN GRAVEYARD**

There are laws and regulations which govern how graveyards are used, both for churches and other organisations, and it is important that you understand these before you decide to make the graveyard at St Stephen's the resting place for your loved one's ashes. Below you will find full details of the Churchyard at St Stephen's and how it can be used in compliance with the Diocese of Leeds Churchyard Regulations 2020 (available at <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/how-we-can-help/dac/consistory-court2/>) .

### **1.1 Burials**

The Graveyard at St Stephen's is closed for burials. The only exception would be where an existing family grave has grave space still available (each grave space has a legally allowed allocation of burials within it), and where this can be established on existing churchyard plans and registers.

### **1.2 Interment of Ashes**

There is a section of the graveyard which can be used for the interment (burial) of ashes following cremation. This can only be done with the consent of the church and following the procedure listed further down this leaflet. The available area is to the right of the lychgate on Lidget Street. We suggest that anyone considering applying for an interment here visits the graveyard, considering passing traffic and general environment.

### **1.3 Who can be interred here?**

Those who are entitled to have their ashes interred in the graveyard include those who live within the parish boundary at the time of death, those who have worshipped regularly at St Stephen's or who have been on the electoral roll of St Stephen's.

## **2. MEMORIAL STONES**

The following guidance must be followed when preparing a memorial stone to be placed in the graveyard at St Stephen's. It is important that each memorial stone fits in with its surroundings, respecting the graveyard as a place both for relatives to visit and remember loved ones, but also as the environment around a busy living church. Consent will only be given for memorial stones which comply with the legal permissions granted to St Stephen's in this respect.

### **2.1 The SIZE OF THE STONE.**

In the currently open section of the graveyard our memorial stones are 18" x 12", buff York stone tablets. The stone must not be of any other type or colour, and this is the maximum size allowed by the regulations. Permission will not be granted for any other kind of memorial. All memorial tablets are laid flush to the ground, and with 'landscape' orientation.

### **2.2 The INSCRIPTION.**

The regulations on graveyards state that the inscription on the memorial tablets should be reverent and should include the full name of the deceased (no nick names) and the dates of birth and death. Inscriptions should be in black carved lettering.

### **2.3 NUMBER OF INTERMENTS.**

A maximum of two interments may be possible in each 18" X 12" plot in the current section. Care needs to be taken therefore that the wording is arranged and sized to allow for more words later should the family wish. This factor should also be considered when deciding if a casket is wanted for ashes.

### **2.4 CASKETS.**

A casket is unnecessary and without one it is easier to make maximum use of the space for two interments. Should you choose to use a casket it must be fully biodegradable to meet necessary legal requirements.

### **2.5 RECEPTACLES FOR PLANTS OR CUT FLOWERS AND OTHER ADORNMENTS.**

There is currently no permission under the regulations for items to be attached to the stone memorial tablets. Plants or cut flowers may be placed in a removable sunken container (preferably unpolished aluminium) in the soil of any grave or in the gravel immediately adjacent to the memorial stone. Wreaths and cut flowers placed on graves and plants and flowers in containers may be removed, when withered, by those authorised to do so by the priest-in-charge.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following are not permitted:

- i. free-standing vases or pots which are not sunk into the ground.
- ii. artificial flowers
- iii. memorials in the shape of vases, hearts, open books;
- iv. memorials incorporating photographs or portraits;
- v. mementoes, windmills, toys or little animals, solar lamps or similar

### **2.6 NEW MONUMENTS MARKING HISTORIC GRAVE PLOTS**

Applications for new monuments to be added to historic grave plots must also comply with the Graveyard Regulations 2020. Written consent is required from the next of kin for changes to any burial plot, and it must be possible to establish from records beyond doubt that the plot relates to a specific individual. There are also statutory fees for the introduction of any monument.

## **3. ADVICE ON PLOTS**

### **3.1 WHO DOES THE PLOT BELONG TO?**

Although you pay a fee for the interment of your loved one's ashes on consecrated ground, this does not mean that the land in which the ashes are interred belongs to you. The fee paid is for consent to inter the ashes on the land belonging to the church, and that land remains the property of the church at all times. As such the land should not be decorated or used in any other way than that for which permission is granted.

### **3.2 WHO DOES THE MEMORIAL STONE BELONG TO?**

Any monument placed in the churchyard remains the property of the heirs of the deceased and you are responsible for its upkeep and maintenance. However, once a monument is placed in the church yard, legal permission is required to remove it.

### **3.3 CAN I RESERVE A PLOT OR USE A PLOT AGAIN?**

Once a plot is in use by your family it will not be used for anyone else's. This means that once a family has interred the ashes of one person, one more member of the family (or

three more in the pre-2015 ashes sections), may also be interred there. An application may be made to the Diocesan Chancellor to reserve a plot for future use (a process called a Faculty Application) – but it should be noted this is an expensive and time-consuming process, and consent is not guaranteed.

### **3.4 WHAT CAN I LEAVE ON THE PLOT/MEMORIAL WHEN I VISIT?**

Only fresh flowers may be left on a grave/memorial stone. Any other items left on graves (including anything planted around a plot) will, with due respect, be removed and disposed of. This is laid out in the Churchyard Regulations which you will sign to agree to when you apply for a memorial.

## **4. WHAT DO I DO NOW? – THE PROCEDURE**

If you wish to apply for your loved one's ashes to be interred in the churchyard, or to apply to introduce a new monument of any kind, you need to speak to the Priest-in-Charge who will provide you with a full copy of the Graveyard Regulations, and an application form for the memorial stone. Your Funeral Director or stone mason can help you with the form, but you must sign for yourself to confirm you understand these regulations and agree to abide by them. When the form is complete you should send it to the Priest-in-Charge for consideration (in the absence of a Priest-in-Charge these forms go to the Churchwardens). The form will include a precise sketch of the memorial stone and the lettering to be put on it. Permission is not guaranteed and **no work should be put in hand** until permission has been given.

NB: It should be noted that for new ashes burials permission will not be granted for any other kind of memorial other than the stone tablets which are detailed above.

## **Fees related to the Churchyard 2026**

**There are fees which are charged for placing a monument in the graveyard and for the interment of ashes.** *(Please note the advice on plots at 3.1 with regards to ownership of a plot).* **These will usually be organised for you by your funeral director or can be discussed directly with the Priest-in-Charge.**

Burial of Cremated Remains	£206
Monument (Memorial Stone Installation) Fee	£96
Additional Inscription on an Existing Monument	£39

These fees are valid from Jan-Dec 2026 and are divided between the Parish of St Stephen's and the Diocese of which our Parish is a part (Leeds). The Diocese of Leeds will invoice you (via your funeral director or stonemason or directly) for these fees at the appropriate time (after consent has been given). They support the ongoing practical administration of church land and buildings within legal requirements, as well as supporting staffing for our churches and enabling the life of the Church to continue and grow.

If you wish to discuss any of the information contained in this leaflet please contact the Priest-in-Charge, Revd. Abbie Palmer ([abbie.palmer@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:abbie.palmer@leeds.anglican.org), 07485 761687).

**Completed application forms should be sent to  
Revd. Abbie Palmer, St Stephen's Vicarage, 2 Lidget Street, Lindley, HD3 3JB.**