

St Oswalds Church Winwick

Graveyard Interment Policy

Last review July 2026

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the criteria and process for interment in the parish graveyard. It aims to ensure fairness, transparency, and responsible longterm management of burial space. Please be aware that we cannot sell or reserve plots in specific locations or adjacent to other graves. However, depending on the depth of the grave further burials and interment of ashes may be possible. Generally grave and ashes plots can accommodate 3 coffins/caskets. The PCC have duty to manage the churchyard capacity for the benefit of the members of the parish and future generations. Whilst the churchyard is a public space it is consecrated ground and as such must be maintained as a sacred space and respected by those that use it. We aim to manage the graveyard to benefit of all and to provide a quiet, peaceful and spiritual environment to support the bereaved family and friends of the deceased.

2. Eligibility for Interment

Interment in the parish graveyard is generally available to:

1. **Residents of the village/parish**

Individuals who are currently resident within the parish boundaries.

2. **Members on the Church Electoral Roll**

Those registered on the official church electoral roll.

3. **Individuals with Strong Family Connections to the Church**

Applications may be considered where a demonstrable and meaningful family connection to the church exists.

These requests are reviewed **case by case** by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in consultation with the Rector/Priest-in-Charge. However, some examples are below:

- Lived in the village for a significant period as a child or adult but moved away to a care home or different family home.
- Baptised or married in the church because of family connection.
- Attended the church or church school for a number of years.
- Close family buried in the church yard and the interment will be in the same plot.

All interment requests should be made via **written correspondence to the email address below**.

The **first point of contact** is stoswaldchurch4@gmail.com.

The incumbent or PCC will confirm whether the request meets the criteria.

Decisions are typically made promptly because the process does not require meetings.

Please also be aware that all Ashes to be interred in our graveyard must have received a Commendation by clergy prior to cremation because of the religious nature of our churchyard is consecrated. If that has not happened (as is the case for direct cremation services) then a Commendation will need to be performed on BOA and an appropriate fee charged.

4. Consideration of Requests

The PCC aims to be **sympathetic** to reasonable interment requests.

However, the PCC reserves the right to decline requests it deems inappropriate or outside policy.

5. Graveyard Capacity

Current estimates indicate space for approximately **800 additional fullsize graves**.

The remaining plots extend toward the **A49** and the full **car park**, and capacity may require review in future.

6. Fees

The PCC will charge fees to support the upkeep and administration of the graveyard. These may include:

6.1 Interment Fees

- Fees for burial or interment of ashes, the fees are set by the Diocese.
- Additional charges for the provision of a verger, a funeral bell (if requested), church maintenance/heating will be made.
- Fees for a new burial or interment of ashes and reopening of an existing grave are set by the gravedigger and should be paid directly to him.
- If an organist is required for a funeral prior to interment, we can make those arrangements but that is subject to an additional fee, otherwise we can play recorded music via the church sound system.

6.2 Memorial and Monument Fees

Approval of headstones, plaques, or other memorials by the Rector or PCC is required prior to installation.

- The fee for installation of monuments etc are set by the Diocese.

6.3 Administration Fees

Fees are charged for

- Copy of burial records or deeds if held by church.
- Processing of special requests (if applicable).

Note: A current fee schedule should be available on request.

7. Maintenance and Responsibilities

7.1 PCC Responsibilities

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the graveyard but not the memorials (see para 7.2). We welcome donations from families to support maintenance of the graveyard, which costs in the region of £4000 per year. Any donations are welcome. Our preferred method is via standing order to the church bank account Friends of St Oswald (sort code 01-02-46, account number 24117951), or via the Give a little QR code below. Suggested annual donation is £35.



Donations can also be made by cash or cheque made out to Friends of St Oswalds and placed in the church or church hall when open. The contractor we use for this carries insurance should any damage occur to graves whilst carrying out the work.

- General maintenance of common areas including pathways, boundaries, and shared spaces.
- Grass cutting and vegetation control carried out at intervals appropriate to the season.
- Monitoring graveyard capacity and ensuring safe, respectful operation.

7.2 Grave Holder Responsibilities

- Upkeep of individual graves and memorials (e.g., cleaning, floral tributes).
- Ensuring memorials comply with churchyard regulations.
- Reporting any safety concerns regarding headstones or ground conditions.
- Repair of memorials that are unstable or broken.

3. Safety and Inspections

The PCC are responsible for the safety of the graveyard and will conduct periodic memorial stability checks for public safety.

Unsafe memorials may be laid flat or supported temporarily until owners can be contacted. Responsibility to restore the memorials rests with the family of the deceased.

7.4 Environmental Considerations

Artificial flowers, ornaments, or nonbiodegradable items may be restricted to preserve the graveyard's appearance.

Planting trees, shrubs, or large plants generally requires PCC permission.

8. Memorial Regulations

To ensure the churchyard remains a safe, dignified, and wellmaintained space, the following regulations apply to all memorials:

8.1 General Requirements

- All memorials **must receive PCC approval** before installation.
- Memorials should be **in keeping with the character** of the churchyard and comply with Church of England churchyard regulations.
- Only **approved stonemasons** may install memorials.

8.2 Permitted Types of Memorials

- Headstones of modest size, made from natural stone or other materials approved by the PCC.
- Simple inscriptions that reflect Christian understanding of death and resurrection.
- Flat or slightly raised tablets for cremated remains, where applicable.

8.3 Prohibited Items

To maintain reverence and visual continuity, the following are generally **not permitted**:

- Kerbs, railings, edging, chippings, artificial grass, or boundary structures around graves.
- Large statues, photographs, or brightly coloured ornaments.
- Artificial flowers (except where seasonal circumstances make natural flowers impractical).
- Glass and other breakable items that can present a hazard to other graveyard users.
- Alcohol, Solar lights, windmills, balloons, or decorative accessories not in keeping with the churchyard environment.

8.4 Inscriptions

Wording should be respectful, appropriate, and theologically suitable.

Inscriptions must be submitted to the Rector or PCC for approval before work begins.

8.5 Maintenance of Memorials

The grave holder is responsible for maintaining their memorial in a safe condition.

Memorials found to be unsafe may be supported or laid flat temporarily for safety.

Significant repairs or replacements must be approved by the PCC.

8.6 Flowers and Tributes

Fresh flowers are encouraged and may be placed in simple, removable containers.

Wilted flowers may be removed by the PCC or maintenance volunteers.

Seasonal wreaths are allowed but should be removed once they deteriorate.

8.7 Planting Restrictions

Planting trees, shrubs, or perennial plants requires explicit PCC permission.

Only small, seasonal plants or cut flowers may be placed without prior approval.

8. Review of Policy

The PCC will review this policy annually and no later than December 2027 to ensure it reflects current needs, legal requirements, and available burial space.

9. Contact Information

All enquiries or concerns should be directed to:

Email: stoswaldchurch4@gmail.com

Please do not put requests or concerns on Facebook as these are not monitored.