

GRAVE MATTERS



WHO CAN BE BURIED IN A
CHURCHYARD?

CHOOSING AND PLACING A MEMORIAL

RESERVING A GRAVE SPACE

CARING FOR A GRAVE

NORTH
BELTISLOE
GROUP OF
PARISHES

Boothby Pagnell

Braceby

Ingoldsby

Lenton

Old Somerby

Ropsley

Sapperton

(Humby Chapel)

Introduction

Our churchyards are places of peace and tranquillity. They have offered the final resting place for our loved ones for many generations, and we can visit them for times of remembering, especially around special anniversaries or key festivals.

It is important that our churchyards remain available to their communities, but also that they are kept in a way that is in keeping with the beautiful mediaeval churches that they surround.

For this reason, there are certain regulations that govern who can be buried in a churchyard, how that takes place, and what style of memorial can be erected.

This booklet has been produced to help you to make decisions about grave spaces and memorials, and answer your questions. If you would like further information there is a list of contacts on the final page.

Who can be buried in a churchyard?

- 1 Those who are resident in one of the parishes which constitute the North Beltisloe Group of Parishes (Boothby Pagnell, Braceby, Ingoldsby, Lenton, Old Somerby, Ropsley and Sapperton) at the time of their death shall be entitled to be buried, or have their ashes interred, in the Churchyard of the parish in which they reside.

There are two exceptions to this:

Ropsley, where the churchyard is closed, and burials take place in the Cemetery, by arrangement with the Clerk to the Parish Council. The cemetery does not belong to the church and is not covered by this policy.

Ingoldsby, where the churchyard around the church has been closed, and burials take place in the churchyard extension on the Humby Road. This policy relates to that extension.

- 2 Those who are on the Church Electoral Roll of one of the churches in the Group of Parishes at the time of their death shall be entitled to be buried, or have their ashes interred, in the Churchyard of the parish in which they reside.
- 3 Those who have been resident in one of the parishes in the Group for more than two years within the last ten years shall be entitled to be buried, or have their ashes interred, in the Churchyard of the parish in which they reside.
- 4 Those who have immediate family (partner, parent, sibling or child) already buried or interred in one of the Churchyards shall be entitled to be buried, or have their ashes interred, in the same Churchyard.
- 5 All other burials and interments will be at the discretion of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the relevant parish.

The burial of cremated remains:

- 1 Cremated remains will be buried in convenient spaces according to the churchyard plan of each church.
- 2 All cremated remains are to be buried in a suitable container. In line with Diocesan regulations ashes cannot be scattered.

Exhumations:

Once a body or ashes have been buried, they may not be exhumed (dug up and removed from that position) without a legal exhumation order from the Home Secretary. To do so is illegal.

Choosing a Memorial:

Burials can be commemorated by a headstone. The rules which govern the size and type of stone can seem strict, compared with the rules for civil cemeteries. However, most churchyards surround ancient church buildings, and the headstones need to be appropriate for the church building. The following is a short resume of points from the Diocese of Lincoln Churchyard Regulations 2008 (amended 2012):

Headstones should measure between 2'6" (750mm) and 4'0" (1200mm) high; between 1'8" (500mm) and 3'0" (900mm) wide; and between 3" (75mm) and 6" (150mm thick).

Monuments should be made of natural stone (with no reflecting finish), teak, oak or cast or wrought iron. Traditional stones are normally used. Those recommended are sandstones and limestones like Forest of Dean, Hornton Blue, Ketton, Nabresina, Portland, York and Northumberland stones and Welsh Black and Westmoreland Green Slates. Neither black nor dark grey granite (including Rustenburg) are permitted, (except for honed black and dark grey granite, which are permitted), nor marble, synthetic stone or plastics.

Although the stone may not be polished nor finished in any way to give the effect of polished stone, the surface may be suitably prepared for inscription.

Inscriptions should be simple giving just the names of the deceased, the dates of birth and death, or the age and date of death alone. If desired, an appropriate epitaph may be added. Epitaphs must be simple, reverent and preferably of biblical, Prayer Book or Common Worship origin.

Figure statuary and photographic representations are not permitted by these regulations. Kerbs, chippings or other artificial grave coverings are not permitted by these regulations.

No monument should be ordered or work undertaken unless written permission has been given by the Incumbent (i.e. the parish priest).

A full copy of the Churchyard Regulations 2008 (amended 2012) is available, free of charge, on request, either from Stephen 07464 728545 / 01778 782779, revstephen@btinternet.com, or through the Diocese of Lincoln website (<https://www.lincoln.anglican.org>)

Stonemasons will give guidance about choosing a stone and the process of application for permission. They will know the best time to place the stone after the funeral, and will ensure that the stone is securely placed, in accordance with health and safety guidance.

There are fees for the burial of bodies and cremated remains; and the erection of a memorial. These fees changed annually, and can be found online on the Church of England website. Sometimes, people are misled into thinking that they are buying a burial plot at the time of the burial of a loved one. This is a misunderstanding. The fee covers the right of burial, or of placing a stone. The plot remains the property of the Parochial Church Council, and is subject to the regulations laid down by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Lincoln.

Applying for a headstone which does not meet the regulations:

Sometimes, families wish to have a headstone which does not fall within the regulations. In this case an application can be made to the Chancellor of the Diocese, for a Faculty - a legal document giving permission for the headstone. Because a legal process is involved, gaining a Faculty can be expensive, and there is no guarantee the Chancellor will be able to grant it. However, if you wish to consider this process, the parish priest or one of the churchwardens will help you to do so. (*See useful contacts, below*).

Reserving a grave space for yourself or other family members:

A process also exists for reserving a grave space in a churchyard in which you are entitled to be buried, either for yourself or for other close family members, in the future. Again, this requires a Faculty and the parish priest or one of the churchwardens will advise you, if you would like to find out more. (*See useful contacts, below*).

Faculties last for 25 years, and safeguard your legal right to be buried in the grave space for which you hold the Faculty.

Caring for a grave in a churchyard:

The final resting places of our loved ones are very special to many of us, and it is important that our churchyards are tidy and the graves well kept. The Diocesan regulations for graves and gravestones try to ensure that this is the case; and that the churchyard is in keeping with the mediaeval building it surrounds. It is a requirement that Parochial Church Councils ensure that these regulations are followed; and also that the churchyard is kept tidy and clean. While each PCC endeavours to keep the churchyard mown and cared for, it is helpful if families can tidy the area immediately around the graves of loved ones.

The Churchyard Regulations, with regard to the care of graves, state that:

No artificial flowers may be placed in a churchyard except Remembrance Day poppies, traditional Christmas wreaths and good quality silk flowers, and these shall be removed within three months.

Figure statuary and photographic representations are not permitted by these regulations.

Kerbs, chippings or other artificial grave coverings are not permitted by these regulations.

(This does not apply to those which were laid down before the 2008 regulations).

The surface of a churchyard should be kept level and where a grave mound has not been levelled within 12 months of burial, the PCC may give instructions for that to be done.

It is helpful that these regulations are observed, so that our churchyards can be attractive, welcoming, and appropriate to our beautiful parish churches.

Useful contacts:

Parishes:

<i>Boothby Pagnell</i>	<i>Emma Thomas</i>	01476 585553 ejt.thomas16@gmail.com
<i>Braceby</i>	<i>Tony Smith</i>	07725 750530 smatharm@hotmail.co.uk
<i>Ingoldsby</i>	<i>Diana Burrows</i>	07931 947012 / 01476 585513 diana_burrows@hotmail.co.uk
<i>Lenton</i>	<i>Tony Clayton</i>	01476 585711 tony@tonyclayton.org.uk
<i>Old Somerby</i>	<i>Len Watson</i>	01476 568439 dianeandlen@talktalk.net
<i>Ropsley</i>	<i>Helen Sloss</i>	01476 58543 helen.sloss@btopenworld.com
<i>Sapperton</i>	<i>Jonathan Tresh</i>	07970 700367 jontesh@me.com

A NOTE ABOUT HUMBY CHAPEL:

Humby Chapel is a privately-owned Chapel-of-Ease. Services take place there during the year, to which everyone is welcome. The chapel is not licensed for weddings. However, it may be available for baptisms, wedding blessings and funerals. The chapel is managed by a local committee, chaired by Colin McGarrigle, 01476 585909