THE PARISH CHURCH

OF ST LEONARD

DOWNHAM & TWISTON



Downham Churchyard

Information Leaflet

2026

The Vicar

Reverend Paul Sherwood

You and your family

We appreciate that you have suffered a bereavement and are probably experiencing a range of emotions right now. We hope that this information leaflet will make discussions with your Undertaker more straight forward. As you will see later in this leaflet we are really restricted by space in the grave yard, so will only be able to bury coffins and ashes here in exceptional circumstances. The holding of a Funeral or Memorial service is more straightforward and can be arranged with the Vicar and Undertaker.

Downham St Leonard Parochial Church Council Policy on Burials and Interment of Ashes

For some years now the churchyard has been closed apart from the reopening of family graves (where this is possible, that is to say where there is space in the grave) for the interment of family members only.

Space in the designated area for the interment of ashes is similarly constrained and therefore reserved for parishioners and those with close ties with the parish—for example people who have regularly worshipped here but who live in neighbouring parishes, or people whose parents or grandparents were long term residents and who have maintained close links following their departure from the parish. The Vicar and Wardens will need to approve any interment.

Funeral arrangements.

Once the formalities of Registering the Death of a loved one are complete, your chosen Undertaker will help you through the next steps in the process. In particular when and where you would like a service to take place. You will need to speak with the Vicar and Undertaker to discuss your wishes and organise the service.

St Leonard's can normally seat up to 100 people within the main body of the church. With the hire of additional chairs, a maximum of 150 people can squeeze in.

Please remember that parking is limited near St Leonard's. The steep hill can be an issue for those with mobility issues. Also, there are no toilets in the Church, although the Assheton Arms across the road are very accommodating.

Why rules and regulations?

Just as planning permission ensures that house alterations/ extensions are in keeping with the surroundings, in the same way churchyard regulations ensure that the grounds blend as attractively as possible with the neighbouring buildings, particularly the church. They also ensure that the churchyard is a place that everyone will find acceptable to them. The use of the right material for the memorial stones, for example, allows these monuments to tone in appropriately with the backdrop of the church.

First things first

This may seem harsh, but it needs saying. Paying for a burial or interment does not allow the owner to erect a headstone, or make any permanent additions, such as flower receptacles or inscriptions, without the written permission of the Church Wardens on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Stonemasons know that this consent must be given before any work can proceed. The church is bound by national regulations in what the PCC may authorise.

Permitted materials

Materials must harmonise with the natural local landscape, and only local stone is allowed. Limestone, or sandstone, are permitted. More detailed information is available about these types of stones.

Use of Wood

As a general rule, only a simple wooden cross (not more than 36 inches (92cm) high, may be applied for.

Materials which are <u>not</u> permitted

Black, dark grey, blue or red granites, any marble, synthetic stone, plastic materials, metal and terra-cotta must not be used. If there is in any doubt about the colour or suitability of any stone, the Wardens will ask for a sample.

Other details

Polishing must not be greater than what is required to give a good, smooth finish, and must be confined to the face of the gravestone, where the inscription is cut. The finish of this face must be non-reflective.

There are regulations governing the dimensions of headstones, and also at Downham these <u>must lie flat</u> to assist with graveyard maintenance and safety. Stones to mark interred ashes must lie flat, these must be "Yorkshire" stone and restricted to 12 x 12 inches in size using an agreed font.

Please avoid these

These features are not allowed: curbs, chippings, free-standing containers, open books, bird baths, pictorial etchings, memorials in unusual shapes (such as a harp or a heart), cameos, portraiture, photographs or coloured designs.

Flowers

Flower arrangements are allowed and where flowers need to be in a vase it must be plastic or metal (glass containers being a major hazard) and be buried flush with the ground. Artificial flowers (silk or plastic) are not allowed, except for Remembrance poppies and Christmas wreaths, which should be removed after four weeks.

Inscriptions

These must be authorised by the Wardens. The reason for this is that words which form a permanent, indelible epitaph need to be carefully thought out. Words which are more suited to the comparative informality of a family's own records may be less than the best when engraved on a tombstone. Based on experience and professional expertise, the church rules give guidelines for the best words to use in remembering loved ones on a public memorial. To give one small example, "25th May 2020" is preferable to 25/5/20.

Cremated remains

Cremated remains may be interred in an existing grave, or in the plot mentioned on page 2, above. Churchyard rules say that it is preferable to commit cremated remains directly into the earth. This symbolises that our present bodies are committed "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Where this practice is not followed, the rules say that any container used should be of a perishable material and without a plastic liner. Not wishing to exclude any persons who have requested it, the PCC will permit the scattering of ashes in the churchyard together with an entry in the Book of Remembrance.

FEES

The following costs should be borne in mind:

Grave digging – estimates given on application	£poa
Digging for Internment of Ashes	£poa
Burial or Interment Graveside Service	£poa
Funeral Service	£poa
Verger (Mandatory at a Funeral Service)	£80
Heating (Optional, but strongly recommended for all but a Mid-summer funeral)	£70
Organist (Optional)	£130
Choir (Optional)	£75
Bells (Optional	£200

Churchyard safety

Headstones are a potential hazard. Fatalities have occurred in churchyards. This is one reason why, at Downham, we insist on the lie-flat memorial stones.

The family is responsible for the upkeep of their grave and any headstone, having particular regard to health and safety. The PCC is also responsible and indeed is legally accountable if an injury occurs as a result of its negligence. The PCC reserves the right to charge for repair work that has to be undertaken or for the costs of the removal of an unauthorised or ill-maintained stone.

Reminder - before proceeding

It is essential that permission is granted by the Church Wardens before any monument is erected, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. Please use the attached form (shown on pages 10 and 11) for this purpose.

And finally

Please do not think that in giving these rules, the Church is trying to make things difficult. In fact, it is quite the opposite. The Church wants to give the best service to the families who use its churchyards, recognising the sensitivities involved. But it can only give the best by laying down well-thought-out guidelines which everyone follows. This enables churches and communities to take pride in their churchyards, as they leave families to cherish that piece of ground in which their loved ones rest in peace. These rules are not peculiar to Downham. They are the regulations of the Blackburn Diocese, based on nationally agreed rules of the Church of England, made with environmental considerations in mind, to ensure good practice throughout the country's many churchyards.

Maintaining the link with St Leonard's Downham

Please contact the Vicar or another member of St Leonard's PCC if you feel we can be of any help to you. It goes without saying that you are always welcome at any of our Sunday services - regular Sunday worship being at 11.15am. A list for Altar Flowers is displayed at the back of the church, and you may, if desired, add your name to this to provide flowers on an anniversary or at any time.

Book of Remembrance

There is a Book of Remembrance in church containing the names of people buried, or ashes interred in the churchyard. This book always displayed at the back of the church with names professionally inscribed. The cost is currently £30 per entry.

Words of hope

Whether or not you have a firm Christian faith, you may find it helpful to read some of the promises of eternal life given in the Bible - promises that, through Christ, life does not end when we die but that his death and resurrection opens the door to a new and far more glorious life than ever we can experience on earth.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Jesus said, "I will never turn away anyone who comes to me." John 5:37 For I am certain that nothing can separate us from Christ's love: neither death nor life neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below - there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8: 38 and 39

What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete - as complete as God's knowledge of me. Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13: 12 and 13

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.....God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared. Revelation 21: 1 and 4

THESE and many other verses from the Bible, written with the authority of God himself, assure us that death, though real and involving a painful parting, is the prelude to something far greater

Some Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, you comforted your disciples when you were going to die: now set our troubled hearts at rest and banish our fears. You are the way to the Father: help us to follow you. You are the truth: bring us to know you. You are the life: give us that life, to live with you now and for ever. Amen.

O God, who brought us to birth, and in whose arms we die, in our grief and shock contain and comfort us; embrace us with your love, give us hope in our confusion and grace to let go into new life; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grant us, Lord, the wisdom and the grace to use aright the time that is left to us on earth. Lead us to repent of our sins, the evil we have done and the good we have not done; and strengthen us to follow the steps of your Son in the way that leads to the fullness of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Application to erect a memorial at Downham Church

(Cut out this page and send to the Wardens—Address on Page 13)

Name of person who has died:

.....

Date of Death: .....

Name of person applying for a Monument or inscription

.....

Address .....

.....

Telephone No: .....

E-mail address .....

Monument for (tick one)

Grave.....

Interment of ashes.....

Material of stone requested (<u>Must lie flat to ground</u>)

.....

Size of stone:

Grave:.....

Interment of Ashes.....12 x 12 inches

Polishing to be applied (if any) (to front of gravestone only)

.....

Wording of inscription (and font and size)

.....

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Monumental Mason being employed

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.....

Application for an entry in the Book of Remembrance

Full name to be entered: .....

Date of Death: .....

Note a Fee of £30 is to be paid to the Treasurer to cover the cost of Calligraphy

Signature of applicant: .....

Date: .....

Countersigned by the Church Warden

.....

Date.....

General information

The Vicar, to whom initial enquiries about funerals, burials and Interments should be made – Reverend Paul Sherwood,

The Church Office, Church Street, Clitheroe, BB7 2DD,

Tel. 07534 796838

e-mail: Vicar0fClitheroe@Yahoo.com

Church Warden to whom application for memorials should be made

Lord Clitheore - tel. 07817 634392

rca.thelidgett@btinternet.com

General enquiries about the parish church may be made to the

Hon Secretary of the PCC - Mr P Naylor, OBE JP

philip_m_naylor@msn.com

07906 570650

Website: downhamvillage.org.uk

