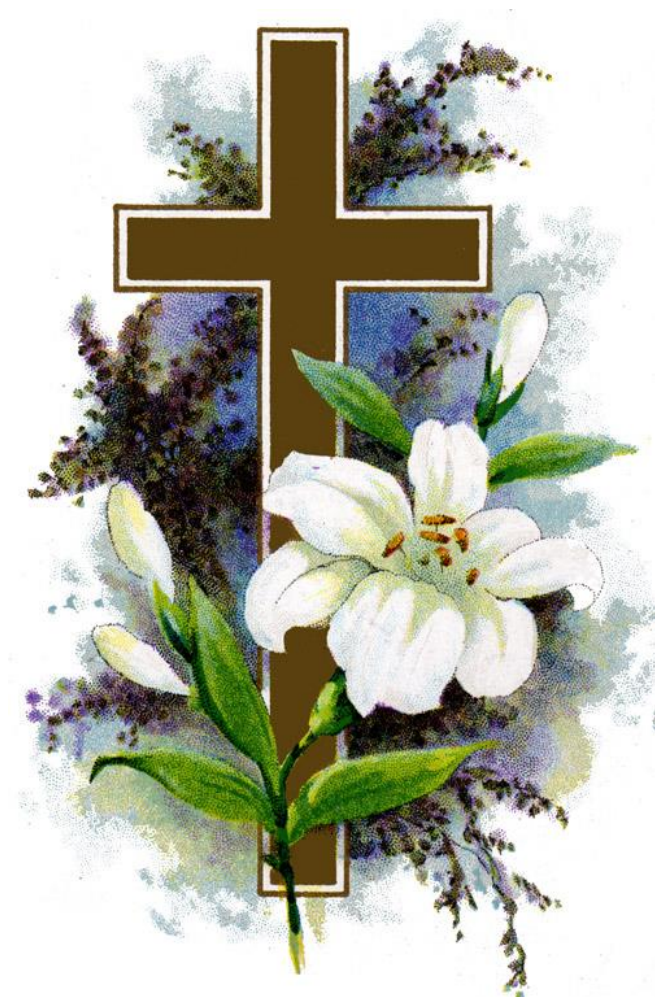


The Saxon Shoreline Benefice



CHURCHYARD GUIDE

Introduction

Our churches have stood on the edge of the marsh and the sea for many centuries and are significant buildings to many people in many ways. The churchyards are equal places of historical significance, antiquity and great beauty and have been much loved by generations of people. The site itself is a significant landmark of the community, though the landscape around it has been much changed in recent years. The churchyard is also a place of history with its many ancient monuments which speak to us of times past. It is a place of peace and quiet which is held dear to our community because the remains of many loved ones have been laid to rest here. Our prime concern is that the churchyard should be a beautiful, well-kept and dignified resting place. – and we welcome you!

Burials

Any person who is resident within the parish boundaries of a parish in the benefice and/or whose name is on the church Electoral Roll has a right of burial in that parish churchyard, as can any non-resident whose death takes place within the parish boundaries. Requests beyond these are at the sole discretion of the Rector in consultation with the PCC. Please note, grave spaces are not purchased, and grave papers are not issued.

The Law

Many people are surprised to discover that what goes on in our churchyard is controlled by Ecclesiastical (Church) Law – which has the **same force as the civil law. The rules are not manufactured by each** parish or Rector but by the Commissary for the Diocese of Canterbury. In general, ***nothing may be placed on a grave without permission.*** We are sure that you will understand that the purpose of the regulations are to preserve the tone of our places, the wishes of the majority and curb the misunderstandings of the few.

The Rector should always be consulted first in relation to churchyard matters, especially by those new to the churchyard.

Graves

Unlike in municipal cemeteries, you do not buy the grave or its plot but rather receive permission to bury your loved one. The grave itself remains in Church of England ownership, administered by the Parochial Church Council. The family will, however, have some responsibilities.

Fees

A standard fee is payable to the Diocesan Board of Finance and Parochial Church Council when a memorial is introduced into the churchyard and/or when an additional inscription is made. Details of those fees are displayed and are freely available to the stone masons and funeral directors. These fees are set nationally by the Church Commissioners under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986, and increased on the 1st January each year to take account of inflation and church costs. We charge nothing in addition.

The grave and its maintenance

For a few weeks after a burial it is normal for the soil level to settle. It is a requirement that ***all graves are to be grassed over***. This is to preserve the general conformity of the churchyards and ease of maintenance.

We are glad that so many people regularly tend family graves as this enhances the appearance of the churchyard and reduces general maintenance work. However, please note that **grave spaces must not be demarcated by the use of any shrubs, roses, perennial plants, small trees, kerbing borders, railings, bricks or chippings, stones or glass**. This is to allow for grass cutting and to comply with the Commissary General's Churchyard Regulations.

The churchyards are maintained by volunteers as well as paid contractors in some cases, without whom we could not manage in the way that we do.

Memorial stones

It is recommended that a period of 6 months be allowed before erection of any new memorial. Fashions come and go but headstones are with us for many generations. Examples of permitted materials are: unpolished Portland, Purbeck, York or Nabrasina stones, Celtic Limestone, slate, honed pale grey granite, oak or teak (if a cross). Other forms of unpolished natural stone may be permitted at the discretion of the Minister. These stones should not be finished beyond a good smooth or 'honed' finish. Your stone mason and Rector will advise on the permitted materials.

The Rector can only give permission for memorials that comply with the Commissary General's regulations. Any other proposed memorial can only be permitted by a 'faculty' granted by the Commissary General. This can be a complicated and more costly procedure. Do please discuss this with the Rector if you think this might affect you. **It is emphasised that permission to erect a memorial must be obtained before entering into a written contract with a monumental mason. Likewise for the removal of any headstone, temporary or otherwise.**

Inscriptions

These should be simple and may include suitable literary quotations. Inscriptions should be incised or in relief. Plastic or other inserted lettering is not permitted, neither are photographs. Inscriptions must be approved by the Rector when the monumental mason makes written application to introduce the memorial. Additions may be made to an inscription at a later date following a subsequent interment in the same grave. However, this must be separately approved. The lettering, layout and wording must be consistent with the original inscription.

Safety

Our insurers advise us that under the terms of the church policy, **families** are responsible for ensuring the future safety of memorial stones. If no family exists or can be contacted, the PCC will assume responsibility for ensuring that monuments are safe, **though unsafe memorials will have to be laid down**. We must also advise that **glass or ceramic vases or receptacles are not permitted on graves** and any in evidence **will need to be removed**. In all these matters we have to comply with Health and Safety legislation. Headstones will be checked periodically and will be laid down if not safe.

The anchorage of all memorials must be in accordance with the best practices of the industry and the National Association of Monumental Masons' Code of Working Practice (in particular with BS8415.) In most case, a well fixed and anchored headstone will last for many years without problems.

Flowers

We are sure that you will want to place flowers on the grave straight away. Please use the containers in the headstone base, and order as many as you think you will need. One to three is ideal. Additional pots and blocks are not permitted. As mentioned previously, no planting is allowed on a grave, other than bulbs (which can be mowed over and reappear on a following season), which we encourage. Glass and ceramic vases must not be used, as they break and constitute a risk of danger. The use of artificial (silk or plastic) flowers is not encouraged, except for Remembrance Poppies and Christmas wreaths (all of which should be removed within two months.)

Rubbish

All dead flowers and wreaths should be removed from graves and taken away. This is a big help.

Dogs

Due to persistent fouling of the grave spaces and headstones in the past, the Parochial Church Councils have agreed that dogs are not allowed for exercising in the churchyard but may be kept with you on a leash. You may be asked to remove your dog if it/they are running around on other graves wilfully, which shows little respect for others. Please be keenly aware of the presence of sheep in some of our churchyards.

General

We quite understand that your main concern is the grave of your loved one, but the condition of the rest of the churchyard is equally important. **For this reason we cannot allow the placing of the following on any grave:**

- **statues, figurines, scarecrows, snowmen, Christmas decorations, dolls, angels, gnomes, animals, wind-chimes, bird baths, windmills, balloons, units of alcohol or lights of any kind.**

This is a churchyard consecrated to the purpose of Christian faith and values. Please do not be persuaded that what is permitted in other burial places or what is sold in garden centres and florists are necessarily permitted here: municipal and private burial places are governed by different rules. **If removing such items causes offence, please consider this before placing them there.**

We are particularly grateful to those volunteers who carry out many maintenance jobs throughout the churchyard. If you feel that you would like to help them, please ask the Rector or Churchwardens.

We hope that when you visit the churchyard you will feel a concern for every part of it. This leaflet is intended as a general guide and cannot cater for every possible eventuality. We wish to emphasise the need to consult the Rector or Churchwardens if there is anything about

which you are unsure or for which you need clarification, which always clears up misunderstanding or misplaced expectations.

We are happy to circulate the Commissary General's directions, which can be found on the web pages of the Diocese of Canterbury.

For further information contact:
The Rev'd Graham Halsall - Rector
01233 329072 & 07757 511204



WHO ARE WE?

The churches of the Saxon Shoreline Benefice provide a fascinating variety of worship styles and opportunities. The benefice consists of the parishes and churches of:

Aldington St Martin	Bilsington Ss Peter & Paul
Bonnington St Rumwold	Hamstreet Church of the Good Shepherd
Kenardington St Mary	Orlestone St Mary with Snaveston St Augustine
Rucking St Mary Magdalene	Warehorne St Matthew

Our people are committed and welcoming, and our places are fascinating. Some of them are open every day (check our notices and social media.)

See the times of regular weekly services in the month, and there are some weekday services also. We hold Bible Studies and house groups and have many fun fund-raising ventures and events and join in with community events. You can find out more about our life and work in the Parish Magazine (available from church.)

Saxon Shoreline Benefice – Regular Sunday Services

Aldington St Martin	Holy Communion	(1 st Sunday)	10.45 am	
	All Age Worship	(2 nd Sunday)	10.45 am	
	Holy Communion	(3 rd Sunday)	10.45 am	
	Morning Worship	(4 th Sunday)	10.45 am	
Bilsington Ss Peter & Paul	Holy Communion	(2 nd Sunday)	9.00 am	
	Holy Communion	(4 th Sunday)	9.30 am	
Bonnington St Rumwold	Holy Communion	(1 st Sunday)	9.00 am	
	Holy Communion	(3 rd Sunday)	9.00 am	
Hamstreet - Church of the Good Shepherd	Holy Communion	(1 st Sunday)	10.30 am	
	<i>Methodist Led Service</i>			
	Morning Worship	(2 nd Sunday)	10.30 am	
	<i>Anglican Led Service</i>			
	Holy Communion	(3 rd Sunday)	10.30 am	
	<i>Anglican Led Service</i>			
	Morning Worship	(4 th Sunday)	10.30 am	
	<i>Methodist Led Service</i>			
	Kenardington St Mary	Holy Communion or	(1 st Sunday)	10.30 am
		Morning Worship		
Orlestone St Mary	Holy Communion	(2 nd Sunday)	9.00 am	
Ruckinge St Mary Magdalene	Morning Worship	(1 st Sunday)	10.30 am	
	Parish Communion	(2 nd Sunday)	10.30 am	
	Matins	(3 rd Sunday)	10.30 am	
	Holy Communion	(4 th Sunday)	8.30 am	
Warehorne St Matthew	Holy Communion	(1 st Sunday)	9.00 am	
	All Age Worship	(2 nd Sunday)	10.30 am	
	Holy Communion	(3 rd Sunday)	9.00 am	
	Evensong	(4 th Sunday)	6.30 pm	

Some of our Churches are also open during the day