**Introduction by the Rector**

Welcome to this introduction to St Mary's Churchyard. We hope that this booklet will help you. It is a guide to the Churchyard Regulations which will help you to make the necessary decisions regarding the final resting place of your loved one. We realise that this is a difficult and emotional time. The Clergy and the Parish Administrator (based in the Church Office) are here to help and assist you. In addition to helping you to plan a funeral or memorial service, our commitment to sensitive pastoral care extends to helping you in choosing and maintaining an appropriate memorial for your loved one. We are also here to lend a listening ear, to pray with you at your request, and to help minimise any difficulties.

Please note that each year, around the start of November, we observe the ancient festival of All Souls’ Day with a service in St Mary's when we remember by name all our departed loved ones, lighting a candle in their memory. This service will be on the Sunday evening nearest to November 2nd. You and your family are warmly invited. Many people find this service very helpful in their journey through grief. Also, because we understand that you may find the Christmas Season especially difficult, we have an alternative carol service, called The Reflective Carol service, which is a bit quieter and gently holds mixed emotions; this is usually on a Saturday afternoon close to Christmas Day.

Finally, please note that these Regulations are intended to be for ‘the common good’, to preserve our beautiful church and churchyard as a peaceful and natural space where families can come to remember those they still love, but see no longer, and find some comfort in its quietness and tranquillity. Regulations are always best when applied fairly and equally, and self-regulation is always preferable to enforcement. In requesting either burial or the interment of ashes within an existing grave in St Mary's churchyard, families are agreeing to abide by these rules and regulations.

Thank you.

**Simple Guide to these Regulations**

**General:-**

* Most churchyard decisions are the responsibility of the Rector, who can be contacted on 01483 234616, or e-mail [rector@worplesdonparish.com](mailto:rector@worplesdonparish.com)
* Copies of this booklet and general advice and assistance can also be obtained from the Church Office, available on 01483 233091 or at [churchoffice@worplesdonparish.com](mailto:churchoffice@worplesdonparish.com)
* Both burials in a grave and the interment of ashes into an existing grave are restricted to parishioners, those who have been members of the congregation of either St Mary's or St Alban's, and those who have a family member already buried here.
* Throughout this booklet and in the Regulations ‘ashes’ refers to cremated remains which are to be interred into an existing family grave. For interments in our Garden of Remembrance, please see the booklet specific to the Garden.
* Most decisions can be made quite quickly by the Rector. More unusual requests may have to be decided by what is called a ‘faculty’. This is a special permission which has to be obtained from a senior officer of the Church of England, and entails some additional delay and additional fees. Please note that the Rector is not authorised to permit requests that fall outside these Regulations.
* The churchyard is extensive, and both difficult and expensive to maintain. Every effort is made to make this maintenance easier for both volunteers and contractors. Anything you can do to keep the churchyard tidy - especially the removal of your own rubbish and dead flowers - would be very welcome. New volunteers are always welcome!
* It is possible to donate money towards the upkeep of the churchyard and receive a guarantee from the Treasurer that it will only be used for this purpose. Please write to

[treasurer@worplesdonparish.com](mailto:treasurer@worplesdonparish.com)

**Burials in a grave:-**

* The area available for new burials is towards the back of the churchyard, on the right as you go down the hill towards the common. New burials will now be in this area.
* Graves can usually be dug to ‘double depth’ which would allow a second burial of a close family member in the same grave. Ashes can usually be interred in an existing family grave space at the Rector’s discretion. The Regulations specify how these additional burials or interments may be marked (see paragraph 4.2 of Appendix A).
* All headstones and other memorials, including inscriptions, have to be applied for on the correct form (CR1). Your first port of call will usually be your Funeral Director, or an independent stonemason. There are clear restrictions on the shape and design, size, choice of material, finish, as well as the content of any inscription. (See Regulation 3.1 and 3.2 as well as all three Appendices – depending on the type of memorial you are considering.)
* The regulations are quite strict on what can be added to a grave space, and in order to avoid upset it is best to ask beforehand. The Rector and the PCC may always remove items which have been added in breach of the Regulations. (See Regulations 3.2 and 3.3, as well as material in the Appendices.) If we remove non-perishable items, we will try to keep them for six months before disposing of them. If we have removed anything, please feel free to ask so that you can take it away. Please note, though, that items sometimes go missing – it is not always that they have been removed by church officers.

Flowers, both natural and good quality artificial, can be left, but will deteriorate and may be removed. We do understand that appropriate seasonal items (such as Christmas wreaths) may be left, but these will be removed at the end of the season.)

**Interment of Ashes:-**

* Unlike burials, which happen on the day of the funeral, the interment of ashes may happen weeks or even months after the service at the crematorium. It is often a much quieter and smaller gathering, which takes place at the grave into which the ashes are to be interred. (We are not allowed to scatter ashes over the surface of the ground under any circumstances.)
* It is now possible to add a stone plaque, bearing an inscription, to the grave into which ashes are interred, if this is preferred to adding an inscription to any existing headstone. An application for such a plaque must be on form CR1, and there are regulations about size, material and inscription. A fee will be payable. (See Appendix B, 3.1)
* No plantings, other than seasonal bulbs and small plants are allowed anywhere in the Churchyard or on graves, and any roses, bushes, flowers, or shrubs will be removed. No non-perishable items may be left on a grave or in the Churchyard (other than very good quality artificial flowers), and fencing, stones, vases and potted plants will be removed.

**Book of Remembrance**

* In St Mary’s Church you will find our Book of Remembrance (which is ahead of you on the right hand side as you enter the church). It should always be open at the current date, but feel free to open the glass case and turn the pages to find your loved one’s name, and then return it to the current date when you leave.
* Names can be added to the Book of Remembrance, and they will be inserted on the date that your loved one died. There is a fee payable for this to cover the cost of calligraphy. Forms (both paper-based and sent electronically) are available on request from the Church Office.
* There is also a Book of Remembrance at St Alban’s Church (in the Narthex). This is most appropriate where the main connection is to Wood Street Village.

**Regulations for Churchyard**

**of**

**St Mary's, Worplesdon**

**1 Introduction**

This extract from the Churchyard Regulations 2005 (as amended) gives guidance on the procedure for burials within St Mary's Churchyard.

Our churchyard is a place of great beauty and historical value. It is located next to the historic church of St Mary's (grade 1 listed) and on the edge of the Worplesdon Commons. The Regulations are designed to maintain and enhance this environment with a minimum of bureaucracy. There are also practical reasons for some of the rules to allow for ease of maintenance. The family of the deceased bear the cost of providing any Memorials, and maintaining them. All Memorials and changes to Memorials need to be applied for on form CR1, which should be available from your stonemason, your Funeral Director, or from the Church Office.

**2 Burials**

Parishioners, those on the Church Electoral Role (church members) and those who have a family member buried in the Churchyard have a right to burial in the Churchyard if there is still space available. Permission for burials must always be given by the Rector or his/her representative. Burials take place in the next available space, unless they involve the re-opening of a grave previously prepared as a double grave.

**3 Memorials**

3.1 The Rector has discretion to authorise the erection of any headstone which falls within the types and classes authorised in Appendix A. The Rector may refuse to permit the erection of an authorised headstone if it is believed it would be detrimental to the churchyard. However the Rector has no discretion to allow the erection of a headstone that falls outside those authorised.

3.2 If individuals wish to erect a Memorial which falls within the Rector's discretion, they should apply on form CR1 (available from the stonemason, your Funeral Director or the Church Office). Permission is always required and no work should be ordered or put in hand until permission has been granted. If individuals wish to erect a Memorial which falls outside the Rector's discretion, they may apply for a Faculty giving the grounds for their request. The Rector will advise them how to approach the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) before seeking a Faculty.

Once permission has been granted, no additional Memorial items, including plaques or statues may be added without further permission being sought and granted in writing (also form CR1). Similarly no fences, edgings or other boundaries may be introduced, or any form of chippings placed on the grave. The PCC reserves the right to remove any such additions.

3.3 Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of a grave being within the area previously excavated. Wreaths or cut flowers may be laid directly on any grave but will be removed when in poor condition.

Artificial flowers of good quality may be placed on a grave, but both natural and artificial flowers will deteriorate after periods of time. The PCC may at their discretion remove flowers of whatever kind and wreaths if they judge them to be unsightly, and all artificial flowers after two months.

*As the churchyard has no facilities for the disposal of rubbish, visitors to graves are asked to take home any rubbish from tending graves.*

3.4 A Memorial **"Book of Remembrance"** is kept at both St Mary's and St Alban’s Churches in which entries may be made, subject to the approval of the Rector, by a calligrapher approved by the Rector. A form to request an entry in the Book of Remembrance at either or both churches is available from either the Rector or the Church Office. A small fee is charged for each entry. Entries may be requested for both burials and interment of Ashes.

**5 Fees**

Current details of these can be obtained from the Church Office (01483 233091).

**6 Approval**

This extract from Diocesan Churchyard Regulations (as amended) has been approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese and came into force on the 1 July 2005, and was amended by Faculty granted by the Chancellor on 5th July 2013.

**Appendix A:**

**Regulations for**

**Memorials in the Churchyard**

**of St Mary's, Worplesdon**

St Mary's Church has been a centre of Christian Worship for over 1000 years. The design of Memorials needs to be sensitive to this setting next to a Grade 1 listed building, and the rural environment on the edge of the Worplesdon Commons.

An appropriate variety of designs is encouraged in choosing Memorials. A suitable choice can often be made from the range of Memorials offered by some stonemasons, and your Funeral Director can advise on a suitable firm.

Permission must be sought (on form CR1) before introducing any Memorial into St Mary's Churchyard in order to ensure quality and suitability of materials and design. Usually this may be authorised by the Rector, but Memorials which are outside the range of simple designs commonly found in churchyards, whilst not necessarily discouraged, must be authorised by Faculty.

The Rector may authorise the erection of Memorials which comply with the following provisions, provided the inscription is also acceptable. Application must be made via Form CR1, which is available from the stonemason, the Funeral Director, or the Church Office.

**1 Materials**

1.1 Memorials must be of weathering natural stone slate, or hardwood, so that they harmonise with the surroundings. Stones traditionally used in local buildings or closely similar to them in colour and texture are preferred. The stone (including the lettering surface) shall not be finished with a polished or reflecting surface. It may not be black, dark grey or red, and no Memorials or vases shall be of synthetic stone or plastic.

1.2 There is usually a delay of about a year before a Memorial can be added to a new grave, to allow the disturbed earth to settle. It is possible to mark the grave with a simple wooden cross (with a brief inscription) in the meantime. This cross would then be removed when the permanent Memorial is introduced.

**2 Design**

2.1 Memorials may comprise a simple headstone, cross, stone or vase.

- A headstone may have maximum dimensions of 1200 mm high above ground level, 900 mm wide, 150 mm thick (4ft x 3ft x 6ins).

- A cross may have a maximum height of 1500 mm above ground level, 900 mm wide, and 150 mm thick (5ft x 3ft x 6ins). The permitted design requires the cross to be made from a single piece of stone whose width in the earth is at least equal to the width of the cross.

- A stone vase or urn may have maximum dimensions of 300 mm in height by 200 mm x 200 mm (12ins x 8ins x 8ins).

2.2 Memorials should not be smaller than 350 mm high, 500 mm wide and 50 mm thick (14ins x 20ins x 2ins), although this may be waived in the case of a Memorial for a child.

2.3 All headstones and crosses must be securely fixed in the ground and due regard must be paid to the nature of the ground and the risk of settlement. Masons/Funeral Directors are strongly encouraged to have regard to the Guidelines issued by the Association of Burial Authorities. The PCC may decide to lay flat any Memorial which, in its opinion, is unsafe.

2.4 A headstone or cross may stand on a base provided that it is an integral part of the design and firmly fixed to it with nonferrous dowels. The base may project no more than 100 mm (4ins) beyond the headstone in any direction, except where a receptacle for flowers is provided, in which case this must be flush with the top of the base and may extend up to 200 mm (8ins) in front of the headstone. The base must be securely fixed on a foundation slab which is flush with or below the ground so that a mower may pass freely over it. The foundation stone must extend from 75 mm (3ins) to 150 mm (6ins) all around the base.

**3 Exclusions**

3.1 There are many practical reasons (e.g. maintenance, appearance) why horizontal ledges, raised kerbs, railings, and stone or other chippings are no longer normally permitted as part of Memorials. Similarly, Memorials in the shape of a statue or bird bath, or including any image of the deceased or any photographs or coloured drawings are specifically excluded from the delegated authority given to the Rector.

3.2 Similarly no fences, edgings or other boundaries may be introduced around a grave as they are both a trip hazard and interfere with maintenance. The PCC reserves the right to remove any such items.

3.3 Where there is a request for a memorial which is designed to replicate a memorial which has already been installed (with or without authorisation of a faculty) where the deceased is a close family member (defined as spouse, sibling or child) and the new internment is adjacent to the existing one, the incumbent has the authority to grant the request provided that:

* 1. The surface of the memorial is flush with the ground
  2. The materials and design conform to the Churchyard Regulations as stated in Appendix A, clauses 1 & 2.

*This last clause 3.3, applies only to that area of the churchyard north of the public footpath excluding the garden of Remembrance and was given approval by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Guildford on the 21st July 2016.*

**4 Ashes interred in existing graves**

4.1 Where Ashes have been interred in an existing grave any inscription should be added to an existing headstone wherever possible. If there is insufficient space, an additional stone or plaque not exceeding 300 mm (1ft) square may, with the consent of the Rector, be laid flush with the turf in front of the existing Memorial. The stone should match the existing Memorial. Any other Memorial will require a Faculty. A fee is payable for an additional inscription or stone.

**5 Inscriptions**

5.1 Inscriptions must be simple and reverent and appropriate to a churchyard. The Christian and surnames of the deceased should be given, with the dates of birth and death (or age and date of death). Relations named should normally be limited to parents, children and spouse or partner. Quotations compatible with the Christian faith are permitted. The terms of any epitaph must be agreed by the Rector as part of the necessary permission.

5.2 Lettering should normally be incised and maybe leaded, but plastic or other inserted lettering is not permitted. Incised lettering may also be painted in black or white, as appropriate for the colour of stone. It should be noted that paint may become illegible in a relatively short period, and may require repainting.

5.3 No advertisement or trademark shall be inscribed on any Memorial, but the name of the Mason may be inscribed low down on the side or reverse of the stone in hand-painted and unleaded letters no larger than 13 mm (1/2 inch) in height

**Thank you for reading these regulations and complying with them. They are intended to be for the “common good” – to be of equal benefit to everybody. If in doubt, please ask!**

**We value you, and we are here to help. If you would like prayer or support, please ask.**

**God bless you.**