



Parish of Limpsfield and Titsey: Churchyard regulations

This ancient churchyard has been a focal point for the village for many centuries. It is important to maintain it with care. The PCC has agreed the following regulations to ensure that the churchyard meets the needs of today, and remains a beautiful and peaceful place. Limpsfield Churchyard has one of the finest settings in this neighbourhood, and is visited by many people; relatives visiting graves, pilgrims visiting the church or graves (especially the musicians' graves), and others seeking out a place of beauty and peace. The responsibility for its care and maintenance falls on the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the cost is met almost entirely from the gifts of those who love the churchyard and worship at St. Peter's. The maintenance of churchyards is governed by regulations which PCCs have little or no power to alter; some are laid down by law, others are made by the Diocese, which for St Peter's is Southwark. Many of these regulations relate to graves and memorials. It will avoid misunderstandings if it is appreciated that when a burial has taken place in any churchyard, the relatives do not acquire ownership of the grave or the right to erect any headstone or memorial, or to plant the surface - except in accordance with the current regulations.

If these regulations sound fussy and bureaucratic, then we trust that those who have an interest in the churchyard will accept that these legal requirements are intended to safeguard its character and beauty for all to enjoy. A significant factor is the need to ensure that the safety and efficiency of maintenance of the churchyard are assured in the long term, including when relatives may have ceased to be able to maintain the grave.

The PCC is aware of how much the upkeep of the Churchyard owes to many friends and relatives who give their time and energies. The PCC is grateful for this and would not wish the publication of these regulations, necessary as they may be, to discourage anyone from contributing to the upkeep of the Churchyard.

ALL REQUESTS FOR HEADSTONES, PLAQUES, MEMORIALS, INSCRIPTIONS AND DECORATIONS MUST BE AUTHORISED IN ADVANCE BY THE RECTOR BEFORE THE ORDER FOR THEM IS GIVEN, AND MUST IN EVERY CASE CONFORM TO THE REGULATIONS THAT FOLLOW.

Burial spaces

This is an ancient churchyard, and it is likely that burials have taken place in the whole of the churchyard although there are not always visible memorials or records. As specifically stated in the policy of the Diocese of Southwark, grave space can be re-used after 75 years has elapsed since the most recent burial.

However, there will be no need to remove headstones in the churchyard for many years to come as there is still open space.

We believe after the recent working party that after Block G there should be space in Blocks H, L, D and C, and probably also the bottom of block M.

As burial space is limited it is open only to those who meet one of the following criteria:

i) persons who live or die within the existing ecclesiastical Parish of Limpsfield

ii) current members of the congregation of St Peter's Limpsfield

iii) persons who have the benefit of a faculty reserving a burial space (i.e. in an existing family grave, where it is usually possible to make a second or third burial in the same plot for a family member provided that the plot was originally dug to double or triple depth).

All people in these three groups have a right to be buried in our churchyard for as long as it remains open. In addition, at present and on a discretionary basis:

iv) persons who live in the Civil parish of Limpsfield but now since 2010 in the Ecclesiastical parish of Limpsfield Chart, which does not have a churchyard (depending on demand this policy may need to change in the future).

v) at the discretion of the Rector (or Churchwardens in a vacancy), permission for burial may be granted in other very exceptional circumstances. Please approach the Rector in case of difficulty.

ALL APPLICATIONS FOR A BURIAL SPACE MUST BE AGREED IN ADVANCE BY THE RECTOR. IF IN ANY DOUBT, PLEASE CONTACT THE RECTOR TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION.

Cremated remains

Special nabresina kerbstone has been placed beside the path and a memorial may be inscribed beside the interred ashes in a Times Roman font. This may show the name, year of birth and year of death of the deceased. A charge will be made for the stone and incision plus colouring the letters in black. If wished, an adjacent section of kerbstone may be reserved for a family member to join their loved one. A charge will be made for reservation and the charge for inscription will be made at the current rate when the cremation takes place. Please contact the Parish Office for details.

The use of individual tablets to mark the position of cremated remains is no longer permitted.

Headstones

Headstones in natural sandstone, limestone or slate are permitted: granite and marble are not permitted.

Headstones must not exceed a height of 36 inches or a width of 30 inches above the ground.

Headstones must not be thicker than 6 inches, or thinner than 3 inches, except in the case of slate, which must not be thinner than an inch and a half.

Headstones may not have a base or plinth, and should be buried to the depth of at least 15 inches.

Wooden crosses or memorials may not be taller than 30 inches.

Stone crosses are not permitted. A cross, or other Christian symbol, carved on the face of a headstone or memorial is permitted.

Kerbstones, stone chippings, pebbles or glass shades are not permitted.

The size, shape and design of coffins, caskets and containers lie in the discretion of the Rector, and must be authorised in advance.

Metal coffins and caskets will not be authorised.

Inscriptions

All grave inscriptions must include the name of the deceased, the full date of death and either the full date of birth or the age at death. They must be reverent. All factual information must be correct. No photographs or portraits are permitted.

All inscriptions and artwork must be incised into the stone.

If paint is used, no more than one colour is permitted.

No advertisements or trademarks other than the name or mark of the mason are permitted. Where they are included, they should be at the base of the side or the rear face of the stone and be no more half an inch high.

Flowers, plants and decorative objects

Family members are very welcome to tend to the graves of their loved ones.

The planting of bulbs and the laying of flowers (without cellophane wrapping) on graves is permitted. Flowers and potted plants that have passed their best may be removed.

No artificial flowers are permitted. An exception is made in respect of British legion poppies and crosses in the season of Remembrance.

Vases and other containers for flowers and plants are not permitted.

Toys, tokens or any such freestanding ornaments are not usually permitted.

Although trees and shrubs may occasionally be permitted as memorials, their introduction is determined both by the space available, their effect upon adjacent graves or structures, and

the ecological and aesthetic balance of the churchyard. They must be authorised in advance by the Rector and planted under the direction of the St Peter's churchyard committee.

Memorial Benches

It is not permitted to put extra benches in the churchyard.

Book of Remembrance

A book of Remembrance is on display in the church and the names of loved ones who are buried or whose cremated remains are interred in the churchyard, or who had their funeral service at St Peter's Church Limpsfield, may be entered. Entries will show the name of the deceased and the date of birth year and death year. A charge will be made for calligraphy.

Identifying your Parish church

The website <http://www.achurchnearyou.com> is useful for checking which is your parish church, and therefore the place where you have legal rights relating not with regard to death, but also to marriage and baptism.

Contact for all matters relating to the Churchyard:

FAO The Rector, Limpsfield Parish Office, High Street, Limpsfield, Surrey RH8 0DG.

Tel: 01883 712512

email: stpeterschurch.lttm@gmail.com

On behalf of Limpsfield PCC, it is our hope that these revised regulations will offer clarity for the benefit of all people locally and beyond, and allow the churchyard to continue to be a place of peace and hope for succeeding generations.

Approved by Limpsfield and Titsey Parochial Church Council (PCC), 20 September 2023