



## Holy Trinity, Houghton Graveyard Guidelines and Policy

### INTRODUCTION

These guidelines and policy are designed to assist those who use or visit Holy Trinity Church graveyard. It is hoped that this information helpful and that it will prevent any misunderstanding that may be caused by the various rules and regulations that govern Church of England graveyards.

Holy Trinity churchyard is a place of history, dignity and beauty where generations of parishioners have laid their loved ones to rest.

### THE RIGHT OF BURIAL IN THE CHURCHYARD

Not everyone can be buried in the churchyard. Normally only people who live in the parish, who have died in the parish, or are on the Church Electoral Roll have the right of burial here. If there is a family grave with room for a burial, this may be used. Cremated remains may be placed in a family grave which is full. Any other burials may take place only with the consent of the Vicar and Churchwardens.

### THE GRAVE

In a municipal cemetery, the grave is bought and owned by the family and a grave deed is issued. This is not the case in a Church of England churchyard, where the graves are owned by the Church with the Vicar of the parish acting on its behalf. There are certain regulations about what memorials are permitted. These regulations are not made by the Vicar or officers of the parish, but by the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Bishop's Chief Legal Officer.

### AFTER A BURIAL

A few months after the burial it is normal for the soil level to settle. The grave will, in due course, be allowed to grass over and the Church will take responsibility for keeping it mown and tidy.

We are pleased that many people carefully tend family graves, but please do not use flower vases of glass, ceramic or other fragile material. Any unsuitable material on a grave will be removed and placed by the refuse area for disposal. Please note that the planting of shrubs, plants or small trees, and the use of kerbs, borders, railings or chippings, free-standing containers of any kind, statues, open books or bird baths, is not allowed anywhere on the grave or on the ground in front of the grave. Please note that

only natural flowers are allowed in the churchyard because of the damage caused by the wire stems of plastic flowers.

## **MEMORIALS**

Before you place any memorial on a grave, you must have permission from the Vicar. In a churchyard such as Holy Trinity, it is desirable that memorial stones are similar in colour and texture to the stone of the church. Light or medium grey granite, limestone or nambresina are the approved stones and these should not be polished beyond a good smooth finish. White marble and highly polished stones are not allowed.

## **HEADSTONE AND FOUNDATION SLAB (BURIAL)**

The headstone should be no larger than 30 inches high by 24 inches wide by 4 inches thick.

A headstone may stand on a stone base provided that it is an integral part of the design and does not project more than 2in (50mm) in any direction except where a receptacle for flowers is provided, in which case it may extend up to 8in (200mm) in front of the headstone. It is a good idea to have a headstone that incorporates a flower container.

The base must be fixed on a foundation slab which is to be flush with the ground so that a mower can pass freely over it. The foundation slab will usually be 3 - 5in (75 - 125mm) larger than the base.

## **INSCRIPTIONS**

Inscriptions must be consistent with Christian beliefs and must read well and be appropriate now and in the future. These must be approved by the Vicar. Any subsequent inscription at a later time must also have the Vicar's permission.

## **MEMORIAL STONE (ASHES)**

To the left of the church building outside the church hall, we have a memorial garden where loved ones can inter the ashes of family members. Ashes must be in an approved casket or a biodegradable scatter tube. Any stone placed to mark the spot must be in keeping with the rest of the memorial stones in this area. The same regulations apply about wording on these memorials.

## **FEES**

A standard fee which is set annually by the Church of England Commissioners is payable when a memorial is introduced into the graveyard or when an additional inscription is made to an existing stone.

## **OWNERSHIP AND CARE**

A memorial or headstone is the property of the person in whose name it was erected or his or her family. If no family exists, the officers of the Church will assume responsibility for ensuring that gravestones are safe, and also for their future maintenance.

All dead flowers should be removed and placed in the bins provided.

Please do not allow your dog to foul the graveyard.

If there is anything of which you are uncertain, please ask the Vicar or Churchwardens. The Vicar and the Churchwardens' details can be found on the church website [www.holytrinityhoghton.com](http://www.holytrinityhoghton.com)