

# st Mary's Burghfield



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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Dear Families and visitors to St Mary's Church

## Re: St Mary's Churchyard Maintenance and Regulations

We want to clear-up any misconceptions about the maintenance of St Mary's Churchyard, which has provided a burial area for the whole community for at least 933 years.

However, the space has now been used up and the churchyard was legally closed for new burials in 2016. This process took a while and was an act of Parliament. It means that no new burials can take place at St Mary's, though if provision was made prior to the closure, family members may still be buried in existing graves. Ashes may also still be interred into existing graves, although there are regulations regarding this procedure. There are still a few remaining spaces for new plots for interring ashes.

Our Parochial Church Council requested legally that Burghfield Parish Council took on the maintenance of the churchyard. Legislation on this is here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/215>

It was expected that Burghfield Parish Council would start to maintain the churchyard in December 2017. However, the Church and the parish council needed more time to work out what this meant in practice.

We have struggled to maintain the churchyard ourselves and worked extremely hard during the summer of 2018 to get the churchyard into a good state, ready to handover to the parish. Since then, many people have complained that the churchyard has become overgrown. The parish council is putting a maintenance plan in place though this will take time, but we hope that soon it will look well-maintained again.

We would like to thank the families who have supported us and the parish council by maintaining their loved ones' graves and often the area around them.

It is of course always difficult when family members move away, to continue maintaining graves which is why elaborate gardens and planting along with ornaments, stone chippings or edgings are not permitted to keep maintenance as simple as possible.

While the parish council is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard, we still have to stick to the *Diocese of Oxford Churchyard Regulations 2016* when considering what is and isn't permitted in terms of memorials and graves. The full version of what is permitted is printed on our lychgate noticeboard or online here:

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Churchyard-Regulations-2016.pdf>

We do hope that if anyone has any concerns that they will feel able to come and talk to us about it and my door is always open and my contact details are above.

Yours sincerely,

Revd Glynn Lautenbach  
Rector

Mr Michael Wood  
Churchwarden

Mrs Alison Eves  
Churchwarden