

Ashes and Memorials at St Clement's, Sandwich

If you are reading this booklet because you have recently lost someone you love, may we offer you our condolences and assure you of our prayers.

If you have chosen to lay your loved one to rest at St Clement's, we ask that you read this document before you make any arrangements or decisions about their ashes, or any memorial stones or plaques.

Note: In a municipal (council) 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 Rector acting on its behalf.

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Interring Ashes

Why interments?

The Church teaches that, out of dignity for the deceased, mortal remains (including ashes) must be buried in one, sacred place. For this reason we are unable to permit the scattering of ashes.

Instead ashes must be 'interred' in a plot. Ordinarily at St Clement's this will take place within the context of a short, simple ceremony led by a priest, though the family or funeral directors may perform the interment without a religious element if preferred. The cost for an interment is £316 (this is made up of a fee set nationally, plus the cost of preparing the plot. An additional £100 is charged for Saturdays, owing to the cost of the gravedigger).

Interring ashes in an existing grave or plot

The area of the Churchyard which runs around St Clement's, including the Closed Garden of Remembrance by the north porch, is now legally 'closed'. It is not possible to be interred in a grave or plot in this area except in exceptional cases, ordinarily only a spouse being interred alongside a spouse.

If a loved one is buried in the 'Churchyard Extension', which runs between the apiary where the beehives are and the Bowling Club, it is possible to be interred in that existing grave if all of their family are in agreement.

Interring ashes in a new plot

All other interments take place in the 'New Garden of Remembrance', running along the fenceline in the Churchyard Extension. All residents of Sandwich have the right to have their ashes interred here, and the Parish Office is able to advise in other circumstances.

Arranging an Interment

Please email the Parish Office at admin@stclementsandwich.org.uk with the following details, and we will be back in touch to arrange a date:

- Your Name
- The deceased's name, and your relationship with them
- Their date of birth, and date of death
- Their address at the time of their death
- Will this interment/burial take place in a new or an existing plot? If it is an existing plot, please provide the location.
- Ordinarily interments take place at 11:00am on a Wednesday, giving those who wish a chance to attend the 10:00am Holy Communion, then attendees go for lunch together (the service lasts no longer than 10 minutes). Please advise of any preferred dates, or give requested alternative days of the week.

Memorials

There are certain regulations and guidelines about what memorials are permitted. These are not made by the Rector, or officers of the parish, but by the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Bishop's Chief Legal Officer.

The main purpose of these guidelines is to try and ensure that the churchyard has a harmonious appearance and remains of an essentially Christian nature, reflecting the resurrection hope we have in Christ. Local stone masons are also aware of these guidelines and should be able to help you with your choices. Please ensure you approach a reputable stone mason (most stones at St Clement's in recent times have been carved by Cleverley and Spencer www.clevspen.co.uk or Cat's Eye Carving www.catseyecarving.co.uk), as many online retailers do not have the required knowledge.

Written permission from the Rector is required before any memorials are ordered. An additional fee (again set nationally) of £96 must be paid for the installation of a monument, but generally this will be arranged through a stonemason.

If requests are made for memorials which do not conform to the guidelines, the Rector does not have the authority to agree to them. Some minor differences can be referred by the Rector to the Archdeacon of Ashford, but for anything which differs substantially there is a formal process, called a Faculty, by which you can request an exemption from the Chancellor. There is a statutory charge for this and it is unlikely that such requests will be granted.

Monuments within the new Garden of Remembrance, in the Churchyard Extension, must be submitted, using the appropriate application form, to the Rector. Any reputable stonemason will be able to make the application, bearing in mind the guidelines on the next page, which must be followed for an application to be approved.

Memorial Guidelines

- The memorial is to be in the form of a tablet not exceeding 25 centimetres by 20 centimetres, made in stone and laid flat and to sit below (or certainly no higher than) the surrounding ground.
- The memorial is to be of unpolished Portland, Purbeck, York or Nabrasena marbles, Celtic limestone, slate, honed pale grey granite, or another form of unpolished stone at the discretion of the Rector
- The inscription should not exceed four lines of text including the names of the deceased and dates of birth and death, save that nine lines of text are permissible in the case of a double interment. All information must be accurate;
- No photographic reproductions are permitted;
- All words inscribed must, in the opinion of the Rector, be clearly legible and the overall layout and design must be set out suitably;
- The inscription should be carved into a stone tablet and any infilling of lettering and other designs shall be of black or grey matt finish or earth colour enamel and, in the opinion of the Minister, shall be in harmony with the material from which the tablet is made. Lead, plastic, cement or other materials should not be used for infilling of lettering or other designs.
- The name of any craftsman, trademark or other advertising may not appear on the tablet.
- Under exceptional circumstances, where a memorial is added to the closed Garden of Remembrance, these must be in bronze and of no more than 13 centimetres by 8 centimetres. The inscription shall protrude above the surface minimally and by no more than one millimetre. All other guidelines above remain the same.

Care of Graves and Memorials

The churchyard immediately surrounding St Clement's is legally 'closed' for future burials. Maintenance is the responsibility of Dover District Council, though many local volunteers from Sandwich and the surrounding areas assist in this work. A conscious decision has been made, through the Churchyard Rediscovered project, to allow some parts of the Churchyard to grow wild in order to encourage wild flowers and support wildlife, including our own resident bees.

The Churchyard Extension is maintained by those whom the Parochial Church Council employ, though some areas and bushes are left to grow broadly to provide the flower arrangers with more foliage.

We are pleased that people carefully tend family graves, but please do not use flower vases of glass, ceramic or other fragile material. These are easily knocked or blown over and broken. While it has become commonplace for artificial flowers, various statuettes of people or animals, etc., to be placed on graves in municipal cemeteries, but these are not in keeping with the natural surroundings of a churchyard and in order to maintain a harmonious appearance, and to remove any hazards, any such items found on graves may be removed.

Please do not plant trees, shrubs, bushes or invasive bulbs such as muscari (grape hyacinth), star of Bethlehem or Spanish bluebells on or near a grave. They can quickly grow out of control.