



Holy Trinity Churchyard Regulations – August 2026

Introduction

Churchyards are historic sites and are governed by regulations issued by the Church of England which are intended to strengthen and protect these historic sites. The regulations outlined in this document are based on the most recent churchyard regulations set out by the Chancellor of Guildford Diocese, effective 1 September 2022. The [full regulations](#) can be found on the Diocese website. These regulations are for use at **Holy Trinity Claygate** and have been approved by the Vicar and the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

These regulations are intended to support the church's vision for the churchyard, whilst recognising the personal attachment regarding loved ones interred in the churchyard.

The regulations are designed to support the overall character of the churchyard and to simplify ongoing maintenance as much as possible. The churchyard is maintained by a small, but enthusiastic, group of unpaid volunteers.

Our Vision

Our churchyard is a beautiful yet hidden gem in the centre of Claygate, containing many wonderful treasures.

Our vision is to share this space with the wider Claygate community while continuing to respect the needs of those who come to remember loved ones interred here.

We want the churchyard to be a peaceful space to encourage the well-being of body, mind and spirit, at the heart of the local community.

We also want the churchyard to be a welcoming place for people to come and enjoy God's creation, with a focus on sustainability, biodiversity and wildlife.

Wildflower Meadow

Much of the churchyard continues to be developed as a wildflower meadow. This means that these areas will not be mown during the growing season (May to September). These regulations are intended to support the biodiversity objectives of our vision.



Churchyard regulations

General

- All burials, interment of ashes, and any associated memorials require the permission of the Vicar
- Any exceptions to the regulations outlined below require the permission of the Vicar
- The churchyard is now full. The only burials that are now possible are second burials in existing graves

Memorials (Headstones and Plaques)

- No headstone, apart from a wooden cross, may be erected within 6 months of burial – this may increase to 12 months should the Vicar feel it necessary. This is to allow the soil to settle following a burial
- Headstones may only be placed on graves with the written consent of the Vicar
- Consent will only be given for headstones at the head of the grave. The rest of the grave should be kept clear. Grave coverings (including chippings) or surrounds/kerbs are not permitted
- If memorials are placed on graves without this consent, families will be required to remove them at their own expense

Flowers & Memorabilia

- Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted on a grave. A single container for plants or flowers is permissible but must be placed by the headstone, to enable grass mowing to continue
- Trees and shrubs may not be planted on the grave, as these can damage neighbouring plots and add to the churchyard maintenance
- Glass and ceramic items of any description may not be placed on graves
- Wreaths, artificial flowers, figures, toys and other memorabilia should not be placed permanently on or around graves. These items will be allowed for the months immediately after the burial taking place. These items will be removed should they remain on graves after 12 months

Garden of Remembrance

- Ashes are interred loose in the lawn area, in a grid format
- Memorial plaques will follow a prescribed layout and wording. Space for plaques cannot be reserved
- Cut flowers and plants in plastic or small ceramic pots may be temporarily placed on or, preferably, next to plaques. Withered flowers/plants will be removed regularly
- Glass items, artificial flowers and other memorabilia may not be placed on plaques

Management of churchyard

- Owners of memorials are required to carry out repairs to any memorial that is unsafe. Unsafe headstones will be laid flat on the ground to prevent accidents
- The surface of the churchyard should be kept level to aid mowing of the grass



Rights of Interment / Burial

The churchyard, and everything in it, is owned by the Church of England under the authority of the Vicar.

The Vicar grants licences that allow for burials and interment of ashes, but the ownership of all plots within the churchyard remains with the church.

Interment of Ashes

- A parishioner has a right to interment of their cremated remains (ashes) in the churchyard, and the cremated remains of non-parishioners can also be interred there if the Vicar consents
- Applications for interment of ashes must be made to the Vicar (via the church office) who, following discussion, will determine the place of interment
- Cremated remains may be interred in a family grave but otherwise will be buried in the Garden of Remembrance
- The fees for the interment of ashes are contained in the current Parochial Fees Order. Additional charges may be applicable and shall be fixed by the PCC
- The ashes interred in the Garden of Remembrance will be interred loose, without their container. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Vicar, remains may be interred in an existing family grave in a casket made of biodegradable material. The dimensions of the casket may be no greater than 25cm square and 15 cm deep
- The names of those whose ashes have been interred, together with a record of where they were interred, will be recorded in the Burial Register
- A memorial 'Book of Remembrance' will be kept in the church and updated to a calligraphic level of quality. There is no charge for this entry

Churchyard Burials

- Parishioners (including those on the Church Electoral Roll) and Parish residents normally have a right to burial in the churchyard if there is still space available
- However, there are no burial plots remaining in the churchyard, so no new burials will be possible apart from additions to existing family graves. Burials will still be possible in local council cemeteries
- Applications for burials must be made to the Vicar (via the church office) who will determine the place of interment
- The fees for burials and associated services are contained in the current Parochial Fees Order. Additional charges may be applicable and shall be fixed by the PCC
- The names of those who have been buried, together with a record of where they were buried, will be recorded in the Burial Register
- A memorial 'Book of Remembrance' will be kept in the church and updated to a calligraphic level of quality. There is no charge for this entry



Memorial Regulations

1. Materials and Appearance - to preserve the beauty and harmony of the churchyard:

- Only natural, weathering stone may be used
- Materials must be in keeping with local stone in colour and texture

Memorials must not be:

- Black, dark grey or red stone
- Synthetic stone, plastics, or glass
- No polished or reflective finishes
- Statues, figurines or objects in a particular shape (e.g. books)

2. Features -to maintain a peaceful Christian setting memorials may not include:

- Lighting of any kind
- Videos, sound, or technology
- Portraits or photographs
- Glass, mouldings or chippings
- QR codes or scannable labels
- Kerbs, fencing, railings, borders or stone/glass surrounds

3. Wording / Inscriptions - should be simple, reverent and consistent with Christian belief.

What is allowed:

- Christian name(s) and surname of the deceased
- Dates of birth and death (or age and date of death)
- Nicknames if appropriate and agreed with the Vicar
- Relationships limited to parents, children, spouse or partner

Biblical verses

- Christian or literary texts compatible with the Christian faith
- Words that honour the dead, comfort the living and help future generations
- Incised lettering (leaded or painted in black, white, silver or gold)

What is not allowed

- Inaccurate or inappropriate inscriptions
- Advertising or trademarks (except the mason's name discreetly on the side or back)
- Etchings depicting identifiable individuals
- Any etching covering more than one-fifth of the stone surface
- Plastic or inserted push-in lettering



4. Size and Shape

The memorial should be a simple headstone. The maximum size should be:

1220mm high (4ft)

914mm wide (3ft)

150mm thick (6ins)

5. Installation Requirements

- All memorials must be securely fixed with a pre-cast shoe or deep-set anchoring appropriate to the ground conditions
- Bases may be used if integral to the design, projecting no more than 100mm (4ins)
- Up to two flower receptacles may be included, flush with the base