

Tidebrook PCC Policy on Burials in Tidebrook Churchyard

Diocesan policy allows people the right to be buried in the churchyard if they died within the parish or at the time of their death had their usual place of residence in the parish or were on the Electoral Roll of the church. The decision regarding others who have requested burial in the churchyard is at the discretion of the Vicar and the PCC.

Tidebrook's only area with sufficient open space for community events such as the Summer Barbeque and Creation Sunday services is the open lawn surrounding the handkerchief tree below the existing graves to the north of the church. The PCC agreed that this space was important both for our outreach into the community and as an outside facility for services and fellowship.

Following research, site assessment and much discussion, the PCC agreed to preserve this entire area by not proceeding with further rows of graves below the most recent burials, but rather to use the alternative options available to us as a church:

- there are enough spaces available elsewhere within the graveyard, which do not encroach upon this space, to last several years.
- the PCC is permitted to reuse unmarked graves where any burials are believed to be prior to 1900. To reuse any that have a headstone, a faculty is required to move the headstone.
- according to the map of the churchyard updated by Anton Glanville, the areas south and west of the church contain 296 unknown graves in which the earliest burials were between 1857-1889. There are around 18 unmarked graves in the area south of the church for reuse. At the present rate of burials (averaging around 3 per year) this area may be filled by 2026.

To prepare for future burials beyond that date, the PCC agreed to clear and landscape the area of trees and scrub between the graveyard and the parking area. The existing trees are volunteer species, mainly ash, birch and hazel; several of them have fallen in recent gales. The work would involve removing the trees and their roots, levelling the area and sowing grass, and planting a mixed-species hedge, including beech, two metres from the edge of the parking area as a screen and boundary marker. Access for four-wheel drive vehicles from the parking area across the lawn to the crypt would be maintained.

Should there be a need to relocate gravestones from pre-1900 graves (subject to Diocesan permission) they could be relocated beside the new hedge.

The PCC recommended beginning this work in the near future (pending approval from the relevant bodies) as funds are currently available.

Burial of ashes: the Garden of Remembrance is set aside and marked with a notice for the burial of cremated remains, where ashes may be poured into the ground. If required, a small horizontal inscribed stone tablet, maximum 15 x 12 inches, may be placed in the ground nearby, but not necessarily over the burial site. The location, wording, materials and finish of the stone must be approved by the PCC's representative in consultation with a family member. Flowers may not be placed in vases or containers; artificial flowers are not permitted.