



## **St.Paul's**Church**Tongham**

*a growing community of faith*

### **Burials at St Paul's Tongham**

We are really pleased that you have chosen St Paul's for the burial of your loved one. I am sure, like us, you value the traditional, beautiful setting and the peaceful atmosphere that comes from being alongside the church. We aim to maintain this throughout the years for all to enjoy.

You may not be aware that neither family, nor the PCC, own the grave space - it belongs to the Church of England and they have put together rules to help ensure that churchyards are maintained in a consistent manner cross the country. It is the Parochial Church Council's (PCC) responsibility to guide you, so that you know what you can and can't do. Below you will find an extract from the Churchyard Regulations which gives guidance on the procedure for burials and the interment of cremated remains within the churchyard. The full set of Diocesan Churchyard Regulations is available from the Vicar or the Guildford Diocesan website or the Diocesan Directory and Handbook.

We hope these are helpful and will be very happy to discuss this with you at any time and will try to answer any questions you have and, where necessary, will take enquiries to the Diocese on your behalf.

Many thanks,

Claire Holt  
Priest in Charge  
St Paul's Tongham  
01252 782790

## **St Paul's Tongham Churchyard Regulations**

(Based on extract from Churchyard Regulations (2005) as included in Guildford Diocesan directory 2012-2013)

### **Burials**

Parishioners (*including all those on the Church Electoral Roll*), and others who die in the parish, have a right to burial in the churchyard if there is still space available (fees involved may be found on Diocesan website or from vicar). Permission for the burial of other persons may be granted by the Vicar, according to guidance drawn up in consultation with the PCC. The Vicar will decide where a burial will take place but will endeavour to respect the family's wishes.

At St Paul's we do not have sufficient spaces left to allow for reservations for all in the parish. However, we recognise that the high water table means that couples may not have a double depth plot. Therefore, the PCC have recently taken the decision that they will support the reservation of a plot for a spouse, immediately following a burial, to ensure that they can be buried next to each other at a future date. There is a special procedure if you wish to reserve a particular grave space by obtaining a faculty (a bit like planning permission) and the Vicar can advise you on applying for this or you can contact The Bishop of Guildford's registry on 0207 222 5381.

### **Memorial Headstones**

Headstones may be added to a plot after 12 months, once the soil has settled, but before they are commissioned the Vicar is required to approve all designs using form CR1 (from the stonemason, the Vicar or Diocesan website), further fees are required. The Vicar is able to approve any designs which fit within the Diocesan guidelines below. If you want anything outside these it needs to be referred to the church authorities via the faculty process. The Vicar will advise you if this is necessary and can explain the process to you in more detail and provide the forms if this is something you would like to consider.

#### **Guidelines:**

- the headstone needs to be of a stone that will blend well with the rest of the headstones and that will weather naturally (it may not be coloured, polished, reflective or artificial)
- the headstone may be rectangular or in the shape of a cross with maximum dimensions 1200mm high x 900mm wide x 150mm thick, a cross may be a maximum of 1500mm high and the base needs to be as wide as the cross to ensure stability
- all headstones must be securely fitted to the ground (if they become unstable we will lay them down for safety reasons and try to contact you - so it is helpful to ensure we have an up to date contact number for the family)
- the diocese states no kerbs, railings or stones
- they also don't allow memorials in the shape of a statue or bird bath
- they don't allow you to include any image of the deceased including photographs or coloured drawings on the headstone
- the inscription needs to be checked with the Vicar and can include name, dates, family (e.g. husband/father/grandfather). It can also include a short, appropriate quotation or epitaph. Lettering needs to be incised and may be leaded or painted black/white (though this will need to be repainted from time to time)

## **Other Memorials**

It is also possible to mark the plot with flowering bulbs and small annual plants planted in front of the headstone. Other plants and flowers may be left in removable sunken pots in front of the headstone but may not be buried straight into the ground as roots damage the soil structure and with our high water table are likely to mean head stones falling in the future. A removable vase may be placed in front of the headstone to put cut flowers in. Cut flowers or wreaths may also be placed directly on the grave. Please remove plastic covering and remember that we have deer so they will eat flowers, especially roses. These, of course, will need to be removed when they become unsightly as they are no longer honouring to the deceased. We prefer you not to use artificial flowers as natural flowers blend much better with the natural setting of the churchyard, but where they are used they will, of course, also need to be removed when they become unsightly (Diocesan guidelines are after 2 months, but we are happy to use our discretion where flowers are lasting well). The Diocese does not allow other ornaments, toys or decorations on the plot. However, we know how important these are to many families and have managed to get an agreement that these may be present for birthdays and anniversaries for a week, and over the Christmas period from December 1st to January 6th (12th night) but ask that there are no lights as this causes problems for wildlife and other visitors to the churchyard.

Other memorials such as benches always require a faculty, the PCC are not able to agree to them independently. There are also other possibilities for memorials such as doors, notice boards etc. which may have a memorial plaque. Please contact Claire to discuss this further if you are interested.

## **Cremated Remains**

Cremated remains may be buried in our garden of remembrance, or added to an existing family grave (fees required may be found on Diocesan website or from vicar). Cremated remains are buried without their container and where a double depth is required this needs to be advised at first meeting with the Vicar. The scattering of ashes is no longer permitted due to health and safety reasons. Burials may be recorded in the Book of Remembrance and it is also possible to have a memorial plaque on the bell tower - either at the time of burial or at any time afterwards. Please contact the Vicar for a form (this currently has a £20 fee). Please don't attach anything else to the Bell Tower. Plants and flowers may be left in removable pots at the base of the tower. We are currently applying for a faculty to be able to provide a raised area for this. Cut flowers or wreaths may also be placed directly on the grass over the burial. Please remove plastic covering and remember that we have deer so they will eat flowers, especially roses. These will be tidied up on a regular basis (they will need to be removed Tuesdays to enable grass cutting to take place) and will be removed when they become unsightly. Because they are removed so frequently it is not possible to use artificial flowers. Please don't place other ornaments, toys or decorations on the plot - any placed there will also need to be removed for grass cutting and to ensure that the traditional and natural look of the graveyard is maintained for all.