



ABBOTTS ANN PARISH COUNCIL

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Effective Churchyard Management

The Parish Council has decided to issue these Terms Of Reference for Effective Management of the Churchyard following a Parish Council meeting on 14th March 2018.

Background

On 5th May 2016 St Mary's Parochial Church Council gave three months notice that a local authority should take over the maintenance of the Churchyard, under Section 215 (2) of The Local Government Act 1972. Abbots Ann Parish Council passed a resolution to do so at their meeting on 21 July 2016.

Usually best practice advises providing twelve months notice so that a negotiated agreement can be reached and local authority budget assigned, however due to the short notice period an agreement was not reached.

The Parish Council therefore issue the following Terms Of Reference until alternatives can be agreed at a forthcoming Burial Ground Committee Meeting.

Interment of ashes in the Churchyard

Although the Churchyard is closed, it has now been approved for interment of ashes.

Documentation: The Incumbent is responsible for statutory documentation required for any interment.

Interment Service: To ensure that distress is avoided for family members, the Incumbent should provide five working days notice as a minimum prior to an interment taking place so that the Clerk can ensure that maintenance or other activities are not planned at the same time.

Health and Safety: Where a grave is dug for interment, the Incumbent is responsible for ensuring that the hole is secured from causing injury to members of the public. The area should be returned to its original state afterwards.

Risk Assessments

As the organiser of events in the Church or Churchyard, it is important that the organiser carries out their own risk assessment prior to each event. If concerns are found, these should be passed to the Parish Council together with any evidence such as photographs.

Groundworks in the Churchyard

The Parish Council has an over-riding concern to ensure the safety of the Churchyard and to ensure that any works carried out are of a suitable quality and damage caused is remedied. The Church as freehold owners of the Churchyard can carry out works, however approval should be requested from the Parish Council prior to starting works with an emphasis on the approach being taken for site safety, as well as arrangements for maintenance and agreement over remediating any damage.

Memorials

Memorial maintenance is the responsibility of the memorial owner. If a memorial poses a danger to visitors, various measures may be taken to support the memorial and if necessary fence it off. Enquiries will be made to the Incumbent to identify any known owners, and if after a period of time that has not been possible and publicity by the Parish Council has not identified an owner a decision will be taken on the next best action. If remediation paid for by the Parish Council is required this will only take place if the Incumbent agrees to place a charge against the burial plot in perpetuity such that the charge should be satisfied before an interment is allowed.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Hayter
Chairman
Abbotts Ann Parish Council