

# St Nicholas West Thorney Churchyard Policy

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## Policy Objectives

1. St Nicholas churchyard surrounds a Grade 1 listed church building, in a tranquil setting in an area of outstanding natural beauty. This Policy, together with its accompanying Churchyard Regulations, has been made pursuant to a faculty dated 1 November 2020 issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese of the Diocese of Chichester. It seeks to maintain the setting for visitors, the church community and for Thorney Island's Remembrance Commemorations.

2. The Policy prescribes certain restrictions and limitations on the use of the churchyard which must be fully understood by the bereaved as it may not be possible to accommodate the wishes of the deceased or next of kin.

## Policy

3. Funeral and memorial services are freely available to those with a connection to St Nicholas, on application to the Vicar of Southbourne, using the prescribed form. This form records diocesan fees due but offers no right to burial or interment of ashes in St Nicholas Churchyard, unless approved by the Vicar of Southbourne, in accordance with this Policy.

4. Parishioners' statutory right to burial in the churchyard was terminated when St Nicholas became a chapel of ease in 1980, and when the parish of West Thorney merged with Southbourne. The practice since 1980 has been to restrict burials at the sole discretion of the Vicar of Southbourne in accordance with the Churchyard Regulations. Visiting clergy and army padres have no jurisdiction to permit burials or the interment of human remains. All enquiries must be referred to the Vicar of Southbourne.

5. Such burials as are permitted must be carried out in accordance with the accompanying Churchyard Regulations and be subject to a bond to ensure the marking of graves in an approved manner and the making-up of the grave to ground level in the event of settlement. No grave-goods are permitted.

6. Committal of ashes in an area set aside as a Garden of Remembrance is less restrictive because these unassigned plots will be reused after 25 years. The marking of the location of interred ashes is not permitted; but flowers may be left on the adjacent shelf. A book of remembrance is available in St Johns Church, Southbourne.

7. The practice of scattering ashes is contrary to canon law and is not permitted in the churchyard. It is strongly discouraged due to the risks from wind-borne alkalis to respiratory systems and potential damage to plant-life.

8. This policy, together with the accompanying Churchyard Regulations and prescribed forms, is binding on all clergy (including army padres) and church officers associated at any time with St Nicholas. A failure to follow this policy may constitute misconduct for the purposes of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. Responsibility for its enforcement rests with the Parochial Church Council of Southbourne with West Thorney and the Vicar of Southbourne, subject to any direction of the Chancellor of the Diocese of Chichester.

## Attachments:

St Nicholas West Thorney Churchyard Regulations,  
St Nicholas Funeral Booking Form  
St Nicholas Application for a Memorial