

Closure of the Churchyard

The Parish Council have now received a formal request from St Michael and All Angels Church to take over the maintenance and care of the Churchyard.

“The primary effect of the request is that the body on which it is served becomes responsible for maintenance three months after the date of service, but if the local council resolve to pass the responsibility to the principal council and give notice before that date to the parochial church council, the responsibility passes to the principal council. “Local Government Act 1972, sections 215 (2) and (3).

Please see below a copy of the letter.

As you are aware we have been seeking the necessary permissions from the Privy Council to close the Churchyard at St Michael and All Angels church, and we finally received news that this has now happened on 21.2.24. Please find attached the formal notification.

As you see on the formal declaration despite its closure the agreement with the Privy Council is that provision can be made for the following exceptions: -

- a. in any vault or walled grave in the churchyard, burial may be allowed but every coffin in such vault or grave must be separately enclosed by stonework or brick work properly cemented;
- b. in any existing earthen grave in the churchyard, the burial may be allowed of the body of any member of the family of the person or persons previously buried in that grave, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.
- c. in any grave space in which no interment has previously taken place, the burial may be allowed of any person for whom, or any member of the family for which that grave space has been reserved and appropriated, with the exclusive right of burial there, but no part of the coffin containing the body shall be less than one metre below the level of the surface of the ground adjoining the grave.

I am writing to the Parish Council now to formally request that you take over the maintenance and care of the Churchyard.

We are very grateful for the fact that you already fund and make the necessary arrangements for its upkeep, but the PCC feel we need to formalise this arrangement now for mutual benefit.

There is always maintenance required in an old premises such as the Churchyard. We recently had our 5-yearly Quinquennial inspection, which details work required to keep the Churchyard in good order. You are aware of the dead tree that needs to be removed and I understand the PC have already agreed to fund the removal of this. We are waiting for the Archdeacon's permission for this to happen. And you are aware of one of the 4 ancient chest tombs was damaged in the winter frosts. At least 2 of these are Grade II listed. We have sought quotes from a Stone Mason regarding the repair and care of all the 4 chest tombs, and I am afraid the cost is going to be substantial.

We recognise that there is a financial burden of maintaining the Churchyard, and would suggest that in the first instance we meet with the Parish Council to discuss some of these issues through so that we can set up a mutually agreeable handover of responsibilities.

We would be grateful for your consideration, and to continue to work together to keep this lovely village resource safe and attractive for the community.