

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, WEST HOATHLY

INFORMATION REGARDING THE BURIAL OF ASHES AND INSTALLATION OF ASHES PLAQUES

At St Margaret's, we have the wonderful gift of a beautiful churchyard in which our loved ones are either buried, or have their ashes buried. This guidance relates to the burial of cremated remains, and the installation of plaques on the walls of the terraces, once this has been done.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has a burial policy, which is as follows:

The following persons have a legal right to be buried in St Margaret's churchyard (Canon B38(2)):

- *Anyone who is resident in the parish at the time of death*
- *Anyone who dies in the parish*
- *Anyone registered on the electoral roll at the time of death.*
- *Someone who holds a Diocesan Faculty for a grave space reservation.*

The PCC has also decided at this point to allow the following rights to burial:

- *Ex-parishioners and non-parishioners who desire to open family graves or vaults for close relatives.*
- *Persons who, although not parishioners and not on the church electoral roll at the date of death:*
 1. *nevertheless are known to have been habitual attenders of St Margaret's Church.*
 2. *are the spouse or dependent child of a person who is a habitual attender of St Margaret's Church.*

(Persons who have attended services occasionally, or normally only for family occasions like baptisms or weddings, are not considered to have been habitual attenders.)

No other persons can be buried in the churchyard without the consent of the Incumbent of the parish. If the Incumbent declines to allow the burial of a person who has no right of burial, his or her decision shall be final.

Grave Reservations

The parish priest and PCC will not support any future petitions for the reservation of grave spaces. The PCC considers it fair and right that all remaining spaces should be used by those with a right of burial in the churchyard or as otherwise approved by the parish priest, as they die.

Practicalities

Burials of ashes are to be arranged with the Incumbent (currently Rev'd Heather Wilkin) at this address: burialsandmemorials@highbrookwesthoathly.org.

It is not legal to 'scatter' ashes; they have to be appropriately buried, with our permission. It's also not possible to choose a plot for their burial, unless of course you are reusing the existing plot of a close loved one. Used plots do not 'belong' to surviving family members.

There is a statutory charge for the burial of ashes, which for 2026 is £206, whether or not you are opening up an existing burial space or using a new space. This includes optional prayers of committal, which Rev'd Heather would be delighted to arrange with you. We also charge £30 for the preparation of the plot.

We bury ashes by pouring them directly into the ground. This is the most environmentally friendly way of maintaining our churchyard. Please do ask Rev'd Heather about the practicalities of this if you are not sure.

Memorial Plaques

After ashes have been buried, families often wish to install a plaque to mark the resting place of their loved one. Again, there are strict rules as to how this is to be carried out, and the correct permissions must be obtained.

An application form must be submitted and Rev'd Heather's consent given before any plaque is made. In order for plaques to be in keeping with the existing churchyard, we ask that they be made of bronze anodised aluminium, bronze or brass, and are presented in rectangular 'portrait' shape as illustrated here:



The link to the application form is: [Documents - Application for introduction of memorial - Diocese of Chichester \(anglican.org\)](#)

The regulations for memorials generally, together with guidance on wording is here: [Documents - Chichester Churchyard Regulations - Diocese of Chichester \(anglican.org\)](#)

There is an additional statutory cost for the installation of a plaque, which for 2026 is £96. We do not allow families to fix plaques to our terrace walls, because of their fragility, and so we charge an additional fitting cost of around £150, depending on the weight of the plaque.

We would also like to draw to your attention the wonderful work of The Friends of West Hoathly Churchyard Trust, who help to maintain our beautiful place. If you are interested in finding out more, please follow this link:

[CHURCHYARD – St Margaret's Church, West Hoathly](#)

Rev'd Heather Wilkin, January 2026