

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, WEST HOATHLY
INFORMATION REGARDING THE ERECTION OF HEADSTONES

At St Margaret's, we have the wonderful gift of a beautiful churchyard in which our loved ones are buried. This guidance relates to these burials and the installation of memorial stones 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.

Memorial Stones

After a burial, families often ask about memorial stones, and this information is here to guide you. There are strict rules as to how this is to be carried out, and the correct permissions must be obtained. These will not be granted until at least 6 months after a burial. An application form must be submitted and Rev'd Heather's consent given before any stone is made.

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

Please do pay attention to this guidance: Rev'd Heather cannot authorise memorials that do not comply with it. Please also be aware of the other guidance as to items placed on the grave. It is also useful to point out that burial plots do not 'belong' to surviving family members.

Please use the following email address when making enquiries:
burialsandmemorials@highbrookwesthoathly.org

There is an additional statutory cost for the installation of a headstone, which for 2026 is £179. This is due before the memorial is authorised, and can be paid by BACs:

Account name: St. Margaret's PCC
Account number 00017455. Sort code 40-52-40

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, June 2025