

## ST MARY'S CHURCH MIRFIELD

### PLEASE HELP US LOOK AFTER OUR CHURCHYARD



The church grounds are governed by the Church of England Diocesan Churchyard Regulations. These regulations are in place to ensure our churchyards are places of peace and tranquillity, where wildlife and nature can flourish, and visitors can feel close to God. What one person may think is appropriate, may offend someone else. The regulations help to keep everybody to the same standards. They make the churchyard easier to manage, uncluttered and tidy.

We really appreciate that people have spent lots of time and care maintaining their loved ones' graves. Regular visitors will know that churchyard volunteers give their time freely to help maintain the grounds. But we also need the support of churchyard visitors and those who look after graves to keep the churchyard a special place.

To make sure our churchyards remain special places of peace and remembrance for everyone, now and in the future, English church law sets down rules and regulations. Each church, like St Mary's, is responsible for making sure our churchyard follows the legal requirements (for full details see the Diocesan website)

<https://www.leeds.anglican.org/legal/consistory-court>

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### **PLEASE HELP US LOOK AFTER OUR CHURCHYARD**

Over the years, people have made changes and modifications to **Graves** and within the **Garden of Rest**. As more people have made changes, others have followed suit. This means there are now items in our churchyard that are not allowed including:

- Monuments such as gravestones that have not been specifically approved by faculty (legal permission) from the Diocese of Leeds. This includes grave edging stones and fences.
- Candles, wind chimes, solar lights, photos, toys, and other decorations/ornaments
- Artificial flowers (these are not allowed because they are not natural and can endanger wildlife).
- Extra plants and shrubs on graves, make it impossible to mow the grass and keep the churchyard looking its best. With legal permission flower holders can be inlaid into gravestones.

#### **Changes**

We invite graveyard users to join the advisory group to help find ways forward that support maintaining a graveyard and garden of rest that:

- Allows fair access for all those who are bereaved
- Is an area of natural beauty, a fitting and respectful place of memorial to the dead and a plastic free environment
- Is easy to maintain by our volunteers

To be part of this group please contact Reverend Helen Butler:  
[revhelenb@gmail.com](mailto:revhelenb@gmail.com)

The rules and regulations we must follow are there to help us to do this. That does not mean we are asking families to make immediate changes to those graves where in the past, for all sorts of reasons, the regulations have not been observed. We understand that this is a sensitive issue, and so we are happy to offer whatever pastoral support you might need to achieve this.

**We respectfully ask that all unauthorised structures, decorations, artificial flowers, and extra pot plants/shrubs are removed from graves**

**We also ask, on a continuing basis, that:**

- **Plastic wrappings must be removed from flowers.**
- **All rubbish and discarded plants must be removed**

**All rubbish can be placed in the large green lid commercial bin situated near the old tower.**

**We would like to invite all graveyard users to join an advisory group to help find ways forward that support maintaining a graveyard and garden of rest and:**

- **Allows fair access for all those who are bereaved**
- **Is an area of natural beauty and a fitting and respectful place of memorial to the dead**
- **Is easy to maintain by our volunteers**

### **Garden of Rest**

**Except for the interment of ashes, name plaque (as agreed by the Vicar), and fresh flowers, nothing else should be placed in the Garden of Rest.**

**Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we strive to improve the churchyard.**

**Please help us to keep the churchyard a special place, not only for us to have a memorial but for everyone to enjoy as well as future generations.**

**Helen Walker & Stephen Butler – Churchwardens**  
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