

St Peter and St Paul Watford
Proposal: Area for cremated remains

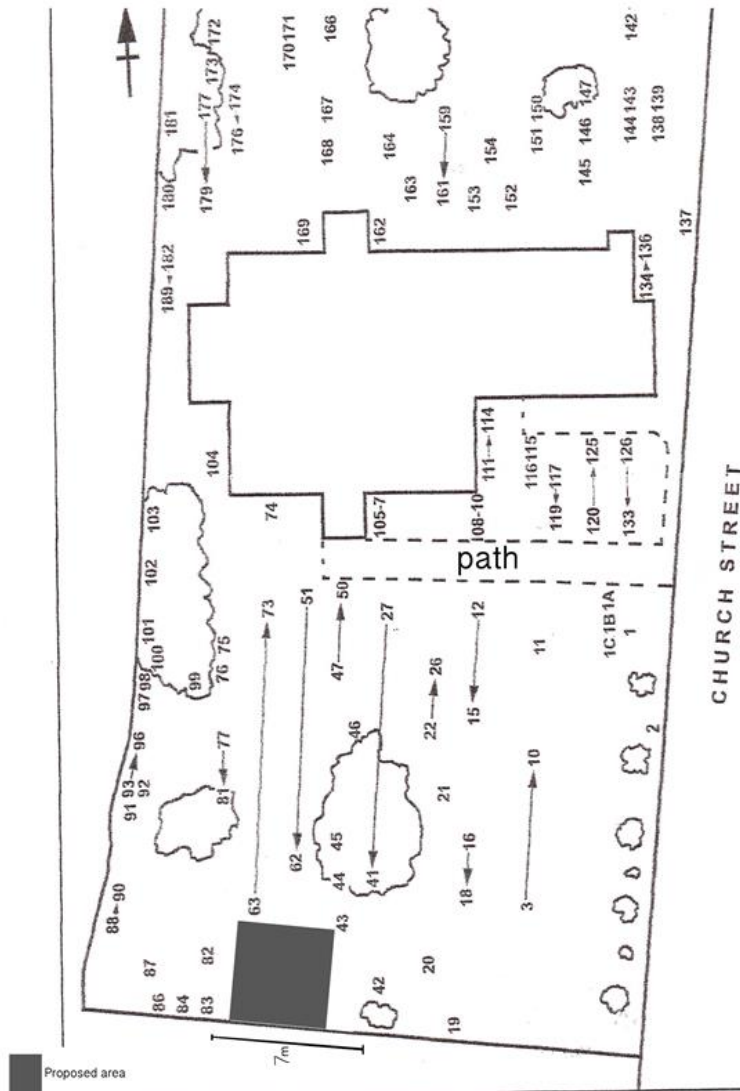


Diagram based on a plan of the Churchyard in: 'Memorial Inscriptions at The Church of St Peter and St Paul Watford' (Northamptonshire Family History Society, 2008).

**St Peter and St Paul Churchyard, Watford:
Proposal for an Area For Cremated Remains.**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is proposing a scheme for the interment of cremated remains in the Churchyard. It is based on guidance produced by the Diocese of Peterborough. In a survey in Autumn 2013 ninety-seven residents indicated support for a scheme. This leaflet outlines a scheme and invites comments the Parish Council, residents of Watford, and other interested parties. **Comments should be sent to the Vicar, Revd Graham Collingridge, by 9th March 2018** in order to be considered by the PCC at its meeting on 19th March (contact details at the back of leaflet).

Final agreement would only be given by the Diocese of Peterborough following a formal application for a 'Faculty'. This includes the issuing of a public notice, and gives people the opportunity to lodge objections. However, the current consultation is for the village to make a positive contribution to the details of the proposed scheme.

I. Proposal

- ✚ We propose to set aside an area for cremated remains in the churchyard in the space marked on the attached diagram, 7 meters x 7 meters. This area is accessible from the path to the south door of the church, and the church is visible from this area. It is away from the church building where work to improve drainage might be needed.
- ✚ Plots would be spaced no less than 60cm x 60 cm.
- ✚ Cremated remains are preferably to be interred directly into the ground though it is recognised that local practice is often for remains to be placed in a wooden casket. Remains must not be interred in a plastic or other non biodegradable container.
- ✚ A plan of the area detailing the location of each interment would be kept.
- ✚ Information about the area (including churchyard regulations) would be on the Church Notice board/gate. Information would make it explicit that it is in a consecrated area for Christian burial. **Question:** Should the area have a sign or other appropriate marking to identify the area?

- † We suggest that memorial stones would not be permitted as they would change the character of the area, and the experience of neighbouring parishes is that they wear quickly. **Question:** do you agree?
- † The PCC is willing to consider having a book of remembrance in the church. **Question: the PCC would welcome views on this, what form it should take, accessibility when the church is open, etc**
- † Flowers and wreaths (based on the Churchyard Regulations):
 - May be laid, but must be removed as soon as they appear withered.
 - No artificial flowers are allowed to be laid or placed in containers except for traditional Christmas wreaths. These must be removed after a period of not more than two months.
 - No tree, rose bush or other shrub may be planted to mark a place of interment of ashes without the authority of a faculty.
- † **Question:** should we consider any additional planting in the area, and if so, what form should this take?
- † **Question:** Should there be a seat for people visiting the area to rest on? Funds would need to be raised for this.

More Questions and answers

Why are we proposing this?

- † We believe there is widespread support in the local community, and the Parish Council has now indicated its support.
- † Cremation has become much more popular. From July 2013 – January 2018, of the 10 funerals for Watford, 5 have been burials and 5 have been cremations.
- † Peterborough Diocese encourages the practice
- † We want to make the church and churchyard more welcoming, accessible and useful to villagers and the general public.

Please note:

- † The churchyard remains closed to burials.
- † The proposal does not imply that provision in Watford Cemetery is inadequate. It simply offers an alternative, and allows the continuation of a

tradition (albeit in modified form) of burial in the churchyard which probably began in the 1300s and which only ceased in 1920.

Why haven't we done it before?

Until recently, no one has asked! The churchyard was closed for burials in 1920 at a time when cremation was very uncommon (there are a few exceptions contained in the closure order). In other local churches e.g. St Lawrence Long Buckby and All Saints West Haddon, areas for cremated remains were established before the churchyards were closed. It is quite common locally where churchyards are closed to have a choice of place of burial of cremated remains in the churchyard or in the local cemetery.

Can anyone have their cremated remains interred in the churchyard?

There is a right of burial for cremated remains for:

- † Residents of the parish (regardless of religious belief),
- † Those on the electoral roll of the church,
- † Those who die in the parish.
- † The Vicar can use his discretion in other cases e.g. where a person lived in the village for many years or otherwise had a special connection with it.
- † The minister is required by Canon Law to bury the cremated remains reverently and in accordance with the rites of the Church of England.

Any other questions?

The PCC would welcome feedback on the current proposal, and would include responses in its submission to the Diocese. **These need to be received by 9th March for consideration by the PCC at its meeting on 19th March 2018.**

There is further information about churchyards on the Peterborough Diocesan Registry website: <http://www.peterboroughdiocesanregistry.co.uk/dac.html>

Comments should be sent to:

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