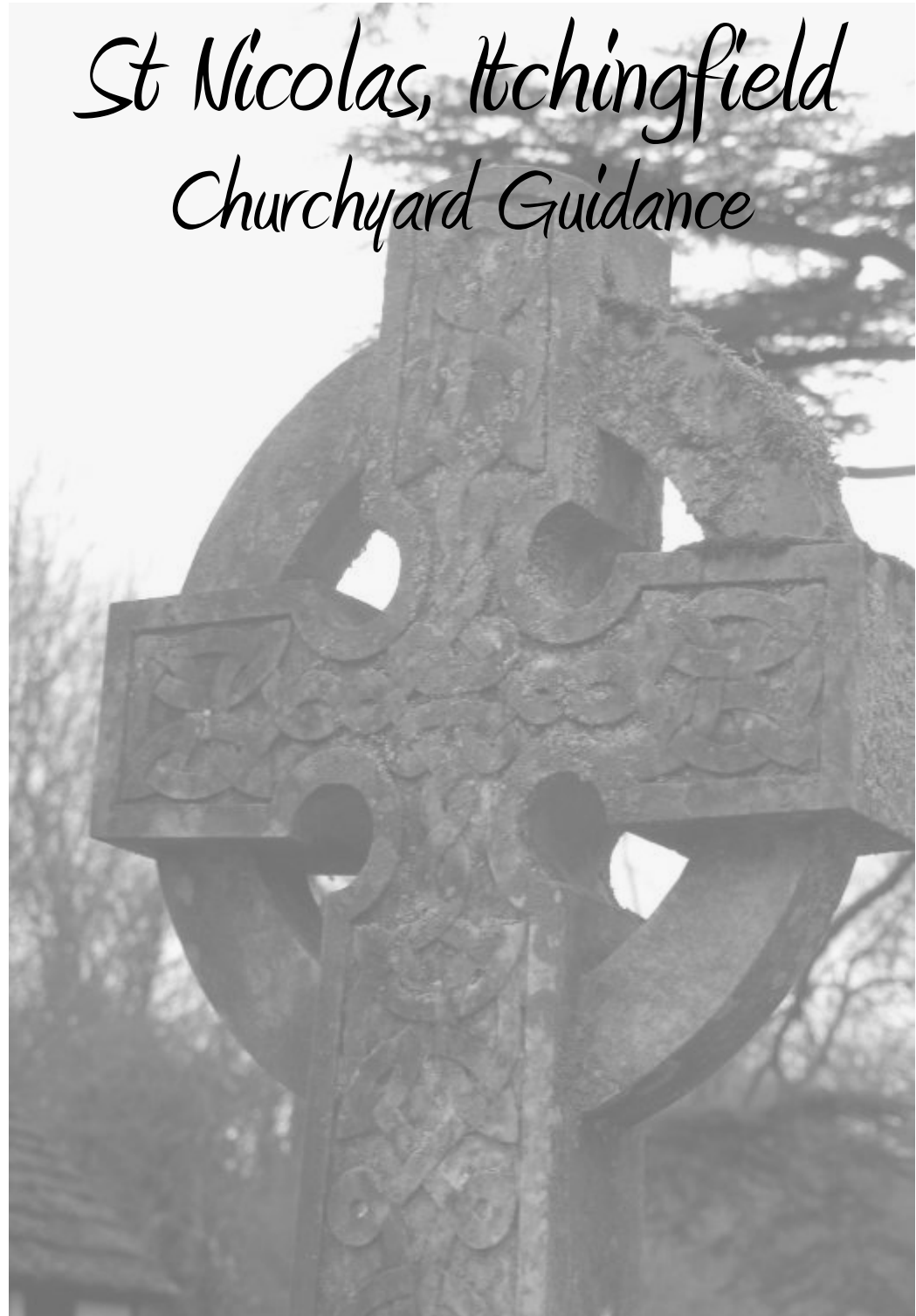


St Nicolas, Itchingfield Churchyard Guidance



St Nicolas's churchyard has been a place of Christian burial for nearly 900 years. It is a very special and peaceful place and this is reflected in the Conservation Area status of both the churchyard and its surroundings. We are merely the current custodians of this ancient and historic place and this leaflet is intended to help guide those who use our churchyard.

Churchyard maintenance is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council. Maintenance is carried out to an agreed plan and we work hard to ensure the churchyard is a pleasant and safe place, reflecting the diversity and beauty of God's creation. A botanical survey in 2009 found a wonderful diversity of flora and several rare plant species were identified. The Parochial Church Council was praised for its sympathetic maintenance plan.

All plots in the churchyard remain in the ownership of the church and therefore it is our responsibility to ensure they are suitably maintained throughout the year. Long grass is not neglect, it is a haven for wild flowers and increases the value of the churchyard to insects as well as larger creatures and also provides suitable conditions for a variety of our beautiful native wildflowers. We have several rare wildflowers in the churchyard and would ask that you do not strim or mow areas around any grave. If you are concerned about a grave PLEASE speak to us about your concerns and we will make every effort to assist you.

Burials in the Churchyard

We will advise on all aspects relating to a new burial in the churchyard. **New graves will be laid to grass** as soon as is practicable and we encourage the placement of natural flowers and wreathes on new graves. We will ensure that these are tidied up as necessary. If you wish to reuse wreath bases, please let us know and we will ensure they are not disposed of.

For new burials, small containers of flowers may be placed on the grave until the headstone is in place. Please do not use glass vases or containers as these are easily broken and become very dangerous. Our churchyard team will ensure that new graves are kept tidy and we ask you to speak to us before you attempt any maintenance.

We encourage the planting of spring bulbs on graves as these naturalise well in grass and enhance the churchyard. Please speak to us about the most suitable bulbs to use. **Please do not plant trees, shrubs or any other plants anywhere in the churchyard as these will be removed by the maintenance team.**

Interment of Ashes

We will advise as to where ashes can be interred. Ashes can often be placed in an existing family grave but these may be in the wildflower areas of the churchyard, where mowing is carried out less frequently. A memorial stone can be placed over the ashes. Please speak to us about your wishes before you make any arrangements for a stone to be prepared.

Pots or containers for plants are not permitted as these kill the grass and make maintenance more difficult.

Finally

A note about safety in the churchyard. You may, on occasions see gravestones or memorials laid down flat. This will happen where a stone has become unsafe and we are not able to repair it. We will make every effort to trace and notify the family of the deceased in these circumstances.

The ground in some areas is very uneven, please take care.

Over time, graves can become uneven. We regularly repair the ground in the churchyard and grass seed these areas at appropriate times of year. If you find a grave under repair please bear with us as we undertake this work and if you have any concerns, do speak to us.

If you have any queries or concerns about the information in this leaflet, please speak to us and we will be happy to help.

**Email: enquiries@stnicolas.uk.net
www.stnicolas.uk.net**

We have a guide book in the church with photographs and information about the wildflowers found in our churchyard.