

GRAVEYARD REGULATIONS AND CHARGES

PARISH OF SAINTFIELD NIC 101048

May 2026



Vicar: Rev Chris Pollock
Admin Office Sally Milligan
Saintfield Parish Church Office
43-45 Main Street
Saintfield
Co Down
BT24 7AB

office@saintfieldparish.org
Phone: 028 97 519653
Charity No: NIC101048

Graveyard Convenor William Drury
Phone 07720883993
Saintfield Parish Church Office
43-45 Main Street
Saintfield
Co Down
BT24 7AB



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GENERAL CONDITIONS RELATING TO ACCESS OF GRAVEYARD

The Graveyard is the property of Saintfield Parish Church and has existed since 1776.

We look after it with great care and attention, remembering how important it is in helping people honour their loved ones who have passed on. As a graveyard, it is managed through regulations that determine who can use it, who has the authority to look after it and the charges involved.

WHO CAN USE IT?

1. The burial ground at Saintfield Parish is managed by the officiating member of the clergy, Graveyard Convenor of the parish, the Sexton and a Trustee from the Select Vestry. They are the Select Vestry approved Graveyard Committee who manage the Parish Graveyard Regulations.
2. Any requests for allocation of interment spaces, permission to bury or the erection of headstones must be directed to the officiating member of the clergy/churchwardens or Graveyard Convenor. **Each request will be considered but fundamentally, only Church Members can request a new plot at the time of need. This decision will be made by the Graveyard Committee.**
3. Permission to be buried within the confines of Saintfield Parish Church Graveyard will be granted to those people fulfilling the below conditions referring to Church Membership at the point of need.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS RECOGNISED AS BEING:

A parishioner, either resident or accustomed subscribing to the funds of the parish through the parish financial system by regular consistent giving within at least the past 2 financial years. All contributions must be given in such a manner that a receipt is produced from the parish.

Church Membership also implies regular Church attendance for Sunday Worship in Saintfield Parish. General Sunday cash plate collections and/or Graveyard Donations for its upkeep are not considered as qualifying subscriptions.

4. When a funeral is being arranged, the holder of burial registration papers will make application for burial to the Graveyard Convenor and Graveyard Committee. These papers should be produced before a burial can take place or final arrangements made with any Funeral Director.
5. The time of the burial must not be arranged without prior permission of the officiating member of the clergy and Graveyard Convenor without reasonable notice being given.
6. No burial will take place within 60 minutes of / during times of any Divine Service.
7. No coffin shall be laid in any grave nearer to the surface than 1 metre, measuring from the upper part of the coffin. Where the space available is less than 1 metre, a burial may take place provided the grave is permanently closed.
8. No coffin shall be buried within 3.66 metres of the fabric of the church except in an existing vault.

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TRANSFER / RE-REGISTERING OF GRAVES

1. If a plot holder wishes to grant a **space** (not a full plot) to a family member, they must apply for such remaining space to be used for members of that family. This must be confirmed with the Graveyard Committee in writing. Burial registration papers will be updated.
2. If a plot holder wishes to re-register a **full plot** to another family member, permission must be sought from the Graveyard Committee. The request must be made in writing and all affected family members must agree with signatures confirming this. This will incur a re-registering fee. Burial registration papers will be updated. The old certificate must be surrendered before a new one is re-issued.
3. For a Grave to be re-registered in all other circumstances, the plot holder **must** seek permission from the Graveyard Committee in the first instance. No grave plots can be 'sold on'.
4. Where there is a difference of opinion within a family as to who should hold the registration papers this should be referred to the Graveyard Committee.
5. There is an administration fee for re-registering. Refer to 'Fees and Charges'.
6. In all cases of dispute concerning allocation of graves or management of the graveyard the decision of the Select Vestry is final.

GENERAL RULES RELATING TO GRAVES AND UPKEEP

1. As the burial ground is subject to natural decay, those holding burial papers should ensure that headstones, flatstones, memorials and grave surrounds are maintained in good order for the benefit of other Graveyard users. Grave plots should be kept neat and tidy and any waste removed to the skip provided.
2. The Vestry of Saintfield Parish Church cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to memorials erected by the holders of the grave plots. The maintenance of headstones and surrounds are the responsibility of the plot holder.
3. No permanent memorial marks may be placed on graves including wedges. Any hazardous or dangerous memorial or surround may be removed in the interests of safety.
4. Unauthorised memorials may be removed by instruction from the officiating member of the clergy, Graveyard Convenor, Sexton at the expense of those holding the burial registration papers.
5. The Graveyard Committee shall have the power to remove any bush, shrub or other form of growth which they consider to be detrimental to the burial ground or to any other interment space.
6. Information about interments is recorded in the Parochial Register of Burials.
7. A fee will be charged where ashes are being interred in an existing grave.

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8. No family may have an allocation of more than 4 burial spaces in one plot.
9. In the interest of Graveyard maintenance, surrounds are not permitted.
10. No interment space shall be allocated until the necessity arises.
11. An annual contribution towards the upkeep of the Parish graveyard will be requested.
12. No work to be carried out without written permission (Monday – Friday only).
13. Any floral tributes used at the funeral may be placed at e.g. memorial wall, paved area etc. and will be disposed of by the church officer after a suitable period or when withered. **NO** artificial wreaths, any other memorials or adornments, inscriptions or flower containers may be placed in the Garden of Remembrance.
14. Dogs are not permitted in the Graveyard.
15. The Graveyard Committee encourage the removal of all Christmas wreaths/arrangements by the start of February.
16. All plot holders should ensure that their names are registered in the Graveyard register.
17. All remains are now to be carried into the Graveyard from the Parish Hall (car park) entrance instead of from the Church Door entrance. This only applies to the lower section of the Graveyard.

PLEASE NOTE:

Normally the officiating member of the clergy is the incumbent/Vicar. In the event of a Parish vacancy, the Area Dean is the officiating member of the clergy. The allocation of a burial space does not confer legal title or exclusive right of burial.

GENERAL RULES REGARDING CREMATION PLOTS

1. Interment of cremated remains may only take place with the permission of the officiating member of the clergy and Graveyard Convenor.
2. All committals should be conducted by a minister who is authorised to do so.
3. No interment space will be allocated until the need arises. The spaces will be covered using stones provided by the parish.
4. Information about interments is recorded in the Parochial Register of Burials.

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5. Any floral tributes used at the funeral may be placed at e.g. memorial wall, paved area etc. and will be disposed of by the church officer after a suitable period or when withered. **NO** artificial wreaths, any other memorials or adornments, inscriptions or flower containers may be placed in the Garden of Remembrance.
6. After a cremation, ashes must not be scattered but should be buried directly in the soil or in a biodegradable container at a depth of not less than 30 cm.

THE GRAVE PLOT

1. Prior to installation, plans the proposed designs for headstones, flatstones and surrounds and for any treatment of the grave surface must be submitted to the Graveyard Committee for approval whose decision will be final and in accordance with diocesan guidelines.
2. Any proposed inscription must be approved by the Graveyard Committee BEFORE installation.
3. Artificial wreaths, shrubs, bushes, flags, emblems or other adornments are not permitted in the churchyard.
4. All floral and other tributes may be removed from the grave 4 weeks after the interment, by instruction of the officiating member of the clergy, churchwardens, Graveyard convenor and Sexton.
5. All contractors and other persons erecting a headstone or making alterations to grave plots must contact the Graveyard Convenor prior to commencement of the work. All surplus materials must be removed from the graveyard, and the contractors will be held responsible for any damage caused to the Graveyard.

THE SIZE OF PLOT

SIZE OF BURIAL SPACE - Length 8ft x Width 4ft

HEADSTONES

Single Plot Dimensions Max Height 2ft 6. Width 2ft Depth 4 inches. Plinth 2ft 6 wide.

Double plot Dimensions Max Height 2ft 6. Width 3ft. Depth 4 inches Plinth 3ft 6 wide.

Plot Numbers must be engraved on the headstone or base.

Any design (emblems and wording) for a headstone must be submitted to the Minister along with the Graveyard Committee who will advise the Funeral Director, Stone Mason if the plans are approved. **No headstone to be erected or monumental work carried out without full prior permission from the Church.**

The placement of the headstone will only take place after the Graveyard Convenor, Sexton, Minister, or Church Wardens have seen it prior to it being placed in the Graveyard.

All emblems are restricted to Military and Emergency Services.

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FEES AND CHARGES RELATING TO BURIAL

GENERAL FEES FOR ALL BURIALS	PAYABLE TO	£
Committal Fee (Burial or Cremation)	Saintfield Parish Church	£100
Administration Charge – Burial & Cremation (Non-Parishioner who has paid graveyard maintenance in the last 24 months)	Saintfield Parish Church	£250
Administration Charge – Burial & Cremation (Non-Parishioner who has not paid Graveyard maintenance in the last 24 months)	Saintfield Parish Church	£500
Vicar Fee	Church Vicar	£75
Organist Fee	Church Organist	£75
Sexton Fee	Church Sexton	£75
Graveyard Convenor Fee	Church Graveyard Convenor	£75
Cremation plot & all Interment of Ashes. All Fees for Vicar, Convenor and Church to be paid beforehand.	Grave Digger	£75
Use of Hall Complex (Non-Parishioner)	Saintfield Parish Church	£100
PLOT CHARGES		
Single Grave Plot Permission (In Burial Section)	Saintfield Parish Church	£600
Cremation Plot Permission (In Cremation Section)	Saintfield Parish Church	£200
Interment of Ashes in a Burial Plot	Saintfield Parish Church	£200
Permission to erect headstone (Parishioner)	Saintfield Parish Church	£100
Permission to erect a Headstone (Non-Parishioner)	Saintfield Parish Church	£150
Permission to erect a Cremation Flatstone or Marker (Parishioner)	Saintfield Parish Church	£75
Permission to erect a Cremation Flatstone or Marker (Non-Parishioner)	Saintfield Parish Church	£100
Administration Fee for re-registering Grave plots	Saintfield Parish Church	£50

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