

**3 NOVEMBER 2021**

**St Peter's Churchyard, Graveyard and Burial Ground Health and Safety Audit**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Parish Council has accountability and responsibility for all aspects of health and safety across the entire site at St Peter's. The site is broken down into three distinct areas – The Churchyard, the Graveyard and the Burial Ground. For administration purposes, The Churchyard and Graveyard are administered by the Church and the Burial Ground by the Parish Council. The Grounds Maintenance team are currently responsible for the general maintenance of the grounds ensuring the areas is strimmed and trimmed and kept in good order to ensure the safety of all visitors to the area which is well visited by the public and relatives.

It is not known when a full Health and Safety Audit was last carried out and therefore this was identified as a major corporate risk to be addressed by the Parish Council.

**2.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT PROCESS**

The audit involved testing every monument across the three areas of the site. Called 'push pull testing', trained operatives apply the right amount of weight to each monument to test for stability and movement. Those that are considered unsafe are classified as a fail. At no time was any testing carried out where an object was 'fired' at the memorial to test stability. This method is a recognised testing method for memorials but can cause damage to the memorial and is therefore not practiced often favouring the push pull methodology.

In this instance, a professional team were sought in to carry out this audit. There are very few trained testers available and the Parish Council sought the assist of BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) to identify a professional to do this. Inspired Glass & Stone were identified as a potential organisation to do this and the audit was carried out across several weeks between xxx and xxx. The audit was carried out in line with Ministry of Justice guidance

**3.0 RESULT OF AUDIT**

Total number of memorials tested	892
Number of fails	154

Memorials that failed have been identified in the audit report as a 'fail' have been pictured and referenced. Where the memorial is loose and could potentially topple and cause injury a stake has been placed behind it. All fails have been labelled with a notice asking visitors / relatives to contact the Parish Council Office to discuss sympathetically the position with regards to the memorial. A small wooden stake has been placed next to in case the sign is lost due the weather conditions.

To date 9 relatives of memorials have been in touch and have been made aware of the safety issue. These are now in the process of contacting the original stone mason to discuss repair. They have all been grateful of the notification and co-operative in getting repairs carried out.

Those identified as needing repair do not pose a health and safety risk but given the experience of the testers were felt to be in position where a repair was imminent.

Each memorial that 'passed' (721) has been given a category of re-testing over the next five years.

#### **4.0 NEXT STEPS**

1. Identify out of the fails the 'record' owner (Parish Council or St Peter's Church office)
2. Produce reports of both – relevant copy to the Church Office for their contacting purposes
3. Parish Council to write to all those identified as ours to advice of the condition and the process of repair via BRAMM accredited professionals and need for Faculty Permission from the Diocese of Oxford. Monitor progress and report to Facilities & Events Committee
4. Produce re-testing plan over five years and apply for Faculty Permission
5. Train Grounds Maintenance operatives to carry out Health and Safety checks on a yearly basis – accredited GNVQ recognised training.
6. Re-test on a yearly basis and monitor progress. Report progress to Facilities and Events Committee