

## FROM THE VICARAGE

Both sweet and sour this month – perhaps it's best if we start with the sour –

Back in November 2018, both Feering and Kelvedon parish magazines featured our 'Churchyard Rules'. These are the rules and regulations of the Diocese of Chelmsford – in other words, general to all C of E churchyards and cemeteries, not just specific to Feering. Essentially the rules state that graves should be laid to grass, or have spring flowers, bedding plants or annuals, and nothing more. There should be no kerbing or hard borders of any kind, nor grave, chippings or artificial grass; no artificial flowers (except poppies at Remembrance and wreaths at Christmas); and no ornaments, which includes animal statues/figurines, toys, pictures, windmills, chimes, and the like.

In previous years – before I arrived in 2014 – quite a few headstones and decorations were allowed that don't match the rules; this makes enforcing them very difficult. It's as if some think the family grave is their own private property or garden to be decorated in any way they wish. The rules may seem quite restrictive, but they seek to safeguard two key things: one, that both burial areas retain the look of historic churchyards; and two, the sheerly practical need for easy maintenance, as our wonderful cemetery volunteers are few and quite mature in years! We're not expecting change overnight - as the 'Rules' say, we're happy to work with families over time to make the cemetery more as it should be. We wish to cooperate sensitively with people to ensure that both our burial areas are well kept and regain their true character as country churchyards.

These regulations have effectively been in force for many years, but only in the last few months have we managed to put up a copy of them in both burial grounds. It's my fault it's taken so long, but now there are there for all to see; they are also on our website. In November I said that we were aware that several graves and ashes plots don't conform to the regulations, and that in time we would seek to take action to bring as many as possible in line with them.

That time has now come to put this into effect. Over the next few months the Churchwardens, the PCC and I will be looking at and monitoring the graves and ashes plots in the cemetery, and if we believe that particular graves need to be altered, we will either contact the family (if known) or leave a laminated notice on the grave drawing the family's attention to the changes that are required.

We do realise that this is a very sensitive subject and we are not seeking changes overnight. However we are seeking permanent changes, simply because we have a duty of care to St Martin's Cemetery, so that it keeps its historic country character, and to ensure it retains this for future generations.

If you have any issues or concerns with this then please contact me in the first instance.

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And now the sweet –

**Our FEERING CHURCH FETE is on SATURDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE at 12.30-4.00 pm!**

This summer, for the first time in very many years, we're holding a traditional village church fete all around our beautiful churchyard, and in the church itself of course.

There'll be plenty of stalls for all tastes: for those with a sweet tooth, the Chocolate Tombola is a must, and there will be great prizes on the Raffle and on the Big Gift and Bottle Tombola. How about bagging yourself a bargain on the Bric-a-Brac stall, or treating yourself to a delicious home-made cake from the Cake Stall? Refreshments will include a BBQ, Tea and Cake and Ice Creams, while the liquid sort comes in the form of a Pimm's and Beer Tent.

There'll be Children's Craft in the Messy Church tent, as well as Face Painting, Lucky Dip, Sideshows and a Treasure Hunt in church. Our entertainment in church includes Feering Primary School Choir at 1.30 pm, and Handbells at 2.30 pm.

Entrance is free with donations very much appreciated. All funds will go to our major project for a servery and toilet in the church, plus also for general church upkeep.

By 'general church upkeep' we mean essentially all the necessary repairs to keep our church in good order. You may have noticed that recently there has been scaffolding on the church tower – this was to carry out essential repairs to the stone quoins (the smooth flat square stones) on the buttresses, as a number of them were pulling away from the buttress itself. These repairs, along with others to the tower roof and interior, have cost us £5,000. As I have said before, ancient Grade 1 Listed churches do tend to eat money...

If you're able to help in any way with this family event, or you have donations for any of the stalls, please contact my wife Liz or me – our details are below.

Enjoy the Summer – and hope to see you at the Fete!

*Simon*

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## **SERVICES for JUNE 2019**

**SUNDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE – *The Seventh Sunday of Easter: The Sunday after Ascension Day***

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

**SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – *Day of Pentecost***

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

**SUNDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – *Trinity Sunday***

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

**SUNDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE – *The First Sunday after Trinity (Trinity 1)***

**\*10.00 am FAMILY SERVICE**

*A short, lively and informal service without Communion, followed by home-made refreshments.*

*\*Please note the later time.*

**SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – *Trinity 2***

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

**SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY – *Trinity 3***

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion