



Churchyard briefing notes  
South & South East in Bloom  
2020

West Farleigh in Bloom - Churchyard



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< The Lych Gate which has been sanded down and repainted in 2020 by the Bloom team.

## Foreword & Welcome to our Judges

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our judges. This is our second year of entering the Churchyard category of South and South East in Bloom. Last year All Saints church, West Farleigh received a Silver Certificate.

The Grade 1 listed consecrated Church of England building dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century with additions carried out in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was restored in 1875 and then had substantial stone work refurbishment in 2018 too. It is made of uncoursed ragstone and a pebbledash render with tiled roof.

In recent years we have added a car park and edged it with a Yew hedge. This was made possible by the kind donation of land from the adjacent property.



## A1: Site Assessment

The churchyard has a boundary ragstone wall surrounding it with 2 gates that are always unlocked and hence open to visitors at any time. Even during Covid-19 when the Church itself was closed and then open to private prayer at set times, the churchyard has remained open at all times.

The paths are all in good condition, in tarmac with a stone edging, meaning the church and the churchyard are fully accessible to all.

The Parochial Church Council aim for a calming space of reflection that is neat and tidy yet also welcomes wildlife and promotes ethical maintenance.



## A1: Site Assessment : Car Park

In 2015 it was agreed with the owner of the adjacent property, Court Lodge, to fence off part of their paddock for dedicated church parking. A yew hedge that was planted at the time is now looking mature and the natural look of the paddock is retained by '[bod paving](#)' sunken into the earth to give the cars reinforcement when turning yet allowing water to soak through and grass to grow on top.

The Taxus Baccata hedge is very dense and offers protection and nesting opportunities to many birds.



## A2: Entrances and Noticeboards

The All Saints church noticeboard is situated at the main entrance to the churchyard, just through the iron gates.

It is regularly updated with current information in regards to services but also wider community information and parish council minutes and news.



In 2020 we have created a short history of the church and a map of its 5 English Heritage Grade 2 listed graves so that any visitor is easily aware of the riches and heritage to be found here. It includes a QR code that takes the viewer electronically to the Village website or the Benefice Website.

We proudly display our Silver Bloom certificate from 2019 for all to see.

Service times and phone numbers of the Vicar and Church warden are also displayed.

### A3: Infrastructure

The main entrance to the church is through a metal gate and wrought iron arch, the latter commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (the bells in the tower having been rehung for her Golden Jubilee).

Last year the Bloom group pressure washed and cleaned the gates, however in 2020 we sanded them down and repainted them. The back metal gate was also sanded and repainted too. The end result as seen on the Contents page is very pleasing.

All paths and walls are kept in excellent condition. They are weed free and do not currently need any repair.



## A3: Infrastructure

Night Time Illuminations – The church has a light above the main entrance arch and also various up lighters in the churchyard itself. They automatically come on at dusk each evening and turn off at 11pm.

Please find photo's of All Saints taken on a June evening in 2020 and associated hardware taken in the day.



## A3: Infrastructure

Both the church and churchyard are in a very good state of repair.

There are 2 benches in the churchyard and also 2 pews either side of the church door, both under cover.



## B1: Overall Appearance

### 1. Appearance: Cleanliness, trees, flowers, grass and shrubs

There are 10 Golden Yews that edge the path from the main archway entrance to the door of the church. These are clipped annually and kept free of weeds at their base. They were planted in 1721 – so next year will remarkable be their 300<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We have added over 500 snowdrops when in the green in Spring 2020. These border the path from the main gate leading up to the porch and entrance door. We are hoping that they naturalise and spread.

In 2019 we removed Ivy from the yew trees, graves and walls and have checked this year to ensure it doesn't grow back. We also shaped a yew cross.

Many new Allium and Hyacinth bulbs were also planted around the churchyard.



## B2: Horticultural practice

In previous years all the grass in the churchyard was kept short all over to make it look neat and allow for ease of access. However it was pointed out to us during Judging 2019 that this is not helping the wildlife and wildflowers and hence we have kept longer grass areas with paths mown through them.

2020 has been a dry year in the south east of England so our grass is not overly long, but we intend to let it naturalise and are pleased to see wild flowers showing already.



## B2: War Graves

Our Judges in 2019 suggested that we scatter the War Grave in the Churchyard with Red Poppies in Remembrance of their life, service and death of those entombed there. The Bloomers really liked this idea and proposed to the Little Angels Toddler play group if they could help us scatter the seeds. They managed to do this in February 2020, just before lockdown.

We are very pleased with the results and hope to collect the seed heads and re-scatter them in this grave for fuller coverage in 2021.



One of the Little Angels scattering the poppy seeds in February.



## B2: Cultivation & Maintenance

- One of the Bloom members works at the local crematorium. They were about to compost these flowers (below right) but she saved them and brought them back to West Farleigh for planting in our churchyard.



## C1: Wild flower meadow

In 2019 we successfully planted an area of wildflowers amongst some graves near the front of the church. This year we have expanded that idea and now have many more areas that are vibrant with flowers and insects but which are 'less managed.'



## C1: Conservation – Bug Hotel



Over the past year, the Bloom team ran a competition to name our Bug Hutch on Teston Wildlife Triangle which is part of the village Bloom efforts. Due to the standard of entry, we decided that there really should be 2 winners. We therefore thought that this would be the perfect opportunity to build an additional Bug Hutch for the Churchyard. This is Casa Coleoptera!

Apart from the screws everything is reclaimed: An old immersion tank frame was its structure, the sides are old fencing panels, the wire mesh is from an old aviary and the felt was left over from one of our members home improvements. The timber is old pallets. Holes have been drilled into wood for miner bees, many pine cones have been collected from local gardens and the bottom is being partially enclosed for hedgehogs. We hope it attracts many new residents very soon.



## C2: Management of scarce resources

- We continue to use our water butt that collects rain water from above the out-house.

## C3: Recycling

- A compost area has been created for any green or brown materials used at the church and in the churchyard maintenance. This is reused on site.



## D1: Environmental Quality

- We are very fortunate that we do not have any problems with litter, graffiti or fly posting at All Saints.
- Although our village has a litter picking team, we do not find any need to extend it to Church Lane and the surrounding area. We see a pattern of litter along the main through roads of the village. If you are using Church Lane it is for the houses there, to play cricket or to visit the church / churchyard and the activities there.



## D2: Heritage: An Eric Gill tombstone?

- This grave is beautifully carved in terracotta. It was installed in 1912 for Herbert Gill of Court Lodge and every year flowers with Wild Garlic in March.
- A Bloomer started to investigate its history as it is so ornate and beautiful but not listed like many other gravestones. Local rumour was that it was designed by [Eric Gill](#), the famous sculptor but there were no records in the church to prove this. We can find no records of Herbert and Eric Gill being related.
- We asked a local stone mason who knew it undoubtedly as an Eric Gill and advised the company who would have made it was Shaws of Darwin. We called them and they said it would have been their sister company 'Darwin Terracotta' but they had not record of this grave commission.

- We ordered a copy of the Catalogue Raisonne 'The Sculpture' but it was not there.
- We spoke to the curator of the Ditchling Museum in Sussex which holds many Eric Gill pieces, but they had no record of it either.
- Our search continues, now with the archive at Rochester Cathedral as all gravestone designs need to be approved by the church. Fingers crossed our search is fruitful.



## D2: Pride of Place – Maintenance of seating

There are 2 benches in the churchyard, both in memorial to past villagers.

We are seeking permission from the PCC to repaint these as well to keep them in the best condition.



## D2: Pride of Place - Flower Arranging

We have a team of volunteer flower arrangers at the church who rotate their skills on a fortnightly basis, except for Lent, to ensure the church always looks colourful, bright and welcoming.

Their efforts are in tune with the seasons which are especially visible during Harvest Festival and also at Christmas.





Thank-you for visiting us in  
West Farleigh, Kent!

[http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/  
all\\_saints\\_church.html](http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/all_saints_church.html)

Facebook – ‘The Farleighs Kent’

LifeLine – A free monthly publication  
for the village, contributed, edited  
and delivered by neighbours for each  
others enjoyment  
(funded by All Saints Church PCC)

\* We participate in Kent ‘Ride and Stride’ each  
September where you can cycle or walk to as  
many churches as possible to raise funds.

## Appendix: Map & detail of Listed Graves

We have added a map of the Churchyard to the noticeboard to show visitors the listed graves. The information below is shared there and we have used our monthly publication, Lifeline, to inform more parishioners about these graves and the history of the people buried there.



There are 5 Grade 2 listed headstones in the churchyard of All Saints, including monuments to:

- John Siles Charlton d.1815 – stone, double stepped base, molded plinth, corniced lid.
- Augustine Hodges C17 – stone, molded plinth, corniced lid, latin inscription.
- Susan Olive d.1826 – rectangular base, formerly railed, double-quirked bead edging.
- Amy Charlton d.1789 – bulbous side pilasters, fielded inscription panel with convex corners.
- John Gibbons d.1800 – oval finial on slightly raised circular base.



# Appendix

## Village Entry

2018	Bronze	Jim Butress & Peter Mountford
2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt?	

## Churchyard Entry

2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt?	



# Map of the church in relation to West Farleigh village

