**Planting new trees**

**N.B. Archdeacon’s permission under List B is required to plant one or more trees in a churchyard**

Before undertaking any planting it may be helpful to prepare a churchyard plan on which the church, churchyard buildings and monuments, the position of each tree, the girth of its trunk at 1.4m above ground level and the span of its branches can be plotted. Putting the right trees in the right place will help generations to come. A churchyard is different to a domestic garden

Consider carefully before adding more trees to the churchyard. Parishes are often asked by relatives of deceased parishioners if they can plant a memorial tree. Before agreeing to such a request parishes need to think carefully about the type of tree it is proposed to plant. Trees must not be planted as memorials on graves as their canopy might overshadow the graves and their root system might undermine tombstones.

When considering the planting of any new tree, you should think ahead about what its growth and spread are likely to be when mature. Bear in mind that currently mature trees will, in time, age and decay. Consider the visual effect any tree planted now is likely to have on the church and its surroundings in years to come.

In general seek expert advice before deciding to plant any tree in any particular part of a churchyard, for example (<http://www.trees.org.uk/>).

**Checklist to consider before planting a tree:**

**-** Is there an historic planting scheme or churchyard design?

**-** Does the species proposed suit the site? (Flowering specimen trees are sometimes appealing but may be better suited to a domestic garden and may look out of place in a churchyard).

**-** Does the site suit the species? (e.g. soil, exposure, shade).

**-** Are there existing trees for free, e.g. naturally regenerating species that would thrive better than a planted one?

**-** What will be the height and span of a tree in its maturity?

**-** Will it be near anything, e.g. church, other trees, (especially valuable, mature or veteran specimens) existing or proposed burial plots, neighbouring property, roofs, overhead or underground services, highways or rivers (there are regulations concerning the last two)?

**-** What about future development e.g. proposed future extensions, or buildings?

**-** Will it impact on archaeological evidence?

**-** Will it significantly reduce the area for future burials?

**-** Will it enhance the churchyard for wildlife? (If you decide to use your churchyard as a local nature reserve, wildlife prefers to live among a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs with a variety of flowers and fruit)

**-** Is it a species that will cause problems from roots, poisonous fruit etc.?

**-** Will good planting practice and after care be followed? (There is no point in planting the tree and then watching it die).

**Good planting practice**

Too many trees die after planting. Gardening and tree-care books set out the full details, but here is a list of the common faults and how to avoid them.

More advice is available from the Royal Horticultural Society website, www.rhs.org.uk.

**-** Small specimens are usually more successfully planted out than large.

**-** Inspect the quality of the delivered plants.

**-** Choose good planting conditions. For bare rooted trees generally choose late autumn or early winter, but avoid frosts. The roots should be kept in a plastic bag and the tree in a cool place right up to the moment of planting to keep them moist. There is more flexibility with container trees.

**-** Dig a wide enough hole with a fork and don’t plant the tree lower than it was growing in the nursery.

**-** Maintain a weed free area of a square metre around the newly planted tree.

**-** Water often after planting to prevent wilting.

**-** If necessary prune to ensure a good shape.

**-** Stakes and ties should only be used for trees over 1 metre in height. Fit stakes and ties properly, adjust them regularly; remove them when no longer necessary (often within 3 years).

**-** Tree shelters and spiral guards may be necessary especially for smaller trees. These must be adjusted occasionally to ensure they expand properly and can be removed when the bark is strong.

**-** Keep strimmers well away.

**-** In later years maintain regular pruning to strengthen the tree and ensure healthy growth.

Please contact the DAC team at the earliest opportunity to discuss your project: dac@elydiocese.org