

✠ Diocese of Creative-on-the-Wold ✠

*The Office for Ecclesiastical Groundskeeping and Miscellaneous Outdoor Matters
Established 1578 – Reformed Several Times Since*

THE ECCLESIASTICAL MANUAL OF CHURCHYARD GRASS-CUTTING

(REVISED 2025 EDITION)

*By Order of the Very Mildly Bemused Committee for Pastoral Grounds and
Miscellaneous Verdure*

FOREWORD

This manual sets forth the sacred practices, traditions, and occasional superstitions surrounding the noble art of grass-cutting within churchyards, ensuring uniformity, serenity, and a distinct lack of alarming strimmer noises during Evensong.

Let it be known: an uncut churchyard is a matter of some theological discomfort, second only to untied hymnals and unlabelled jam jars in the church kitchen.

1. THE LITURGICAL LAWN

Grass within consecrated ground has a spiritual density 17% greater than ordinary turf. It resists trimming with quiet piety and often regrows overnight. This is to be expected. Therefore, mowing must be approached with the solemnity of a harvest festival sermon and the focus of a curate balancing a tray of custard creams.

2. TIMING THE TRIM

The following are acceptable mowing times:

- **A.** The third Thursday after Pentecost, weather and tea availability permitting.
- **B.** When Mr. Jenkins finds the petrol can again.
- **C.** Prior to a bishop's visit, assuming the bishop is known to notice such things.
- **D.** At dawn, ideally while reciting Psalm 23 aloud and nodding respectfully at passing pigeons.

Mowing is prohibited during:

- A funeral.
 - The church fete (unless demonstrably part of the entertainment).
 - Choir rehearsal (unless they need an accompaniment in the key of "Muffled Whirr").
 - Any time the vicar is meditating behind the compost bins.
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3. APPROVED EQUIPMENT

Sanctioned implements include:

- **The Push Mower of St. Alban** (Model year unknown, reportedly blessed in 1963). Currently housed in the shed behind the bell tower.
- **Mrs. Pym's Sacred Shears**, currently kept in a biscuit tin marked "*Stones for Pets*".

Note: Robotic mowers are strictly discouraged after the incident when one confused a baptismal font for its charging dock.

4. OBSTACLES AND BLESSED HAZARDS

Grass-cutters are to exercise caution around the following:

- **Ancient gravestones leaning at whimsical angles** – if it looks like it might fall, it probably already has.
 - **The Bench That Is About To Be Fixed** – avoid resting tools upon it.
 - **The Mole of St. Crispin's** – local legend dictates he must not be named aloud.
 - **Burdock Hillock** – not a medieval burial mound, just where someone dumped the clippings in 1998.
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5. THE BLESSING OF THE BLADES

Though not strictly canonical, it is customary for the vicar to offer a light blessing over the mower at the start of each season. This may take the form of a short prayer, a hymn fragment, or a knowing nod accompanied by the words, "Let's hope it starts this year."

In the absence of clergy, an approved layperson may offer a substitute prayer, so long as they have a DBS check, a pot of tea, and at least three slices of Battenberg.

APPENDIX A: APPROVED GRASS TYPES

- **Ecclesiastical Rye** – upright, humble, slightly unpredictable in the rain.
- **Parish Fescue** – pleasantly tufted and suspiciously resistant to edging.
- **Saintly Bentgrass** – mostly grows in semicircles near the vestry door for reasons no one fully understands.

CONCLUSION

May your blades be ever sharp, your lines straight, and your ear defenders securely fastened. For in every clipped blade lies the quiet promise of order, serenity, and the subtle joy of a churchyard tidy enough to impress even the Archdeacon.

Amen (and mow on).

Issued under seal by

Canon Basil Thistlethwaite, Sub-Deputy Groundswarden (Retired, Acting)

Creative-on-the-Wold Diocesan Centre for Lawn-Based Worship Support

“And lo, the mower passed over the land, and it was good.” — Book of Leviticus, probably.