

## THE DOs & DON'Ts OF HISTORIC GRAVEYARD MAINTENANCE

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### DO

- Check the ownership and legal status of the graveyard and the structures within it, and seek the owner's permission to do work there.
- Contact both the National Monuments Service and the National Parks & Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht before the project begins.
- Plan out the programme of work carefully, beginning with the least difficult tasks.
- Clear the site using only hand strimmers or other hand tools.
- Designate dump sites away from monuments.
- Survey the site, marking in the church, any other buildings and all gravestones and memorials.
- Retain healthy trees, and if planting new trees, choose native species.
- Leave all hummocks in the ground, they mark structural and archaeological features.
- Maintain existing pathways using gravel, small stones and grit.
- Keep boundary walls, banks and hedges.
- Wait until the site is cleared to decide on conservation of structural remains.
- Keep all architectural and sculptural fragments, record their position and report their finding to the National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and to the National Museum.

*Source: Adapted from The Heritage Service (1997). The Care and Conservation of Graveyards (Dublin: Government Stationery Office).*

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### DO NOT

- Do not start without professional advice and a clear work plan.
- Do not try to demolish or remove anything from the site without the landowner's permission and the approval of the National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.
- Do not dig graves near walls; they can cause structural damage.
- Do not attempt unlicensed excavation; it is illegal (this includes removal of rubble from collapsed walls).
- Do not use machinery to clear or level the site.
- Do not burn vegetation or use total spectrum weedkillers.
- Do not plant wild plants without expert consultation.
- Do not uproot ivy, trees, plants or gravestones.
- Do not pull ivy off buildings or trees.
- Do not pull ivy off fragile gravestones or composite tombs/memorials.
- Do not use wire brushes or sandblasters.
- Do not apply paint to gravestone inscriptions.
- Do not repoint any masonry without professional advice.
- Do not use ribbon pointing on old boundary walls or buildings.
- Do not level off pathways.
- Do not use graveslabs for paving.
- Do not lay new pathways without consulting an archaeologist.
- Do not move gravestones unnecessarily or without archaeological advice and supervision.
- Do not burn rubbish on site.

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