

The Church Commissioners and the Diocese of Leeds note that concerns have been raised by members of the public regarding the churchyard and access to graves at Thornhill Lees Holy Innocents in relation to its proposed conversion to residential use.

We appreciate that many people have loved ones buried in the churchyard and the significance that this holds. It remains open for future burials and we recognise the importance of maintaining access for those whose loved ones are interred there.

The area of churchyard to be included in any sale for residential use is yet to be determined. Such land can prove crucial in securing an alternative use, and therefore securing the future of the building, but where a section of churchyard is included, continued public access will be reserved for those visiting and tending graves, and to allow for new burials.

As well as secular planning and listed building consent, any appropriation to residential use will require ecclesiastical consent under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, if it is to proceed. The Church Commissioners are yet to undertake their formal statutory public consultation on the future of this former church building and its churchyard, this will provide an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions, seek further clarification and express their views in relation to the proposals. Further information regarding the process can be found at the link below;

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/parish-reorganisation-and-church-property/closed-churches>

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