

STATEMENT
regarding a Definitive Map Modification Order Application
through the churchyard of Saint Michael & All Angels, Barnes.

Dear Parishioners,

A local resident has sent the Vicar and Wardens notice that they have made an application to the Council to request that the path through the church yard from Elm Bank Gardens to Charles Street be made a public footpath with right of way. Neither the Vicar, Wardens or PCC were consulted in advance of receiving notification, and we have no definite knowledge about why the application has been made. The Vicar, Wardens and PCC are currently consulting with the Diocese and taking legal advice about this matter, both about the process ahead, and how we might respond.

As many of you know, last year the PCC erected a sign indicating that the path through the churchyard is not a public right of way, and the reasons for doing so were publicised at the time in the notices. The churchyard of St Michael's is private land owned by the parish since its foundation and held in trust by the Diocese, and it is a requirement of the Highways Act 1980 to erect such a sign where a path is not a public right of way. Other churches have similar notices. There are occasions from time to time when it is necessary to restrict or prevent access to the churchyard, and there have been a number of such occasions in the last few years, such as for the pruning of trees or the maintenance of the church building and its facilities.

We have decided to make this statement to help clarify the situation at the moment, and because some in the parish may have received inaccurate information or misunderstood the reasons for erecting new signage. We hope that this, in itself, helps to resolve the situation, by correcting any misunderstandings that might have arisen. If the application proceeds, this issue may take some time to determine, and we will continue to share what we discover as the process continues, but most importantly we commend this matter to your prayers.

*The Vicar and Wardens of St Michael & All Angels, Barnes
Sunday 15th July 2018.*