

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CHURCHYARDS

These Regulations have been drafted after consultation with the Diocesan Archdeacons and the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and their purpose is to identify clearly what is and what is not permissible by way of erection of monuments in churchyards. Redrafting has been made necessary because in some churchyards inappropriate memorials have been erected contrary to the guidelines in existence at the time. Clergy and churchwardens are reminded that they may only agree to memorials that are within their remit from the Chancellor and must refer to the Archdeacon or the Chancellor, via the Registry, any applications that are not allowed by these Guidelines.

The bereaved have the choice whether to arrange a burial in consecrated ground or not. Where they chose the former these Regulations will apply and families of a deceased should understand that. The clergy are particularly reminded that whenever they, understandably, come under pressure from a bereaved family to permit the erection of a memorial which does not comply with these Regulations, to take the opportunity to seek advice from the Archdeacon or Chancellor.

1. THE RIGHT OF BURIAL AND INTERMENT

The following have the right to be buried in a churchyard or to have their ashes interred there regardless of whether or not they were a practising Christian and regardless of the length of time they lived in the parish.

- (a) Parishioners and all other persons dying within the parish boundaries together with those whose name appears on the electoral roll of the parish concerned provided that the churchyard is still open for burials.
- (b) Other persons may also be buried in a churchyard if the incumbent gives permission after consultation with his churchwardens and the PCC.
- (c) No person has a right to be buried in a particular part of a churchyard. In some circumstances grave spaces may be reserved by faculty (the agreement of the PCC should be sought first)
- (d) The exercise of a right of burial, the interment of ashes, the reservation of a grave space or the erection of a monument does not confer any right of ownership or control of that part of a churchyard, the whole of which remains vested in the incumbent.

2. WHAT THE PARISH INCUMBENT MAY PERMIT

The Incumbent, under authority from the Chancellor, may give written permission for the erection of memorials within the limits defined below:

- (a) An upright memorial stone, within the following dimensions:

Height: No more than 4' (1220mm) nor less than 2' 6" (760mm).

Width: No more than 3' (915mm) nor less than 1' 8" (510mm).

Thickness: No more than 6" (150mm) nor less than 3" (75mm) except for slate, which should be 1½" (403mm).

The top of the stone should be in a shape or style as set out in Schedule 3.

Stone crosses of similar dimensions to headstones are permitted. So also are hardwood crosses. A wooden cross should be no more than 3 ft (915mm) high with the transom in commensurate proportion.

- (b) The material must be very carefully chosen, and should be in sympathy with the church building and any other local features. **The stone used should have a non-reflective finish.** Acceptable types of stones are listed in Schedule 1 of these guidelines together with a note about wooden crosses
- (c) The headstone may stand on a stone base, provided that the base is an integral part of the design, and does not project beyond the upright stone more than 4" (100mm) in any direction, unless a vase hole is included, when it may project 7" (180mm) in front and 4" (100mm) behind the upright stone.
- (d) The upright stone, or base if used, should be fixed on a foundation slab which is flush with the ground so that a mower may pass freely over it. This slab should extend between 3" (75mm) to 6" (150mm) all round. Due regard should be paid to the nature of the ground and the problem of settlement. A fixing system approved by the National Association of Monumental Masons (NAMM) must be used, such as NAMM's own; Myatt and Leason's, Memorial Anchor System; C.C.A Fixing System; or the Nettlebank Fixing System and these should be detailed in the memorial application form.
- (e) Inscriptions should be simple, reverent, and appropriate to a churchyard, for example an appropriate quotation from Scripture or classical literature. Inscriptions should be incised, or in relief, and may be painted. Plastic lettering is not allowed.

The wording must not be capable of causing offence to others nor should the wording expressly or implicitly draw an unfavourable comparison with anyone else whether buried in the same churchyard or not.

- (f) The incumbent has the Chancellor's authority to allow additional inscriptions on existing memorials.

3. WHAT THE PARISH INCUMBENT MAY NOT PERMIT

The Incumbent has no authority to permit a memorial which does not comply with the conditions set out in section (2) above. In particular the incumbent does not have authority to permit any of the following to be placed in a churchyard. Such would require a faculty from the Chancellor.

- (a) No kerbs, railings, photographs, embossed symbols (such as roses, candles, tracery windows) or chippings. However, the incumbent may permit the memorial to include a symbol having particular relevance to the deceased (e.g. a regimental badge, trade or professional insignia etc.)
- (b) Vases are not included in this authority. However, stone vases of good design, not less than an 8" (200mm) cube, and no more than a 12" (305mm) cube, which have been securely cemented into a sunken slab, may be permitted but must be applied for by faculty.
- (c) Artificial flowers are not permitted (on the grounds that they are not environmentally friendly) except in the case of Remembrance Day poppies, and Christmas and Easter wreaths, which should be removed after 14 days.
- (d) No advertisement or trade mark should be inscribed on a headstone. The mason's name or the mason's company's name may be inscribed at the side or on the reverse in unlead letters, no larger than 1/2" (10mm) in height.

4. RESERVATION OF A GRAVESPACE

No grave space may be reserved without a faculty, and any space so reserved must be clearly marked. Details of the procedure for the reservation of a grave space can be obtained from the Registrar's office.

5. COFFINS

The material used for coffins **MUST** be biodegradable. Materials such as wicker and cardboard are perfectly acceptable, as they are readily biodegradable (note that a suitable lining must be used). Materials which are not easily biodegradable, such as metal, are not permitted other than by faculty granted by the Chancellor, and any such faculty would only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances.

Coffins should be of suitable size and dimensions to fit into a standard sized grave space. Coffins which will require more than one standard grave space will only be permitted by faculty granted by the Chancellor.

American style caskets are not permitted.

6. PROCEDURE FOR APPLY TO ERECT A MEMORIAL.

Written application for a memorial is required, on a form obtainable only from the Incumbent of the Parish. These must not be obtained from a monumental mason or undertaker. That form should then be completed and returned by the family or personal representatives of the deceased to the Incumbent before any firm arrangements are made with the monumental mason.

Contractors, including funeral directors and monumental masons, are reminded that before undertaking any work in a churchyard, they should verify that permission has been granted. If a memorial or other item is introduced without permission (including the introduction of something which is substantially different from that for which permission was granted), the Chancellor may order its removal, and those responsible, including the contractor, may be required to bear the expenses of rectification.

.7. THE BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS

1. GENERAL

The usual practice should be that cremated remains are poured directly into the ground, not less than 4 inches (100 mm) below the surface. They must not be scattered or strewn. If they are buried in a container it must be made of biodegradable material.

NOTE: When pouring ashes into the ground it may be helpful to use a square box with a flap-base for use in windy weather.

2. SHAPE, SIZE AND INSCRIPTIONS

- (a) The shape and size of a headstone should be carefully considered.
- (b) If stones are placed upright, they should not be more than 4' (1220mm) high, 3' (915mm) wide and 6" (150mm) thick, nor less than 2'6" (760mm) high, 1'8" (510mm) wide and 3" (75mm) thick, or 1.5" (403mm) thick in the case of slate
- (c) If stones are not laid upright, there should be a concrete slab, level with or slightly below ground level protruding around the stone, so that a mower may pass over it and not damage the stone; the memorial stone should be fixed on the slab, preferably with a 10% slope. The size of the stone should not be more than 18" (460mm) by 18" (460mm).
- (d) If wooden crosses are used they should be no more than 3ft (915mm) high with the transom in commensurate proportion.

- (e) The inscriptions should include the name of the deceased and the dates of their life. It may have a text either from the Bible or other appropriate sources, and any comments on the personal contribution that the individual has made to the community or nation.

8. PROVISION OF FLOWERS AND OTHER MEMORABELIA

- (a) The provision of receptacles for flowers, set within memorial tablets, is to be discouraged because individual provision of flowers can be untidy. However, an incumbent may permit such receptacles.
- (b) No balloons portable items or items of sentimental value should be left on a grave with the exception that such may be left during the period of one calendar month after interment.

SCHEDULE 1

Suitable stones are:-

Limestones

Sandstone

Slate

Granite - **to be honed to a non-reflective finish**

Nabresina - a gentle cream colour with occasional orange markings.

Serena stone - a blueish sandstone which was chosen to build many of the fine buildings in Florence. It is hard wearing and both carvings and lettering remain clear and crisp for decades.

OTHER STONES

Other stones suitable for memorials and closely similar to those mentioned above can be applied for by faculty. This includes individual carved marker stones which The Chancellor encourages.

WOODEN CROSSES may be used, but particular care should be taken as to the choice of wood (this should be clearly specified when petitioning), but a hardwood is essential.

SCHEDULE 2

- (1) People are encouraged to see a memorial as an opportunity to make a real contribution in keeping with that which the deceased has made to the local community, and individually designed memorials with interesting features and texts may be introduced. In such cases the following procedure should be adopted:
 - (a) The incumbent asks the proposer to complete the form for introducing a memorial into a Churchyard, stressing the importance of the drawing and the inscription of the memorial.
 - (b) The incumbent should send a copy direct to the Archdeacon.
 - (e) The Archdeacon may, in an appropriate case, decide himself to authorise the incumbent to permit the memorial, if the incumbent wishes to do so; alternatively he may refer the matter for consideration by the Chancellor, who will either indicate that the incumbent may permit the memorial if the incumbent so wishes, or direct that the applicant must petition for a Faculty.
 - (d) The incumbent should then advise the applicant that they will have to apply for a private faculty.

Where there is a churchyard in which it is the norm to erect memorials which are outside the guidelines listed, the Parish should regularize this procedure, along the following lines:

- (a) The PCC is encouraged to set up, where there does not already exist, a management committee for the churchyard. This Committee should study the guidelines and schedules in the light of their own churchyard, its setting and the type of memorials already in place.
- (b) If, after making a study of their churchyard and identifying its particular character, the committee thinks that the Diocesan Schedule does not fully answer local needs, the committee should draft a parochial schedule, in the spirit of the Diocesan Schedule but incorporating those local needs, for example traditions peculiar to a locality might be that a type of stone not normally permitted has long been established as an acceptable introduction. At this stage the Diocesan Advisory Committee should be properly involved, as well as the Archdeacon.
- (c) The draft parochial schedule should be submitted for the approval of the PCC. If the Schedule is to be taken seriously it should be the product of as wide an opinion sounding as possible. Publishing the intended schedule in the local press, after the fashion of publication in cases of intended churchyard clearance, might be appropriate. It should be remembered that parochial schedules will probably be broader than the Diocesan Schedule in what they would wish to allow.
- (d) The draft schedule, having been advertised and no objections having been raised, with the approval of the PCC and the approval of the DAC and the Archdeacon, may be submitted to the Chancellor.
- (e) The mere fact that a system has been in operation for some time is not, of itself, a sufficient reason for its perpetuation; it may be useful to give fresh thought to extensions of areas for burial of cremated remains as and when these arise. The parish policy should also deal with matters such as requests for the reservation of grave spaces, and in many cases the interment of cremated remains.

SCHEDULE 3

SUGGESTED HEADSTONE DESIGNS



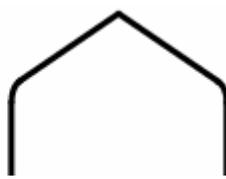
Gothic



Norman Round



Centre round with
Scotia corner



Peon top with
rounded shoulders



Round top with
Offset round shoulder



Ogee



Trefoiled round



Centre round with
Ogee shoulder