



Churchyard Regulations

Guidance to the Bereaved: Burials & Memorials in Churchyards

We understand that you would like to erect a memorial in your local churchyard and your local priest with your stonemason will want to do all that they can to help with this.

A Churchyard memorial is very significant. It is important, therefore, to make sure that every memorial erected in a churchyard meets a family's needs. Yet, at the same time, we have to think of the needs of:

- Other families, who will have loved ones buried nearby
- The local church, on whom the upkeep of the churchyard normally falls
- Generations to come, who will be looking at the memorial long after today's bereaved people are themselves dead

The burial of a relative does not automatically give the right to have a memorial. Permission must, therefore, always be sought for any memorial. This can only be given by the Chancellor of the Diocese. (He is the senior legal officer of the Church of England locally and it is his responsibility to do what he believes is best for the churchyard both now and for future generations.)

However, there are some memorials for which the Chancellor has authorised the local priest to give permission. At pages 3 to 5 there is a summary of the types of memorials which a parish priest is authorised to permit. It is a summary and your parish priest will be able to advise you whether a particular kind of memorial is one which he or she is or is not authorised to permit. For other memorials, a Faculty (a legal permission) will need to be obtained from the Chancellor and he will normally need to be given a good reason as to why he should give permission for this particular type of memorial. The detailed rules are set out in the Chancellor's Churchyard Regulations which you can find at www.dioceseofcoventry.org/?page_ref=1132

It is important to note that the existence in a churchyard of a similar memorial to the one desired will not usually be a reason for permission to be granted. For example, the existence of kerbs around a memorial is not a reason for permission to be given for new kerbs to be installed – once immediate relatives of the deceased leave the area or themselves die, the burden of tending the grave falls directly on the local church, which will find the task more straightforward if there are no kerbs.

How do you go about erecting a memorial?

1. Please do not enter into any agreement with a memorial mason for supplying a memorial until you have received written permission from the local priest, or a faculty has been obtained from the Diocesan Chancellor.
2. It is a good idea, at an early stage, **before** talking to a memorial mason about design and material to consult your local priest (this will help to avoid difficulties later in the process) and to obtain the appropriate form.
3. Then you need to decide whether to create an individually designed memorial, or to approach a firm of memorial masons to produce one of a more standard design from a catalogue.

4. Once the proposed memorial is agreed in principle, and provided it falls within the priest's delegated authority, you need to make an application to the local priest on the form for this purpose and permission can be given quickly.
5. If the proposed memorial falls outside a priest's delegated authority, you will have to apply to the Chancellor for a faculty (permission) for which a fee is payable. You will need to complete a faculty application form, obtainable from the Diocesan Registrar, to whom it should also be returned:

Mrs M H Allanson
Diocesan Registrar
Rotherham & Co
8 & 9 The Quadrant
Coventry
CV1 2EG

6. If you wish the memorial mason to act on your behalf, you must ensure that (s)he knows which memorials may be agreed by the priest and which ones will need faculty permission from the Chancellor.
7. The mason is not permitted to erect a memorial until (s)he has received written permission. The Chancellor of the Diocese can require the removal of any memorial installed without the proper permission and can require the person who installed it without permission to meet the cost of the removal.

Churchyard Regulations

Memorials in Churchyards

Summary of guidelines for what will normally be acceptable for a memorial and may be permitted by the local Priest under delegated powers from the Chancellor of the Diocese.

Any proposed memorial not meeting these guidelines requires permission from the Chancellor for its installation.

The Priest has the right to refer to the Chancellor the installation of any memorial, even if it complies with this summary.

BURIAL			
VERTICAL STONES	Height	Adult	No more than 1200mm (4') high (measured from the surface of the ground), or less than 762mm (2'6") high (measured from the surface of the ground)
		Child	May be smaller, but should be no less than 610mm (2') high
	Width	Adult	No more than 915mm (3') wide, or less than 510mm (1'8") wide
		Child	380mm (1'3") wide
	Thickness	Adult	No more than 152mm (6"), or less than 76mm (3") thick If a slate memorial: may be thinner, but no less than 40mm (1.5") thick
		Child	50mm (2") thick
HORIZONTAL STONES OR LEDGERS		No larger than 2100mm (7') by 915mm (3'), including the base. Should be flush with the surrounding ground so that a mower may pass freely over them.	
HEADSTONE	Design	<p>EITHER:</p> <p>An upright 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 by more than 101mm (4") in any direction unless a vase hole is included when it may project 180mm (7") in front and 101mm (4") behind the upright stone.</p> <p>The stone base must be fixed on a foundation slab extending no more than 152mm (6") nor less than 76mm (3") all round.</p> <p>N.B. Your priest may not authorise memorials in the shape of a heart, nor kerbs, railings or chippings. Memorials in the shape of books can only be authorised in exceptional cases.</p>	
	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural stone of a colour, type and texture traditionally used within, or in the locality of, the churchyard concerned <p>N.B. Your Priest may not authorise a synthetic material which is polished or has a reflective finish</p>	

	Engraved Symbols	A plain cross not exceeding 152mm (6") in height or a single floral symbol extending up to the length of any one side and for no more than 20% of the width of the top of the memorial N.B. Your Priest may not authorise photographs or portraits. He or she may authorise some other symbols after consultation with the Archdeacon. If you wish an additional symbol please discuss it with your parish priest.
	Inscriptions	Should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent with the Christian belief in life after death • Not be simply confined to expressions of personal loss or sorrow • Be simple, reverent and commemorate accurately the existence of the person who has died • Be informative to future readers • Record either his or her full name or else the surname and the Christian name by which he or she was generally known (for example "Thomas Joseph Smith" or "Tom Smith") • Be incised into the stone or carved in relief May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately record what he/she did ("farmer in this village for fifty years") or some feature of his/her character ("a much-loved father and grandfather" or "a kind and gentle daughter") • Include a biblical text, or an extract from a poem, or some suitable phrase from other Christian sources • Be painted black or white or in a colour that harmonises or blends in with the underlying stone N.B. Your Priest may not authorise gilding or silvering of letters
	Additional Inscriptions	Should match the style and appearance of the earlier inscription
	Mason's trademark	If the applicant so wishes, this may be added discreetly on the back of the memorial.

PROVISION FOR FLOWERS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A stone vase may be included provided it is securely cemented into sunken slab and is not less than 203mm (8") cube and not more than 304mm (12") cube <p>N.B. Artificial flowers are not allowed except for Remembrance Day poppies and wreaths. These can be placed in the periods leading up to Remembrance Day, Christmas, and Easter and on the anniversaries of birth, death, or marriage but must be removed within one month.</p>
------------------------------	--	--

CREMATED REMAINS	Memorials	<p>Cremated remains can only be interred in Gardens of Remembrance or Areas for the Burial of Cremated Remains or in or immediately next to the existing graves of family members. Each such area has separate rules about what memorial stones can be placed there and you should ask the parish priest for details.</p>
	Cremated remains interred in an existing grave	<p>Additional inscriptions may be made to existing grave memorials provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such additions exactly match the style and appearance of the earlier inscription • They are approved by the local priest