

Peel Parishes Churchyard Policy

Churchyard Policy and Procedures

This policy is applicable to any interment of remains in the churchyards of:

- St Paul's Church in the Parish of Drayton Bassett, Fazeley and Mile Oak
- St Peter's Church in the Parish of Drayton Bassett, Fazeley and Mile Oak
- St Mary, St Giles and All Saints Church in the Parish of Canwell

The churchyards of the churches in the Peel Parishes are within the Diocese of Lichfield within the Church of England and therefore the churchyards must generally accord to the requirements of the diocese as laid down in the Chancellor's Churchyard Regulations 2013 (or subsequent regulations). However the churchyards have been established for over 100 years during which they have developed their own character wherein some previously permitted arrangements, memorials etc. do not accord to the current regulations. Therefore, in accordance with the said regulations of the diocesan churchyard regulations and in accordance with the requirements of a Covenanting Parish, the Incumbent and Parochial Church Councils (PCC's) have established a local churchyard policy.

Where there is a contradiction of terms, the terms of this policy shall take preference.

The fact that an arrangement has previously been agreed or allowed does not necessarily set precedent for that to be repeated but previous arrangements will be considered. Any change of regulation does not necessarily mean that existing arrangements may be changed, however the Incumbent, the PCC's and Chancellor retain the right to alter the arrangements for the overall benefit of the parish.

The Incumbent of the Peel Parishes, guided by the PCC's and the worshipping community recognise that death can be a harrowing time for the bereaved. Though their loved ones are with the Lord for all eternity, their families may struggle to come to terms with their loss. Though the parishes acknowledge the requirements of the Chancellor, it is felt that each of the parish churches has its place in the community and needs to reach out to those in sadness at a time of loss. We therefore have sought a slight relaxation in the Chancellor's rules, both in the short term during bereavement and in the longer term, to reflect the history and character of each of the churchyards.

The Peel Parishes feel it important to meet people where they are, and we ask of those who wish burial within the churchyards to understand that such places are for the benefit of all so they must respect the wishes of others. We must remind or advise those who wish to inter remains within the churchyards that these are not public cemeteries with a right of interment for all. By requesting interment there is acceptance from the family of this policy, procedures and rules and in so accepting, that they will accord with them or will accept that the church may remove or alter memorials, tributes and so on, without any liability, in order that the rules are upheld. Only deceased persons who were resident in the parish, who died in the parish, or who were on the electoral roll have 'rights' of burial in that churchyard; though the incumbent may after consultation with the PCC's permit other interments in exceptional cases.

Procedure

The local churchyard shall be administered fully in accordance with the Lichfield Diocesan Chancellor's Churchyard Regulations 2013 except for the changes below.

Though the responsibility of the Incumbent (and through the Covenanting Churches agreement, the PCC's and parishioners), the policy shall be administered on a day to day basis by the Parish

Administrator who in turn will liaise with monumental masons, undertakers, relatives of the deceased or executor of the deceased.

Applications for interment shall be made to the Peel Parishes Administrator in writing using the Diocesan form which must be signed by both the deceased's representative and Parish Administrator where this standard procedure is followed. Arrangements not authorised by this policy can only be made if authorised by a faculty granted by the Chancellor.

The regular monumental masons, undertakers and those requesting interment will be provided with the procedure and will be expected to uphold the requirements. Those requesting interment are to be reminded that all memorials, artefacts etc. remain the responsibility of those persons and must be maintained both in accordance with the churchyard rules and in good condition. A contact name and address (being the interred's representative) must be registered with the Parish Administrator. If for any reason there is either a departure from the churchyard regulations, or work is deemed necessary to monuments etc, the Parish Administrator will endeavour to contact the interred's representative to advise them of intended work or actions giving seven days' notice of intent, should that person wish to remove or make the required repairs or alterations themselves. On the expiry of notice, the church officers or those instructed by them may alter or remove any memorial, artefact etc. and dispose of it as they see fit with no liability to value of such or payment of compensation. However, if work deemed necessary incurs cost to the church, the church may recover all such reasonable costs from the named interred's representative. The parish shall not seek out others and it will be the responsibility of the interred's representative to keep their contact details up to date.

Where at the time of interment, the interred's representative wishes arrangements other than in accordance with this policy, they may apply in writing to the Diocesan Chancellor for Faculty Approval before doing so they should consult the Incumbent and the Parochial Church Council. No deviation from this policy will be permitted without the written consent of the Chancellor. Before such consent is given no arrangements other than those fully in accordance with this Policy may be made.

Local Arrangements

The following is an extract from the Churchyard Regulations for the Diocese of Lichfield with local additions (relaxations) which shall apply to all churchyards of the Peel Parishes

Schedule 1 contains a plan of each churchyard depicting areas where special exceptions may apply (e.g. infant graves, kerbed memorials, cremation plots etc.)

Procedure to apply for the erection of a Memorial.

Written application for a memorial is required, on a form obtainable from the Peel Parishes office. The form should then be completed and returned by the family or the interred's representative to the Peel Parishes office before any firm arrangements are made with the monumental mason.

Contractors, including funeral directors and monumental masons, are to be 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 the permission (including the introduction of something which is substantially different from that which permission was granted), the Incumbent and PCC or Chancellor may order its removal, and those responsible, including the contractor, may be required to bear the expenses of rectification.

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

Memorial Stones

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

Height: No more than 1220mm (4') nor less than 762mm (2'6")
Width: No More than 915mm (3') nor less than 510mm (1' 8")
Thickness: No more than 150mm (6") nor less than 75mm (3")
(except for slate, which should be a minimum of 40mm (1½"))

The top of the stone should be horizontal or in a gentle arc minimum 1.8m (6') radius curve. Other shapes may be permitted by the Incumbent and PCC but approval will not be given to a top of irregular or unusual shape, (e.g. in the shape of a heart, teddy bear or other object).

For memorials in the infant graves area, as shown in attached plans, a smaller stone may be permitted by the Incumbent and PCC and subject to exact location and style of adjacent memorials. Where such a smaller stone is permitted it shall meet the following requirements:

Height: No more than 1220mm (4') nor less than 610mm (2'0")
Width: No more than 915mm (3') nor less than 380mm (1' 3")
Thickness: No more than 150mm (6") nor less than 50mm (2")
(except for slate, which should be a minimum of 40mm (1½"))

b) A memorial in the shape of a book

A memorial in the shape of a book, is not normally allowed, however, in an area of the churchyard where such memorials already exist (at least 2 such memorials within 10m (32'10") of the proposed memorial) may be approved by the Incumbent and PCC with the following dimensions:

Height: No more than 305mm (1') nor less than 150mm (6")
Width: No more than 915mm (3') nor less than 510mm (1' 8")
Thickness: No more than 150mm (6") nor less than 75mm (3")

c) Stone crosses or hardwood crosses

A memorial in the shape of a cross is permitted subject to adhering to the dimensions of upright memorial stones, subject to height and transom being in commensurate proportion and subject to written approval of the Incumbent and PCC, which generally will only be given in an area of the churchyard where such memorials already exist (at least 2 such memorials within 10m (32'10") of the proposed memorial.)

d) Horizontal memorial stone

A flat memorial stone may be permitted in an area of the churchyard where such memorials already exist (at least 2 such memorials within 10m (32'10") of the proposed memorial) may be approved by the Incumbent and PCC with the following dimensions:

Length: No more than 1800mm (6') nor less than 1220mm (4'0")
Width: No more than 915mm (3') nor less than 510mm (1' 8")
Thickness: No more than 150mm (6") nor less than 75mm (3")
(except for slate, which should be a minimum of 40mm (1½"))

Such memorials must be laid with the upper face level with the surrounding ground and other than permitted inscription, shall contain no carved, raised or depressed areas that might cause a trip hazard, difficulty for maintenance etc. For horizontal memorials, kerbs, vases or similar will not be permitted.

Inscriptions

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. Painting or gilding of lettering may be allowed by permission of the Incumbent and PCC. Plastic lettering is not allowed.

This lettering 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.

The Incumbent has the Chancellor's authority to allow additional inscriptions on existing memorials.

Vases

Vases are permitted only as a permanent feature of a vertical memorial stone or similarly fixed in place within a kerbed memorial which has raised kerbs. Vases shall be in stone of a similar material to that of the memorial, securely fixed in to the stone and less than 75mm (3") and no more than 102mm (4") in width or breadth and at least 75mm (3") and no more than 152mm (6") in height. A securely fixed pierced metal capping (rose) to arrange flowers is permitted.

Kerbs (and chippings) or railings etc.

Kerbs are not encouraged and may only be permitted by the Incumbent and PCC exceptionally and only in an area of the churchyard where such memorials already exist (at least 2 such memorials within 10m (32'10") of the proposed memorial)

Authorised kerbs must be in stone in keeping with the existing memorial (timber and concrete will not be permitted). Railings are not permitted. Authorised kerbs are to be set with tops flush to the surrounding ground or on exception raised by up to at least 50mm (2") and not more than 104mm (4") with a width of at least 50mm (2") and not more than 104mm (4"). Authorised kerbs must be square edged or with a bevel of up to 50mm (2") on the outside edge. Any inscription to authorised kerbs must be similarly approved by the Incumbent and the PCC. Where kerbs are permitted, the infill area shall be firstly dressed in a surface impervious to weeds (being stone, concrete or similar and then over dressed in chippings).

Chippings

Chippings will be permitted only as a part of a kerbed memorial and within the same approval. Chippings shall be loose between 5mm and 15mm sieve size in a stone as per the memorial and shall have a grey, black or dark green colour only. Chippings shall be laid to a depth of at least 30mm (1.5") and the top surface at least 25mm (1") below the top edge of the authorised kerbs.

Restrictions

No memorial shall include any object that might distract others who are in attendance or which might cause offence or upset the tranquillity of the churchyard. This includes but not by exception, anything that moves or makes a noise or lights, reflects or similar.

Other than authorised kerbs or vases as detailed above, no other items may be placed on interment plots (other than within cremation plots where the church may have pre-placed setts) no items of any kind may be placed upon, adjacent to or elsewhere within the churchyard. This includes but not by exception: railings, fences, seats, or other items.

No memorial shall include separate or built in or carved in, items in any material other than the approved stone. This will include, but not by exception, models or carvings of people, animals, toys or similar.

Materials

Memorials may be in stone or in the case of a cross, also in hardwood. Suitable stones are:

Limestone

Sandstone

Slate

Granite (Medium or Light Grey Only)

Nabresina

Serena stone

Other stones suitable for memorials and closely similar to those mentioned above can be applied for by initial written request to the Incumbent and the PCC

Stones shall normally be honed to a non-reflective finish. Polished stones may occasionally be permitted subject to written approval of the Incumbent and PCC which generally will only be given in an area of the churchyard where such memorials already exist (at least 2 such memorials within 10m (32'10") of the proposed memorial).

Installation and detail

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 101mm (4") in any direction, unless a vase hole is included, when it may project 180mm (7") in front and 100mm (4") behind the upright stone.

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 75mm (3") to 150mm (6") 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 e.g. C.C.A. Fixing System, or the Nettlebank Fixing System, and these should be detailed in the memorial application form.

All memorials must be fixed in accordance with BS8415

All memorials must be manufactured to a professional standard and installed to a professional standard by a monumental mason or other person who has been approved by the Incumbent and PCC. Where requested, full written details shall be provided by the interred's representative.

The interred's representative is reminded that they shall at all times be responsible for any memorial etc. and by requesting interment within the churchyard shall be deemed to have indemnified the Incumbent and PCC from any liability attached. The memorial shall be maintained in good order to the satisfaction of the Incumbent and the PCC or otherwise, the Incumbent or PCC may serve notice as above and take any action they consider appropriate,

Flowers and other decoration

At the time of interment, the church recognises the desire to place flowers and other artefacts to a grave or place of interment. Provided they are tasteful, non-offensive and not to excess, the Incumbent and the PCC will allow the placement of such provided they do not extend beyond the excavated area for interment. Such flowers and artefacts may remain in place for up to three months provided they are maintained by the interred's representative after which they shall be removed or otherwise may be removed by the church representatives.

At other times, the interred's representative (or others agreed by them) may place a reasonable number of cut flowers (but not artefacts) to the memorial either loosely or in vases (as specified above). Such flowers may include artificial flowers, however as and when they are considered by church representatives as time expired (dead, worn out etc.) the church representatives may, without notice, remove and dispose of them without any liability or compensation.

Reservation of a Grave-space.

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 or from the Peel Parishes Office.

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 suit the deceased. American style caskets are not permitted.

The burial of cremated remains.

General:

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

Cremation plots

Cremated remains can currently only be placed in to dedicated cremation plots already created by the church unless being interred into an existing grave. Each plot has the ability to accept a personal memorial stone.

Memorial Stones

Any memorial stone shall be laid flat with its upper surface level with the surrounding ground. Memorial stones shall be sized and materials used as directed below:

St Paul's, Fazeley: 457mmx305mmx76mm Dark Grey Granite Part Polished
(18" x 12" x 3")

Vases are permitted only as a permanent integral feature of the above memorial stone

St Mary St Giles & All Saints, Canwell: 203mmx127mm White Marble Tablet on Slate Base
(8" x 5")

Vases are permitted only as a permanent integral feature of the above memorial stone

St Peter's, Drayton Bassett: 450mmx221mm Unpolished Hopton Wood
(17 3/4" x 8 3/4")

Vases are not permitted

Inscriptions

Inscriptions should be simple, reverent, and appropriate to the churchyard, for example an appropriate quotation from Scripture or classical literature. Inscriptions should be incised, or in relief painting or gilding of lettering may be allowed by permission of the Incumbent and PCC. Plastic lettering is not allowed.

This lettering 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.

The Incumbent has the Chancellor's authority to allow additional inscriptions on existing memorials.

Flowers and other decoration

At the time of interment, the church recognises the desire to place flowers and other artefacts to a grave or place of interment. Provided they are tasteful, non-offensive and not to excess, the Incumbent will allow the placement of such provided they do not extend beyond the cremation plot. The church appreciates the small size of cremation plots therefore the Parish Administrator may indicate a further area for flowers etc. in the short term which though near, will not offend or transgress to another's place of interment. Such flowers and artefacts may remain in place for up to three months provided they are maintained by the interred's representative after which they shall be removed or otherwise may be removed by the church representatives.

At other times, the interred's representative (or others agreed by them) may place a reasonable number of cut flowers (but not artefacts) to the memorial in the vase (as specified above), Such flowers may include artificial flowers, however as and when they are considered by church representatives as time expired (dead, worn out etc.) the church representatives may, without notice, remove and dispose of them without any liability or compensation.

*This policy was agreed by the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Paul's
Fazeley on Monday 2016,
Signed _____ Rev Jonathan Iddon.*

*This policy was agreed by the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Mary St
Giles & All Saints, Canwell on Monday 2016,
Signed _____ Rev Jonathan Iddon.*

*This policy was agreed by the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Peter's
Drayton Bassett on Monday 2016,
Signed _____ Rev Jonathan Iddon.*

This policy has been agreed and approved by the Chancellor's office
on:

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