

Churchyard Regulations Guidance for the erection of memorials

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 will nearly always give permission through the local priest – as outlined on pages 3 to 5. For other memorials, a Faculty (a legal permission) will need be obtained from the Chancellor and he will normally need to be given a convincing reason as to why he should give permission for this particular type of memorial.

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.

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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.

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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.

This document was authorised in October 2006 by officers of the Dioceses of Coventry and Leicester.

**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 4 feet (1200mm) high (measured from the surface of the ground), or less than 2 feet 6 inches (750mm) high (measured from the surface of the ground)
		Child	May be smaller, but should be no less than 2 feet (600mm) high
	Width	Adult	No more than 3 feet (900mm) wide, or less than 1 foot 8 inches (500mm) wide
		Child	1 foot 3 inches (375mm) wide
	Thickness	Adult	No more than 6 inches (150mm) thick, or less than 3 inches (75mm) thick If a slate memorial: - may be thinner, but no less than 1.5 inches (38mm) thick
		Child	2 inches (50mm) thick
HORIZONTAL STONES OR LEDGERS		No larger than 7 feet (2100mm) by 3 feet (900mm), including the base. Should be flush with the surrounding ground so that a mower may pass freely over them.	
HEADSTONE	Design	<p>EITHER: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons guidance b) On a stone base provided that it is an integral part of the design, no more than 9 inches (225mm) high, 3 feet (900mm) wide or projecting 4 inches (100mm) on either side; the base being no more than 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) front to back c) On a vase base, no more than 4 inches (100mm) on either side; the base being no more than 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) front to back. <p>N.B. Your priest may not authorise memorials in the shape of a heart or a book, nor kerbs, railings or chippings.</p>	

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	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	<p>A plain cross not exceeding 6" in height</p> <p>N.B. Your Priest may not authorise photographs, portraits or any other symbol</p>
	Inscriptions	<p>Should: -</p> <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 <p>May: -</p> <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 <p>N.B. Your Priest may not authorise gilding or silvering of letters</p>
	Additional Inscriptions	Should match the style and appearance of the earlier inscription
	Mason's trademark	If the applicant so wishes, this may be added discretely on the back of the memorial.

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<p>PROVISION FOR FLOWERS</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than one container which matches the memorial and must be: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fixed onto/into the stone base Or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sunk completely into the ground so as to be firmly anchored and virtually invisible yet removable should maintenance needs require it <p>N.B. Artificial flowers are not allowed except for Remembrance Day poppies and Christmas wreaths, which must be removed after 2 months. The planting of trees and shrubs is not permitted.</p>
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<p>CREMATED REMAINS [the same permissions apply]</p>	<p>Marker stones</p>	<p>Permitted ONLY in existing Gardens of Remembrance, where currently allowed. Elsewhere memorials should be written into a Book of Remembrance in the church. Where permitted, no larger than 21" x 21" (530mm x 530mm) and should be flush with the ground so that a mower may pass freely over them.</p> <p>N.B. Your local priest may not authorise markers larger than this or in a synthetic material which is polished or has a reflective finish.</p>
	<p>Ashes interred in an existing grave</p>	<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