



Memorials in Churchyards

Guidance to clergy on applications and permissions

1. The permission of the Chancellor is needed for the erection of any memorial in a churchyard. By way of relaxation of that legal rule the Chancellor authorises incumbents to permit memorials and inscriptions which fall within the limits set out in his Churchyard Regulations. These were issued on 20th April 2025 and replace earlier regulations. Clergy should make themselves familiar with the Regulations which may be found on the website for the diocese at <https://coventry.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/churchyard-regulations-2025.pdf>
2. An early opportunity should be taken **before** the bereaved family visits a memorial mason, to explain these regulations relating to memorials, particularly permissions, using the leaflet "Guidance to the Bereaved: Burials & Memorials in Churchyards which may be found on the Diocesan website at <https://coventry.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/guidance-for-the-bereaved.pdf>
3. Specific reference should be made to: -
 - Burial may be a right for a parishioner but that does not convey with it an automatic right to erect a memorial
 - The Summary of Guidelines for what will normally be acceptable for a memorial and may be permitted by the incumbent under delegated powers from the Chancellor. Any proposed memorial not meeting these guidelines requires a faculty from the Chancellor for which a fee has to be paid.
 - Memorials and their maintenance are the responsibility of the person(s) who paid for them and, after those persons themselves have died, the heir(s) of the person commemorated. Therefore, care should be taken to choose memorials which are
 - Of durable quality
 - Adequately and safely secured into the ground conforming to BS8415
 - Not readily susceptible to vandalism
 - Not expensive to maintain
 - Nothing may be erected or placed in the churchyard unless the appropriate permission has been received in writing by the applicant
 - Churchyard maintenance is expensive. Relations of those buried should be encouraged to make periodic gifts towards its upkeep, especially if they are not contributing to the church in other ways.
4. Application should be made on the relevant application form to the incumbent with details of dimensions and materials together with the proposed inscription, type, size and position of the lettering

5. In respect of proposed memorials that fall within the authority delegated to the incumbent from the Chancellor, the incumbent's written consent, by way of the official form, must be obtained **before** an order for a memorial is placed.
6. The incumbent may refer to the Chancellor an application even if it complies with the Regulations.
7. An incumbent is not bound by decisions of previous incumbents that contravene the Regulations. The existence of memorials inappropriately authorised in the past is not grounds for the further introduction of such memorials.
8. If the incumbent receives an application for a memorial outside the authority delegated by the Chancellor, the incumbent is recommended to:
 - Explain this to the applicant
 - Advise that an application to the Chancellor for a faculty involves a fee which is revised annually
 - Encourage the applicant to revise the proposal to fall within what may be authorised by the incumbent

The objective is that the incumbent is saved from appearing insensitive to the wishes of the parishioner whilst, at the same time, the churchyard is protected from inappropriate additions.

9. An application which the incumbent is not permitted to authorise must be made by the applicant on the application form which will be deemed as the faculty petition form to be sent, via the incumbent to the Diocesan Registry* who will then forward the application to the DAC Secretary for consideration by the DAC before the matter is referred to the Chancellor.
10. The faculty form must be accompanied by:
 - Full details of the headstone/memorial to be erected including the type of stone, measurements and lettering together with relevant drawings/photographs. It would be helpful to have photographs of a similar memorial and that part of the churchyard showing its position in relation to the church and any similar memorials in the churchyard.
 - A statement of support or otherwise from the incumbent / PCC
11. The family needs to be made aware as sensitively as possible that should they instruct a memorial mason to erect a memorial without the necessary prior permission having been obtained, the Chancellor has the legal right to require them to remove it at their expense.
12. "Incumbent" within the Regulations is intended to include rectors, vicars, priests-in-charge, team vicars, and (where there is a vacancy) Area Deans. Churchwardens or PCC members have no authority to give permission for the introduction of memorials into a churchyard.

* Mrs Michelle McBrierty
Diocesan Registry
Rotherham & Co.
8 & 9 The Quadrant
Coventry
CV1 2EG
Tel: 02476 227331