

Diocese of Chester
St Mary's Church, Astbury
CHURCHYARD REGULATIONS

The following Regulations have been approved by the Parochial Church Council.

GENERAL

1. The Churchyard is consecrated ground and as such is subject to the jurisdiction of the Bishop, exercised by the Chancellor of the Diocese, and accordingly no memorial stones may be erected, or any works undertaken, except by written authorisation or faculty as outlined below.
2. However, the Chancellor delegates authority to the Rector to give consent to the erection or introduction of gravestones and memorials providing they meet the following criteria (paras 3-20) and the stipulated procedures are followed.
3. Memorials must be constructed and installed by a Memorial Mason in accordance with the Recommended Code of Working Practice issued by the National Association of Memorial Masons, and the memorial must also comply with British Standard BS 8415.
4. Nothing shall be erected or placed in the churchyard until the consent of the Rector to such proposals has been obtained in writing. Applicants for consent should give a full description of proposed designs, measurements, inscriptions and type and finish of stone proposed to be used. The application must be submitted not less than 20 working days prior to the proposed date of erection. The Rector must be given in writing at least ten working days' notice of the day and time when the memorial is to be installed.
5. Applicants are advised not to accept any estimate or otherwise enter into a contract with a funeral director or stonemason until such written authorisation has been obtained.
6. The fact that there is a similar memorial - which does not comply with these Regulations - in the churchyard does not mean that that the new memorial may be approved by the Rector without a Faculty or indicate that a Faculty will be granted.
7. These regulations apply only to memorials in the churchyards. A memorial in the church will always require a Faculty.
8. A memorial must relate to the person or persons who is or are buried or whose cremated remains are interred in the grave. The erection of a memorial to a person buried or interred elsewhere is not permitted.

DIMENSIONS

9. The Rector will normally be able to sanction:
 - Memorials marking or recording the burial of human remains other than cremated remains
 - (a) simple vertical headstones not exceeding 3 feet (900mm) high, measured from the surface of the ground, 3 feet (900mm) wide and 6 inches (150mm) thick.
 - (b) a plinth or base supporting such headstones not exceeding 12 inches (300mm) from front to back and projecting not more than 2 inches (50mm) beyond the back and not more than 3 inches (75mm) beyond the sides of the headstone, and not thereby causing the memorial to exceed the dimensions in 5(a) above.
 - (The intention of a plinth is to enable a vase or other flower container to be sunk into or placed upon its forward projection).
 - (c) simple memorial stones, (see para 24), laid horizontally in the ground, sunk so that their surface does not impede a mower passing over them. Such stones shall not exceed 21 inches x 21 inches (533mm x 533mm).
10. Memorials should be simple and consistent with nearby memorials and the setting of the churchyards. Memorials need not be restricted to a rectangular shape and curved tops are preferable to straight-edged ones. Memorials in the shape of a heart or of a book are not permitted.

EPITAPHS AND INSCRIPTIONS

- 11.1 Inscriptions must be simple and reverent. All inscriptions must receive the prior permission of the Rector in accordance with paragraph 4 above.
- 11.2. Additions may be made to inscriptions at a later date, following subsequent interments in the same grave or for other good reason, but any such addition or alteration to an inscription must be separately approved by the Rector in writing.
- 11.3 The mason's name or mason's mark must be inscribed on the side or reverse of memorial stones, near the foot or on the plinth in letters no larger than ½ inch (13mm) in height, such letters to be unleaded and unpainted.
- 11.4 The identification number of the grave plot should be inscribed as in para 11.3.
- 11.5. For all inscriptions plain cut lettering of good design is preferred. Cut letters may be picked out in paint or gilding if appropriate to the design of the monument as a whole. Leaded letters are not permitted on new memorials or existing memorials not previously leaded.

METHOD OF FIXING MEMORIALS

- 12.1. Due regard must be paid to the nature of the ground and the problem of potential settlement. Memorials including the plinth and base must be placed on undisturbed ground. Memorials with or without a raised plinth (see para 5b) may rest upon a foundation slab or be set in concrete which does not rise above ground level, does not impede a mower or reveal itself in any unsightly way. Headstones inserted directly into the ground must be of adequate dimension below ground level to ensure continued stability in accordance with the NAMM Code and the British Standard..
- 12.2 Memorials must be constructed and installed with proper dowelling and anchored to the ground in accordance with the NAMM Code and the British Standard..

MATERIALS FOR MEMORIALS, ETC.

- 13.1 Memorials must be made of stone which is harmonious with its surroundings and the setting of the churchyard.. Native stones traditionally used in local buildings and memorials, or stones similar to them in colour and texture are to be preferred Reconstructed or reconstituted stone will be acceptable provided it meets British Standard BS 6457 (1984).
- 13.2 Such natural unpolished stone will be insisted on in contexts such as ancient churchyards or areas immediately surrounding traditional church buildings or other areas of graveyards possessing a predominantly traditional, harmonious aspect.
- 13.3 However, in areas of churchyards of more recent date, imported and highly finished stones may be commonly found and in these contexts only such materials such as black, grey, blue and red granites (polished or unpolished) may be permitted at the discretion of the incumbent. White marble is not permitted save for infant burials.
14. Photographs, porcelain or plastic portraits are NOT permitted to be affixed to any memorial or to form part of its design.

TREATMENT OF GRAVESPACES AND MAINTENANCE

- 15.1 It is not permitted to introduce kerbs, railings, posts or chains to enclose a grave nor to cover the surface of a grave with chippings or other extraneous materials.
- 15.2 Spring and autumn bulbs may be planted in the soil of any grave but not trees, shrubs or other plants. The flowers etc of such bulbs are liable to be mown in the ordinary course of churchyard maintenance..
- 15.4 The surface of the grave must be levelled and any mound removed within 6 months of a burial having taken place. It should be flattened and turfed or seeded for grass to allow for mowing.
- 15.5 Wreaths and floral tributes may be laid upon a grave and cut flowers arranged in metal or stone vases placed on the memorial plinth. If there is no plinth, a vase may be sunk into the ground below ground level so as not to impede a mower when not containing flowers. Glass, ceramic and plastic containers are not permitted.
 - Silk and other good quality artificial flowers and Remembrance Day poppies are permitted but once the type of flower is out of season they must be removed. PLASTIC flowers are not permitted. Insurance of a memorial is the responsibility of those ordering its installation.
 - Persons to whom is deputed the day-to-day upkeep of the churchyard may remove wreaths, cut flowers, etc. when they appear to be withered or dead.

CREMATED REMAINS IN THE OLD GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE (by the roadside)

16.1 The Rector may permit cremated remains to be deposited in the churchyard. The remains shall not be scattered, but interred after prior arrangement with the incumbent, preferably directly into the earth without a container.

16.2 Memorial tablets in connection with cremated remains are permitted only in areas designated and set aside for the purpose. They are to be laid horizontally in the ground, sunk so that their surface does not impede a mower passing over them. Such stones shall not exceed 21 inches x 21 inches (533mm x 533mm). In the present Garden of Remembrance, only York Stone squares (12 inches x 12 inches, 300mm x 300mm) are permitted. In addition a 6 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches (150mm x 150mm x 150mm) York Stone flower container is permitted at no extra charge, on the understanding that it may be removed in connection with a future general tidying-up of the present Garden.

Additional inscriptions to existing memorials are permitted in compliance with para 7.

16.3 It is not permitted to introduce kerbs, railings, posts or chains to mark the place of interment nor to cover the surface of the place with chippings nor to mark the spot with any other extraneous materials.

16.4 No new plots will be opened in this garden in future.

CREMATED REMAINS IN THE NEW GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE in use from January 2006

17.1 The Rector may permit cremated remains to be deposited in the churchyard. The remains shall not be scattered, but interred after prior arrangement, directly into the earth without a container.

17.2 Memorial tablets in connection with cremated remains are not permitted in the new Garden of Remembrance. The names, dates of birth and dates of death of those whose remains have been interred in the Garden will be inscribed on the vertical stones as soon as possible after interment. Flowers may later be placed on the flagstones surrounding the stones.

17.3 Wreaths and floral tributes may be laid upon the place of interment at the time of interment ONLY.

17.4 It is not permitted to introduce kerbs, railings, posts or chains to mark the place of interment nor to cover the surface of the place with chippings nor to mark the spot with any other extraneous materials.

17.5 Persons to whom is deputed the day-to-day upkeep of the churchyard may remove wreaths, cut flowers, etc. after a reasonable period, and usually on a weekly basis.

17.6 Artificial flowers are not permitted with the exception of Remembrance Day poppies.

CREMATED REMAINS

18. Cremated remains must not be scattered on the surface of the ground but must be interred into the earth. Arrangements for interment must always be made only after prior consultation with the Rector.

REMOVAL OF MEMORIALS

19. At least ten working days' prior written notice must always be given to the Rector before a memorial is removed - whether for a further inscription or for replacement. The notice must specify the day and time when the memorial is to be removed.

MEMORIAL FOR WHICH A FACULTY MUST BE OBTAINED

20.1 Applications for memorials, the design or dimensions of which fall outside the conditions outlined above, shall be made by means of an application for a Faculty to the Diocesan Registry, Friars, White Friars, Chester, CH1 IXS.

20.2 Individually designed memorials are not discouraged but are subject to the procedures for scrutiny and advice provided for in the Care of Churches Measure, etc. 1991 and a Faculty must be obtained for any such memorial.

No Monument or Tablet may be introduced into the Churchyard without the written permission of the Rector.

Any Monument or Tablet introduced into the Churchyard without the written permission of the Rector will be removed.

No Work should be carried out in the Churchyard without the permission of the Wardens.

**Rev Dr J. C. Cuttell
Mr J. Hulse
Mrs B. Cook**

**Rector of Astbury
Churchwarden
Churchwarden**

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