



DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH

CHURCHYARD RULES

PART I - GENERAL

- Nothing shall be erected or placed, and no work shall be done in the churchyard without the consent of the chancellor of the diocese or of the parish priest (incumbent or priest-in-charge) acting within the authority delegated to him/her by the chancellor. The extent of that authority is set out in Part II below. Where there is no parish priest the permission of the area/rural dean must be obtained and any reference in these rules to the parish priest shall be interpreted accordingly.
- Any consent must be in writing. Any consent given by the chancellor will normally be by faculty (a formal document issued by the diocesan registrar).
- Every application for consent shall be made in the first instance to the parish priest on the form prescribed by the chancellor, and accompanied by the appropriate fee. If the application is not within his/her power to grant, or if he/she does not think fit to grant it, the priest will inform the applicant, who may then apply to the diocesan registrar for a faculty.
- No work should start until a faculty or consent has actually been given. Applicants for monuments should ask the memorial supplier to confirm whether the memorial falls within the scope of the authority delegated by the chancellor under Part II below, or if a faculty will be required. Any contract between the memorial supplier and the client is conditional on the appropriate approval being granted.
- A parish priest cannot give consent to a monument outside the scope of Part II below even if there are existing monuments in the churchyard that are broadly similar. The chancellor is not bound by past practice in the churchyard.
- If there is any evidence of disagreement within a family about a proposed monument, a faculty will be required, so that the chancellor can hear argument from both sides, and the costs of this will be borne by the applicants.
- Applications for earth burial (as opposed to cremation) monuments are unlikely to be considered until at least six months after a burial. Applicants are advised to discuss their proposals informally with the parish priest first.
- The chancellor has power to require the removal of unauthorised memorials and to make orders for costs and impose fines for contempt. He also has power to impose restrictions on funeral directors and stonemasons ignoring these rules in churchyards under his authority.
- No burials may take place in any churchyard that has been officially closed by an Order in Council unless the Order so provides. The only exception is the burial of cremated remains provided that this has first been authorised by faculty.
- The parish priest has sole discretion to refer any application for consent to the chancellor for decision.
- All applications for consent for a memorial inside a church must be referred to the chancellor.

PART II - HEADSTONES AND MEMORIALS

The erection of a headstone or other memorial is a privilege and not a right. The chancellor has delegated to the parish priest power within his/her sole discretion to permit headstones and memorials to persons whose remains are buried in the churchyard or who are not commemorated in another churchyard, provided that they fall within the following provisions:-

- Headstones**
 - Both faces must be flat and not curved and the stone must be erected vertically. The dimensions shall not be more than 4ft (1200mm) high, 3ft (900mm) wide and 6ins (150mm) thick and not less than 2ft 6ins (762mm) high, 1ft 3ins (375mm) wide and 3ins (75mm) thick (slate 2ins). (These measurements include the base.) A headstone shall not be erected within 4ft (1200mm) of the outer wall of the church.
 - The preferred style is a traditional monolith headstone, but lawn-style headstones may be permitted. A base forming an integral part of the design of a headstone is permitted. The headstone must be fixed in accordance with the current National Association of Memorial Masons' Code of Practice and in strict accordance with British Standard 8415 (as amended or replaced from time to time). The person carrying out the work must have adequate public liability insurance and produce evidence of it if so required. A certificate of compliance in the form approved by the chancellor must be issued to the family and to the PCC following the memorial's erection. The base shall not project more than 4ins (100mm) beyond the headstone in any direction. Not more than two vases (not glass) may be incorporated in the base. In such case the base may extend a maximum of 8ins (200mm) in front of the headstone. The base shall itself be fixed on a foundation slab (which may be reinforced concrete) which should be positioned just below the turf so that a mower may pass freely over it. The foundation slab shall extend beyond the base by between 3 and 5ins (75 to 124mm) all round.
- Headstones for young children**

It is acknowledged that these are a special case but headstones should be large enough to be seen easily so that they are not damaged inadvertently and they should be strong enough to survive accidental knocks. In these cases therefore, the minimum size is 1ft 6ins in height by 1ft in width by 3ins thick (460mm x 300mm x 75mm) for all materials other than slate which must have a minimum thickness of 1½ ins (30mm).
- Cremated Remains**
 - These may, subject to (b) below, be commemorated by a memorial (including wedge shaped memorials) not exceeding 1ft 9ins (535mm) square, upright or flush with the turf. A vase may be incorporated.
 - However, where a part of the churchyard has been specially set aside by faculty for the burial of cremated remains nothing shall be introduced into that area except in accordance with the terms of the faculty.
- Materials**

Headstones and memorials must not be garish in colour nor darker than Welsh slate nor lighter than Portland limestone or Cornish silver-grey granite. They must be of natural stone but not marble of any colour and not black, red or pink granite.

Stones traditionally used in local buildings or closely similar to them in colour and texture are to be preferred. The stone including the lettering surface shall not be mirror polished (i.e. highly polished so as to reflect or any finer than a 220 grade hone). Solid wood memorials are permitted with a natural matt finish.

All other materials are prohibited including concrete, synthetic and/or composite stone, plastic, fibre-glass and metal.
- Prohibited items**

Kerbs, surrounds, railings, stone or other chippings, statues, sundials, bird baths, portraits, wind-chimes, windmills and the like, candles, trees, shrubs, photographs, holograms, laminated cards, seats, lights, toys, horizontal ledgers and slabs, and other things not specifically permitted by these rules are prohibited.
- Shape and inscriptions**

Memorials should have a simple shape and shall not be in the form of a figure, heart, book or anything else unusual. Designs of a simple nature and/or words may be incised on one side only.

Inscriptions must not be profane or offensive. The parish priest has discretion to allow familiar or idiomatic expressions or to refer the inscription to the chancellor for his decision.

All lettering must be incised. Uncoloured lettering is preferred, although black, silver or gold may be allowed, but not leaded. Further inscriptions may be added with the written consent of the parish priest, usually on a second interment in the same grave. Existing lettering may in such a case be renovated so as to match the new, but not otherwise.

No advertisement or trade mark shall be inscribed on the monument, but the name of the mason may be inscribed at the side or on the reverse of a headstone in letters no more than ½in (15mm) in height.
- Crosses**
 - Because the cross is the supreme Christian symbol, every application for a memorial in the shape of a cross (other than a temporary wooden marker) will be considered on its individual merits.
 - Informal guidance shall be sought as early as possible from the DAC or the registrar, who will consult the chancellor.
 - If the proposed memorial is of a shape, height and stone similar to other memorials in the churchyard and is clearly in keeping with the appearance of that churchyard, the chancellor may remit the matter to the parish priest's delegated discretion without the need for a faculty.
 - All other applications shall proceed by way of faculty and the DAC's formal advice shall be obtained as part of that process.
- Coffins and caskets**

These should be made of wood or other biodegradable material.
- Temporary grave-markers**

The parish priest may allow these within his/her delegated authority provided that they consist of a plain wooden stake not exceeding 16" (400 mm) in height above ground. The stake may be in the shape of a cross but the cross-piece should be no longer than 8" (200 mm). The name of the deceased may be painted or stamped on it. Alternatively the stake or cross may include a wooden plaque not exceeding 5" by 3.5" (130 mm by 90 mm) with an attached brass or brass-effect plaque not exceeding 4" by 2.5" (105 mm by 65 mm).

PART III - MANAGEMENT

- As far as possible the surface of the churchyard shall be kept level and free of grave mounds. The PCC may level any mound at its discretion at any time more than twelve months after the latest interment in the grave if the family has not already done so.
- Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of a grave, within the area previously excavated but nothing else. Plants or flowers may be placed in a removable container (not glass). Unless the grave is kept tidy the PCC may treat the grave as part of the turf and mow over it.
- Unwrapped wreaths and cut flowers may be laid on a grave.
- No artificial flowers (other than "silk" flowers ie having a mixture of polyester/cotton) may be placed in the churchyard and if they are, the PCC may remove them without notice.
- The PCC may without notice remove flowers and wreaths (of any kind) if they become unsightly or untidy, and any superfluous vases.
- The PCC may without notice remove any other object not authorised by these rules or by faculty.
- The PCC may delegate the exercise of its powers in respect of the churchyard to an individual or individuals.
- Primary responsibility for the repair and safety of monuments rests with those who erected them, and with their successors. In exercising its general responsibility for the churchyard the PCC is entitled to reimbursement by such persons of its proper and reasonable costs for work done by the PCC to keep monuments and graves safe and in decent order.
- Dogs must be kept under control and not allowed to foul the churchyard. The PCC may require dogs to be kept on leads and may exclude them.

Any query on the interpretation of these rules and any application for faculty should be referred to:-

Diocesan Registrar, Birketts LLP
Providence House, 141 – 145 Princes Street
Ipswich IP1 1QJ, Tel. 01473 406270

Where authorised by a faculty, a PCC may have its own churchyard rules and/or set aside certain areas of the churchyard where specific conditions will apply (eg for burial of cremated remains). A faculty is unlikely to be issued if the PCC's rules or conditions would conflict with the diocesan rules.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE

1 May 2009 updated 2 September 2013