

NOTICE RELATING TO CHURCHYARDS

Re-issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese, 2008

CHURCHYARD MANAGEMENT

1. The Parochial Church Council is responsible, under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, for the appearance care and maintenance of the Churchyard.
2. The Incumbent and PCC must maintain an up to date plan of the churchyard.
3. The introduction, alteration or reconstruction of any tombstone or other monument must be dealt with according to the following Churchyard Rules.
4. Every Parochial Church Council should make regulations for the proper exercise of its powers and duties. Specimen regulations can be obtained from the Diocesan Registry and may be adopted or modified by the PCC to suit local circumstances.
5. A PCC may adopt more stringent local Churchyard Rules under faculty.
6. **The existence in churchyards of tombstones or monuments which do not comply with the terms of this Notice cannot be regarded as a precedent.**

CHURCHYARD RULES

Part I Introduction of tombstones or other monuments

No tombstone or other monument may be introduced without permission

1. The **Incumbent** has powers delegated to him or her by the Chancellor. These powers allow him or her to give permission lasting for a period of up to 100 years for any tombstone or monument which complies with the provisions of the Appendix so long as the relatives maintain the tombstone or monument in good repair. Churchwardens and sequestrators have no power to permit the introduction of any tombstone or other monument into a churchyard. If the benefice is vacant or contact with the incumbent cannot be made the Rural Dean or the Diocesan Registrar should be consulted.
2. The **Archdeacon** has power (outside the incumbent's powers) to permit an individually designed monument which is of artistic merit according to instructions given to him by the Chancellor. (Applications should be made in writing to the Archdeacon.) This power is given to encourage variety and the improvement of aesthetic standards.
3. The **Chancellor** has power to allow by faculty the introduction of any kind of tombstone or other monument into a churchyard. Statutory fees are payable at the time of applying for a faculty. Full details and application forms can be obtained from the Diocesan Registry.

Application for permission to erect a tombstone or monument must be made on the official form (obtainable from the Old Deanery, Wells BA5 2UG or the Diocesan Registry, 14 Market Place, Wells BA5 2RE) and must come within the provisions set out in the Appendix.

(If there is any reason for concern the incumbent should refer to the Archdeacon)

Part II Burial of Cremated Remains

In many churchyards (open and closed) areas have been set aside exclusively for the burial of cremated remains. In seeking permission for such an area the PCC should first consult the Archdeacon. A DAC paper gives good advice, and a faculty will usually be necessary. The faculty itself will often specify the type of memorialisation allowed in the area.. Otherwise memorial plaques and other monuments marking cremated remains shall comply with the provisions of the Appendix. The occasional interment of cremated remains is acceptable in the general churchyard area. Small memorial plaques are permitted on top of graves where cremated remains are interred subsequent to burials.

Cremated remains should preferably be put into the ground without a box although a container which is biodegradable is acceptable.

APPENDIX

1. **Headstones** (including any plinth) shall be no more than 1200mm (4 feet) high above ground, 900mm (3 feet) wide and 180 mm (7 inches) thick and no less than 750mm (2 feet 6 inches) high above ground, 500mm (1 foot 8 inches) wide and 75mm (3 inches) thick, and shall not be erected within 1200mm (4 feet) of the outer wall of the church. The stone should preferably be sunk without any plinth having one-third of its total length below ground level. Alternatively, the headstone may be securely fixed below the level of the turf to a ground anchorage complying with British Standard 8415 or giving an equivalent degree of stability.
2. **Crosses** no more than 1200mm (4 feet) high above ground are acceptable.
3. **Horizontal ledgers** (over burials) shall be just below the level of the turf and measure not more than 2100mm (7 feet) x 900mm (3 feet) nor less than 1200mm (4 feet) x 600mm (2 feet).
4. **Memorial plaques** over cremated remains shall be just below the level of the turf and measure not more than 450mm (18 inches) x 400 mm (16 inches).
5. **Vases shall be separate** – measuring not more than 300mm x 200mm x 200mm (12 inches x 8 inches x 8 inches)
6. **Monuments may be of natural wood or natural stone.** Stones traditionally used in local buildings or closely similar to them in colour and texture are appropriate.
7. **Stone shall not be polished or reflective.**
8. **Black and pearl granite, marble of any colour, synthetic stone and plastic shall not be permitted.**
9. **A monument shall not include** any raised kerb, railings, stone or other chippings, picture or photograph, built-in vase container, statuary or bird bath. All monuments shall be simple in shape. No colour shall be introduced except black, white or gold.
10. **No advertisement or trade-mark** shall be inscribed on the monument, but the name of the mason may be incised at the side or on the reverse of a headstone in unpainted and unleaded letters no more than 13mm in height.
11. Responsibility for the safe installation of any memorial rests with the monumental mason. The person who purchased the memorial, and after that person's death the heirs of the deceased, have an ongoing liability for its maintenance in a safe condition.