

DIOCESE OF COVENTRY

CHANCELLOR'S CHURCHYARD REGULATIONS

To be applied across the Diocese of Coventry as from Easter Sunday 2025, and to be read in conjunction with the Churchyard Memorial Regulations (introduced by Additional Matters Order No.1 of 2025).

- 1) These Regulations (in conjunction with the Diocese of Coventry Churchyard Memorial Regulations) set out what is and what is not permitted in the churchyards of Coventry Diocese. In particular the Churchyard Memorial Regulations identify those memorials and related items which can, and those which cannot, be permitted by parish priests without the need for a faculty from the Consistory Court.
- 2) Clergy and churchwardens are reminded that parish priests can only permit those memorials which are within their authority under these Regulations. Any application for a memorial which does not accord with these Regulations should be referred to the Chancellor (through the Registry).
- 3) Clergy should also refer to the Chancellor (informing the Archdeacon that they have done so) any application of the following kinds:
 - a) Applications where there is any doubt as to whether the proposed memorial is of a permitted type;
 - b) Applications where the minister and/or churchwardens believe that he/she/they are being subjected to pressure to permit an unauthorised memorial;
 - c) Applications where the memorial is of a permissible type but where the minister, for any reason, is not willing to give permission.

The Nature of Churchyards.

- 4) First and foremost, churchyards are consecrated to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Accordingly, they must be treated and cared for in a manner consistent with that consecrated status. Churchyards can also fulfil important spiritual roles and can be a powerful part of the Church's witness to the world. They provide appropriate settings for Christian places of worship and as such send out a message of the Church's commitment to offering to God the very best

products of human artistic skill. They contain memorials to departed Christians demonstrating the Church's continuing love for them and belief in the communion of saints.

- 5) The circumstances of interment and the memorials in a churchyard can be powerful evidence of the Church's love for the local community and are an important part of our ministry to the bereaved. Churchyards are places of solace and relief for those who mourn. In addition, many people find comfort in knowing that their mortal remains will be interred in a particular churchyard and in a particular setting. That comfort derives in part from a confidence that the character of that setting will be preserved. Finally, churchyards are an important part of our national and local heritage. Our care for them is part of the Church's work of stewardship of our heritage and of the created world.
- 6) The memorials placed in our churchyards must be fitting and appropriate and they must be fitting and appropriate not just for today but also for the future.

The Purpose of these Regulations.

- 7) The purpose of these Regulations is to preserve and enhance the quality of our churchyards while minimising the scope for conflict and discord when decisions have to be made as to the form of memorials. The Regulations exist to create fairness, equality and consistency of treatment for all. They seek to promote peace, dignity and good order in churchyards where it is necessary to balance the concerns of the past, present and future and where there will, inevitably, be a spectrum of views about what is appropriate.
- 8) The general approach is that each churchyard should be harmonious in appearance and that it should remain as a worthy setting for the church. Harmony does not mean uniformity, but the design and choice of materials for a memorial, and the choice of words and images for an inscription, should seek to ensure that the memorial integrates into the established character of the churchyard.
- 9) The Churchyard Memorial Regulations set out those matters which may and those which may not be authorised by a minister (or such other member of clergy to whom delegated authority has been given). Any proposed memorial or

inscription which is not within the scope of those Regulations requires a faculty granted by the Consistory Court. Nothing may be erected or placed in a churchyard without either the written consent of the member of Clergy to whom authority has been delegated or a faculty from the Consistory Court. Any person who is found responsible for the unlawful introduction of a memorial of any kind into a churchyard is likely to be required by the Chancellor to remove it and will be ordered to meet the cost of doing so (including court fees).

- 10) These Regulations and the associated Churchyard Memorial Regulations are intended as a guide for parish priests, churchwardens, Parochial Church Councils, and those considering interment or the erection of a memorial in a churchyard. They are not a comprehensive statement of all the legal provisions governing churchyards. Any person who has doubts as to those legal provisions should consult the Diocesan Registry.
- 11) Any minister, churchwarden, PCC member, parishioner, or memorial mason who has any question about these Regulations, or about matters relating to a memorial in a churchyard, should not hesitate to consult the Diocesan Registry or the Archdeacon.
- 12) Parish clergy, churchwardens, and Parochial Church Councils are urged to give wide publicity to these Regulations and the associated Churchyard Memorial Regulations. In particular they should ensure that any memorial masons who do work in the churchyard confirm that they are familiar with them. Relatives approaching clergy or churchwardens with a view to arranging an interment should be told of the effect of both sets of Regulations at an appropriate but early stage in the discussions with them.

Burial in a Churchyard.

- 13) Various people have a right to be buried in a churchyard, and the Church welcomes those who wish to exercise that right. However, even when there is a legal right to burial in churchyard, there is no right to a memorial nor to have any

particular inscription on a memorial. Those are matters which need separate permission.

- 14) The Church seeks to minister with love to the bereaved; to extend to them the Good News of Christ's victory over death; and to provide a fitting resting place for the mortal remains of the departed. However, no one is obliged to bury their departed spouse or relative in consecrated ground. It follows that those who seek to arrange a burial and to erect a memorial in a churchyard will have chosen to do so. When making that choice the family of a departed person need to understand that these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations will apply to a burial in a churchyard. It is strongly recommended that when the question of interment in a churchyard is first raised the parish priest explains both the Church's welcome to the bereaved and also the nature of the restrictions imposed on memorials.
- 15) Parish clergy and churchwardens should explain that the restrictions imposed by these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations are not a matter of their personal choice and that they cannot depart from them. The welcome given to those seeking to arrange a burial in a churchyard should also make it clear that a churchyard is not a private place. It is a place where many people have a shared interest in its appearance. Accordingly, the decision as to what is placed in a churchyard cannot be simply a matter of private choice.
- 16) The maintenance of memorials is the responsibility of those who erect them and, after those persons have died, of the heirs of the person commemorated. However, the churchyard as a whole also has to be maintained. Often those who seek burial in a churchyard do not appreciate that the expense of such maintenance falls on the local parish. Ministers should not hesitate to explain that expense. They should encourage the relatives of those buried in a churchyard to make periodic gifts towards the cost of upkeep (particularly if they are not contributing to the Church in other ways).
- 17) It is important that those making decisions about memorials do so after proper reflection and not when they are most acutely feeling their loss. For that reason, no application for a memorial may be determined/authorised within six months

of the burial. The exception is that, where such a custom exists, a memorial stone bearing name and dates may be installed horizontally over the interment plot in an area of a churchyard set aside for the interment of cremated remains, at the discretion of the Minister (or Area Dean where there is an interregnum), as soon after the interment as seems appropriate. The exception does not apply where cremated remains have been interred in an ordinary grave plot.

The Scope and Effect of these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations.

- 18) The permission of the Consistory Court is needed for the erection of any memorial in a churchyard. By way of relaxation of that legal rule, the Chancellor authorises certain ministers to approve memorials and inscriptions without the need for a faculty application, provided that such memorials and inscriptions fall within the limits set out in the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. For these purposes, the term ‘minister’ shall be taken to mean the incumbent of the benefice in which the burial ground is situated. If there is no incumbent, or the benefice is for whatever reason vacant, then the person acting as priest in charge of the parish (which may be an Associate Minister/Associate Vicar) or the curate licensed to the charge of the parish shall be treated as the minister. If there is no priest or curate of that description (or if any of the aforesaid people is unable or unwilling to act), the area dean of the deanery in which the parish is situated shall be deemed to be the minister. A curate should consult with the Area Dean before acting in the role of Minister. In case of doubt, the matter may be referred to the chancellor (through the Diocesan Registry) whose direction as to who shall be treated as minister for the purposes of the regulations shall be conclusive. Neither a churchwarden nor any member of a Parochial Church Council has any authority to permit the introduction of memorials into a churchyard. Ministers are not entitled to delegate their authority to permit memorials to a churchwarden or any other person, although they may consult a churchwarden or other suitable person when considering whether a proposed memorial is appropriate in a particular churchyard.

- 19) The Churchyard Memorial Regulations apply not only to new memorials but also to existing memorials to which any alteration or addition is proposed. For the avoidance of doubt, amendment to an existing memorial stone or cremation plaque requires the authority of a faculty save as is permitted by Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. Even under Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations it is not permissible to turn over a horizontally laid stone to add an entirely new inscription without a faculty. The delegation of authority given to a minister does not include any authority to permit amendment to any memorial once installed, except as is permitted in Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations.
- 20) Where a memorial to an individual already exists (whether in the same churchyard or elsewhere) then a further memorial to that individual can only be authorised by faculty granted by the Consistory Court, and the minister cannot permit such a memorial under these Regulations. Any request to add a further inscription to any headstone, memorial stone, cremation plaque or other item to honour the memory of another person will require permission by way of a faculty save as is permitted by Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. (For the avoidance of doubt, Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations applies to inscriptions for those persons additionally interred or buried in the grave or interment plot on which the memorial has been installed).
- 21) A memorial to a person whose remains have not been interred in the churchyard in question will normally require a faculty application, even if there is no other memorial to that person. However, in such cases ministers should consult the Archdeacon who will refer the matter to the Chancellor to consider whether a faculty application is required.
- 22) The permanent removal of a memorial requires a faculty and cannot be authorised by the minister. However, the minister can authorise the temporary removal of a memorial for repair or for the addition of a further inscription falling within the scope of these Regulations.
- 23) It is unlawful to erect a memorial in a churchyard without either a faculty or written permission given in accordance with these Regulations and the

Churchyard Memorial Regulations. The Chancellor has power to require the removal of any unauthorised memorial or any unauthorised inscription. As explained above, when that power is exercised any person who was responsible for the unlawful memorial or inscription is likely to be ordered to pay the cost of removal (including court costs and fees).

What can be permitted by a Parish Minister: The Shape, Fixing, and Material of Memorials.

- 24) The permitted shape, form, fixing and material to be used for any memorial is as defined in the Diocese of Coventry Churchyard Memorial Regulations, introduced by Additional Matters Order No.1 of 2025.

Diocese of Coventry Churchyard Memorial Regulations Schedule 1. Matters Not Requiring a Faculty

Part 1. General Provisions

- 1.1 *The matters which may be undertaken without a faculty are:*

- (a) the introduction of a new memorial that complies with the specifications in Part 2 of this Schedule; and*
- (b) the repair or alteration of an existing memorial as described in Part 3,*

provided that they have been approved in accordance with the procedure set out in Schedule 2.

- 1.2 *In this Schedule,*

*“base” means the component supporting a memorial on its foundation;
“cremated remains tablet” means a rectangular stone or slate tablet placed above the cremated remains of the person commemorated, the upper face of which is flush with the surrounding ground;*

“foundation” means the element that connects a memorial to the ground and transfers the load from the memorial to the ground; the top surface of the foundation being flush with the surrounding ground or below ground level;

“grave” means a place of burial below ground level;

“headstone” means a “lawn memorial” or a “monolith memorial” erected at the head of a grave;

“incised” in relation to lettering, motifs, emblems or other images, includes being cut either by hand or by machine;

“inscription plate” means a stone forming part of a memorial, into which is incised lettering relating to the person whose body is buried there or whose death is being commemorated;

“lawn memorial” means an independent vertical inscription plate attached to a horizontal base which is fixed to a foundation;

“memorial” means a freestanding object installed in a churchyard in memory of the deceased;

“monolith memorial” means an independent vertical inscription plate set into a pre-cast concrete shoe-type foundation which is set directly into the ground;

“the British Standard” means British Standard BS 8415:2018 Memorials within burial grounds and memorial sites – Specification¹, or any similar standard that may replace BS 8415:2018;

“wooden cross memorial” means a memorial in the form of a wooden cross erected at the head of a grave, into which is incised the name of the person commemorated and the date on which that person died.

Part 2. The Introduction of a New Memorial

Basic principle

1.3 Any new memorial is erected so as to comply with the details specified in the British Standard, so far as relevant.

The form of a new memorial

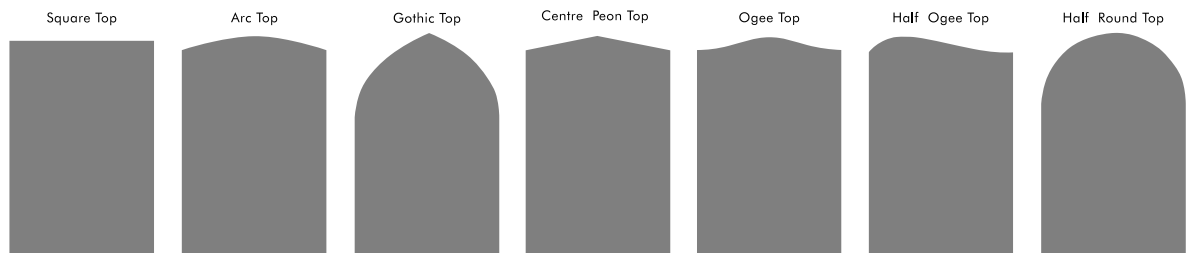
1.4 The memorial is:

- (a) in the form of a headstone;*
- (b) in the form of a wooden cross memorial;*
- (c) in the form of a lawn memorial erected by or on behalf of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission;*
- (d) a cremated remains tablet.*

1.5 In the case of a headstone, the shape of the inscription plate is one of those in Diagram 1, or one similar to one of the shapes in that diagram.

¹ Copies of this may be inspected at major public libraries, or from some memorial masons.

Diagram 1



- 1.6 *In the case of a wooden cross memorial, adequate provision is made to prevent premature degradation below ground level.*
- 1.7 *Paragraph 1.4(d) does not apply where cremated remains are interred in a grave that is already marked by a headstone or a wooden cross memorial.*
- 1.8 *The memorial does not include attached plaques, or kerbs, railings, chippings, statues, or other objects.*
- 1.9 *The memorial is located so that no part of it is closer than 1500mm to the wall of the church.*

The dimensions of the memorial

1.10 In the case of a headstone:

- (a) *the height of the memorial is between 450mm and 1220mm;*
- (b) *the width of the inscription plate is between 500mm and 915mm;*
- (c) *the thickness of the inscription plate fixed to a base is between 75mm and 105mm;*
- (d) *the thickness of a slate monolith is between 50mm and 105mm;*
- (e) *the base, if any, is not larger than 915mm in width, 460mm in depth (front to back), and 155mm thick.*

1.11 In the case of a wooden cross memorial:

- (a) *the height of the cross is between 750mm and 1220mm;*
- (b) *the width of the cross is between 500mm and 815mm;*
- (c) *the thickness of the timber is between 40mm and 55mm; and*
- (d) *the section of the memorial below the ground is at least one third of the height of the section above the ground.*

1.12 In the case of a cremated remains tablet:

- (a) *the size and shape are similar to those of others in the immediate vicinity; and*

(b) *in any case the longest dimension is not more than 450mm.*

1.13 *The height of a memorial is to be measured from ground level; and in the case of sloping ground or ground that has been re-contoured to accommodate the burial, “ground level” is the level of the ground immediately adjacent to the centre point of the rear of the base once the interment has been completed.*

The materials and colour of the memorial

1.14 *In the case of a headstone or a cremated remains tablet, it is made of slate or one of the following types of natural stone:*

(a) *sandstone;*

(b) *limestone; or*

(c) *granite.*

1.15 *The colour of the slate or stone is not such as to render the memorial discordant in the context of the church and churchyard.*

1.16 *In the case of a headstone, the principal surface of the inscription plate is not polished or reflective.*

1.17 *In the case of a cremated remains tablet, the surface is not polished or reflective.*

The inscription on the memorial

1.18 *Any inscription is:*

(a) *factually accurate;*

(b) *not considered by the minister to be likely to be offensive or controversial for any reason; and*

(c) *not inconsistent with Christian doctrine.*

1.19 *The inscription includes:*

(a) *the name of the person being commemorated (which may be or may include the name by which that person was generally known); and*

(b) *the date or year in which that person died; and*

(c) *either the date or year in which that person was born, or the age of that person at death.*

1.20 *Where any text in the inscription is in a language other than English, an agreed formal translation has been supplied to the minister for retention in the parish records*

1.21 *Any lettering is*

(a) *uncoloured; or*

(b) *coloured in a single colour, which does not render the memorial discordant in the context of the church and churchyard. (Gilded or silvered lettering is not*

permitted unless there are already within the immediate area of the grave more than five other memorials that have gilded or silvered lettering)

1.22 *Any lettering on:*

- (a) the principal face of the inscription plate of a headstone;*
- (b) a wooden cross; or*
- (c) a cremated remains tablet;*

is incised into the face of the memorial and not more than 50mm in height.

1.23 *In the case of a headstone or a cremated remains tablet, any motif, emblem or other image forming part of the design of the memorial*

- (a) is of a character commonly found in churchyard memorials within the Church of England, or is relevant to the life of the person commemorated;*
- (b) is a fitting complement to the wording forming the rest of the design;*
- (c) does not exceed 20% of the face of the headstone; or, if there is more than one image (maximum of two), no more than 20% in total';*
- (d) is incised into the stone;*
- (e) is uncoloured, or coloured in such a manner that the memorial is not discordant in the context of the church and churchyard in a single colour; and*
- (f) is not inconsistent with Christian doctrine.*

Photographs or images of the deceased are not permitted.

1.24 *In the case of a headstone, there is no lettering or image other than on the principal face of the inscription plate, except for a reference to the mason (in lettering not higher than 15mm).*

1.25 *The memorial MUST NOT contain a QR code (quick response code), or any other device intended to enable direct communication with an electronic resource.*

Part 3. The Repair or Alteration of an Existing Memorial

1.26 *Any existing memorial being repaired or altered has been lawfully introduced into the churchyard, or has been in place for at least six years.*

1.27 *If a memorial is removed and re-erected in the course of being repaired or altered, it is re-erected so as to comply with the details specified in the British Standard.*

1.28 Any alteration of or addition to the inscription on a memorial is in the same style and finish as the original inscription; and the inscription on the memorial as altered complies with the paragraphs 1.18 to 1.25 above.

Schedule 2. Approval Procedure

The procedure to be followed prior to the undertaking of any matter contained in Schedule 1 is as follows.

- (a) An application in the form annexed to [the Churchyard Memorial Regulations] is to be sent to the minister (as defined in paragraph 8 of [the additional matters order No.1 of 2025]);*
- (b) Such form is to be duly signed by the applicant(s) and by the memorial mason;*
- (c) If the minister or other authorised person gives permission, this is to be endorsed in writing in the relevant section of the form, whereupon the matter may proceed;*
- (d) If an applicant petitions for a faculty to admit the said memorial, then for that purpose, under rule 20.6 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 (as amended), it is directed that the completed form [as annexed to Schedule 2 of the additional matters order No.1 of 2025] shall be treated as the petition.*

What a Parish Minister cannot permit.

- 25) The Minister may not permit a memorial which does not fully comply with the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. If the minister has any doubt as to whether a proposed memorial complies with the Regulations, or for any reason is unwilling to authorise a proposed memorial, he or she should decline to authorise the same. In those circumstances the persons seeking to install the memorial in question will have to apply for a faculty from the Consistory Court.
- 26) The minister may not permit a memorial on a grave-space to be installed unless there has been an interval of at least six months between the date of interment and the determination of the application for the memorial. That rule is relaxed for the introduction of memorials over a plot in an area for interment of cremated remains, where a tablet in accordance with that permitted in the Churchyard Memorial Regulations may be installed as soon as is appropriate following interment, if the minister is satisfied it would be appropriate for such a tablet to be used. The allowance does not apply to cremated remains interred in an earth grave nor where the Parish policy is to have no individual memorials for cremated remains.

How to apply to a Parish Minister for Permission.

- 27) Applications should be made to the minister on the official diocesan application form and the information required on that form should be provided in full. No order for creation of a memorial should be placed before the applicant has obtained either the minister's written consent or a faculty.
- 28) The application form can be obtained from parish priests and will also be downloadable from the diocesan website (or completed on-line, then downloaded). Those considering seeking permission for a memorial are strongly recommended to consult the relevant parish priest before engaging in any discussions with a monumental mason. Parish priests should not be influenced in their application of these Regulations or the Churchyard Memorial Regulations by any arrangements made with monumental masons before the Parish Priest has been consulted.

Applications for Permission to erect Memorials which do not comply with the Regulations.

- 29) These Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations are intended to ensure the application of a consistent approach which is fair to all and to identify those memorials which will normally be appropriate. A proposed memorial which does not accord with the Churchyard Memorial Regulations can only be authorised by the grant of a faculty.
- 30) Notwithstanding the above, it is not the purpose of these Regulations or the Churchyard Memorial Regulations to suppress quality or individuality in favour of an unthinking uniformity. Churchyards can be enriched by memorials which are outside the norm, whether their difference from the norm is in appearance, material, or design. Memorials which display individuality and originality are to be encouraged. Attractive, well-conceived new designs by skilled and imaginative craftsmen are genuinely welcomed. They can be objects of beauty demonstrating thought and imagination and can make a positive and lasting contribution to the appearance of a churchyard. An individually designed

memorial with hand-cut lettering need cost little more than a memorial that is mass-produced. The Church welcomes proposals for individually designed memorials of high quality and the Chancellor urges clergy and churchwardens to draw the attention of the bereaved to the possibility of such memorials. Schedule 2 of these regulations gives some relevant contact details.

- 31) It is particularly important in such instances that the memorial is well designed and is of the highest quality. It is for that reason that memorials of unusual design can only be permitted after a faculty has been granted. Those considering applying for such a memorial should consult the minister at an early stage. If necessary, guidance can then be obtained from the Archdeacon or the Diocesan Registry as to the procedure to be adopted.

Parish Churchyard Policies.

- 32) There are several churchyards which already contain a significant number of memorials falling outside the scope of those authorised by the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. In some of these it would be unrealistic and artificial to limit future memorials to those within the scope of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. However, it remains important even in such churchyards to have a system for controlling what is and what is not permissible. In such cases, and in order to ensure appropriate regulation for the future, the Parochial Church Council is encouraged to adopt and to seek approval for a Parish Churchyard Policy. Such a policy will operate to set out the limits for what will and will not be permissible in the churchyard in question without a faculty.
- 33) The procedure for drawing up and seeking approval for such a policy is set out in Schedule 1 of these regulations. A Parish Churchyard Policy will not take effect until it has been approved by the Chancellor.
- 34) Where a Parish Churchyard policy has been approved by the Chancellor it will operate instead of these Regulations or the Churchyard Memorial Regulations. It will only be in the most exceptional of cases that the Chancellor will, by faculty, permit a memorial or other item which contravenes a Parish Churchyard

Policy, unless the memorial is an individually designed memorial of the kind described in paragraphs 30 & 31.

- 35) Where a Parish Churchyard Policy is in force the Parochial Church Council should review the same to ensure that it continues to meet the circumstances of the churchyard in question. Such reviews should take place at intervals of no more than five years from the date of the approval of the policy.

Areas for the Burial of Cremated Remains.

- 36) A faculty is always needed for the creation or extension of an Area for the Burial of Cremated Remains (“ABCR”) or Garden of Remembrance.
- 37) When there is an existing ABCR at the date when these Regulations come into force its operation will continue to be governed by the terms of the faculty which authorised its creation.
- 38) Each application for a faculty for the creation of a new ABCR, or for an extension to an existing one, will be considered on its merits as different arrangements may be appropriate in different places.
- 39) The overriding requirement is that a proposal for the creation of an ABCR must be the product of careful and prayerful thought and consideration. The ABCR is likely to provide the resting place for the remains of many parishioners and to have a significant impact on the appearance of the churchyard. Accordingly, considerable care is needed to ensure that the layout and design are of the highest possible standard. A proposal which does not demonstrate that such care has been taken will inevitably be unacceptable. Where a Parochial Church Council is considering the creation of an ABCR it should consult the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee at an early stage.
- 40) Although each ABCR will be different in its appearance and design a distinction is to be drawn in general terms between (i) those containing individual memorials to the departed at the points of interment, and (ii) those where the points of interment are unmarked but where there is either a collective memorial or a series of individual memorials on a wall or some other structure unrelated to the individual interments.

- 41) There are a number of powerful considerations which militate against the positioning of individual memorials at the points of interment.
- a) Such memorials can operate as a substantial restriction on the capacity of an ABCR. The placing of a memorial in the form of a plaque covering part of the surface of an ABCR inhibits the reuse of the area under that surface and, such memorials being of materials which will last for very many years, can inhibit that reuse for a long period. There is accordingly, a risk of there being “once and once only” use of each part of the land in an ABCR restricting the area available for the interment of the remains of the departed in the future. Alternatively, distress can be caused when reuse of the site requires the removal and repositioning of the memorials.
 - b) A related factor is the risk of creating an apparently paved area whose appearance will detract from the setting of a churchyard. This risk is present in ABCRs to a greater extent than with interments in traditional graves because of the closer spacing of interments in ABCRs.
 - c) A well-designed general memorial to all interred in an ABCR can be of high artistic quality above and beyond that possible in small individual memorials. As such it can enable bereaved relatives to be assured that there is a proper and fitting and lasting tribute to the departed and can provide a focus for personal grief.
 - d) There are theological and pastoral considerations. The Christian understanding of interment is that it is an act involving the seemingly disposal of mortal remains and is committing, once and for all time, the deceased into the care of God. Although views can differ on the approach to be taken there is very considerable force in the view that the pastoral needs of the bereaved are best met by bringing about an understanding and acceptance of that belief, and that this is assisted by a collective memorial.
- 42) It is important that those who are bereaved are enabled to have a focus for their memories of the departed. A well-designed ABCR should seek to provide such a focus. If there is a collective memorial, and no individual memorials at the sites of interment, then it will normally be appropriate to record the names of those

interred at some point in the ABCR. There are a number of different ways in which this can be done so as to provide an appropriate record without the need for serried ranks of individual memorials on the ground. These can take the form of names being recorded on a central obelisk or equivalent structure; of the incising of names on a plaque fixed to a wall; of a series of small individual plaques fixed to a wall. The Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee can provide examples of these different possibilities. The recording of names in a Book of Remembrance retained in the church building, while an appropriate measure, is unlikely, of itself, to be a sufficient record of the departed to meet the pastoral needs of those that grieve the loss.

- 43) Opinions can legitimately differ as to the appropriate ways of commemorating those whose cremated remains are interred in an ABCR, and there can often be debate as to the respective merits of collective and individual memorials. In addition, the circumstances and needs of different communities, different churches, and different locations will vary. For that reason, each application for a faculty for a new ABCR or for the extension of an existing ABCR will be considered on its merits. The Chancellor will normally expect that, in cases where it is proposed that a new ABCR should take the form of a series of individual memorials at the points of interment, the faculty petition will be accompanied by confirmation that the alternative course of a collective memorial has been considered, together with an explanation of why it is felt individual memorials would be appropriate in the particular case.
- 44) It is the normal practice in the Consistory Court to permit the reuse of an ABCR for further interments after an appropriate period of time which, in cases of pressing need for reuse, may be as little as 25 years after the last interment. Those seeking to inter cremated remains in such an area should be made aware of this.

The Interment of Cremated Remains.

- 45) The well-established practice of burying cremated remains in or immediately adjacent to an existing family grave is to be encouraged. As explained at Part 3 of the Churchyard Memorial Regulations, the minister may permit additional

inscriptions to be added to memorials on such graves so as to record the further interment, provided the proposed inscription otherwise accords with those Regulations and with these.

- 46) Apart from when they are being interred in, or immediately adjacent to, an existing family grave, cremated remains should be interred in an ABCR unless a faculty is granted authorising interment elsewhere.
- 47) Where the faculty authorising the creation of an ABCR permits individual memorials at the point of interment, it will normally specify the permissible size of such memorials. Where, exceptionally, cremated remains are being interred outside an ABCR any memorial must be within the dimensions set out in the Churchyard Memorial Regulations (paragraph 1.12).
- 48) Cremated remains must not be scattered or strewn in a churchyard.
- 49) In many locations it is appropriate that cremated remains be interred by being poured directly into the ground at a point not less than 101mm (4") below the surface.
- 50) If desired, the pouring of cremated remains may take the form of placing a casket in the ground and opening the base of the casket to allow the remains to flow out provided that the casket is then removed. If thought appropriate, the opening of the base and removal of the casket can take place after the departure of the bereaved from the graveside (provided that they have been told in advance that this will be done).
- 51) Cremated remains may be interred in a casket if the minister concludes that such is more appropriate pastorally in the particular case. In such a case the casket must be designed to degrade over a reasonable period of time. The interment of cremated remains in a casket is not permitted unless the remains in the casket are loose and not contained in a plastic bag or other container.

Coffins and Caskets.

- 52) The material used for coffins must be biodegradable. Ministers are urged to encourage the use of coffins made of wool, wicker, or cardboard (suitably lined

with other biodegradable material) as part of the Church's stewardship of the created world.

- 53) The interment of a coffin which is made of metal or of any other material which is not readily biodegradable is not permitted other than by faculty granted by the Chancellor. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that such a faculty will be granted.
- 54) Coffins are to be of a size such as to fit into a standard sized grave-space. The interment of a coffin requiring more than one standard grave-space is not permitted other than by faculty granted by the Chancellor.
American style caskets are not permitted.

Flowers and other Items

- 55) Ministers are to discourage the provision of receptacles for flowers set within memorial tablets. However, if the minister believes that such provision is justified on pastoral grounds he or she may permit the inclusion of a single flower holder in a memorial.
- 56) Artificial flowers are not permitted and should be removed from any memorials on which they are laid. By way of exception to this prohibition the placing of wreaths and poppies is permissible in the periods of and leading up to Remembrance Day, Christmas, and Easter, and on the anniversaries of birth, death, or marriage. Such items are to be removed not more than one month after those occasions. If the items are not removed by those who placed them on the memorials within that period they should be removed by the churchwarden(s) or a person so authorised by the Churchwarden(s) or by the PCC.
- 57) No balloons or other portable items are to be left on a grave save that such items may be left in position for the period of one calendar month after interment. If the items are not then removed by those who placed them on the grave they should be removed by the churchwardens or a person so authorised by the Churchwarden or by the PCC.

- 58) Cut flowers placed on graves quickly wither and become unsightly. The bereaved should be encouraged instead to have flowers placed in church on the anniversary of death or other appropriate occasions.

The Reservation of a Grave-space.

- 59) No grave-space may be reserved without a faculty. Details of the procedure for applying for the reservation of a grave-space can be obtained from the Registry.
- 60) When a grave-space has been reserved it is important that a proper record is kept of its location and of the fact of reservation. The reserved plot should be recorded on a plan of the churchyard. It should usually also be suitably marked on the ground by a marker which is sufficiently visible and durable to ensure that the reservation is readily noticed. In a churchyard where grave-spaces have been reserved the minister and the Parochial Church Council should decide upon a suitable standard form of marker for the reserved spaces. There are a number of ways in which such spaces can be marked including small wooden crosses; small metal markers; and small stone tablets. The Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee can advise on options which might be appropriate for a particular churchyard. In a churchyard where a standard form of marker has been agreed upon by the minister and the Parochial Church Council that form should be adopted unless the petitioner can establish, on application to the Chancellor, that exceptional circumstances exist justifying the use of a different form of marker. The grant of a faculty for the reservation of a grave-space will normally be conditional on arrangements being made for a suitable marker to be installed.
- 61) It is open to a Parochial Church Council to adopt a policy stating that it does not support the reservation of grave-spaces in the churchyard for which it is responsible. Such a policy is not binding on the Chancellor, and an application seeking a faculty to reserve a grave-space in such a churchyard will be decided on its merits. In considering such an application the Chancellor will normally invite the Parochial Church Council to explain the factors which caused it to adopt the policy. However, very considerable weight will be given to such a policy and the applicant for a faculty will normally have to show exceptional

circumstances to justify a departure from such a policy. A policy of opposition to the reservation of grave-spaces should only be adopted after consultation with parishioners and should be subject to debate and approval by a formal resolution of the Parochial Church Council.

- 62) Even where a policy against reservation of grave spaces is not in place the Chancellor will not normally authorise the reservation of a grave-space where such reservation is likely to interfere with the rights of parishioners and where there is a substantial risk that the churchyard will be full an appreciable period before the reserved space is used by the person in whose favour it has been reserved. Whether a particular reservation is likely to have this effect will depend on the age of the petitioner, the number of spaces remaining in the churchyard, and the number of interments which normally occur in the churchyard. The Chancellor will not normally allow a grave-space to be reserved in cases where there is no more than 10 years space remaining in a churchyard.
- 63) Reservations will normally be limited to a period of 50 years but will be renewable on application made before the end of that period.

*The Worshipful Glyn Ross Samuel
Diocesan Chancellor and Vicar-General
1st January 2025*

SCHEDULE 1

PARISH CHURCHYARD POLICIES

The following procedure should be adopted if a Parochial Church Council wishes to adopt a Parish Churchyard Policy to regularise the position in cases where it has been the practice to erect memorials outside the scope of the Regulations.

- i. The Parochial Church Council should set up, where one does not already exist, a management committee for the churchyard. This committee (which need only be small) should study these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations in the light of the particular churchyard, its setting and the type of memorials already in place. However, the mere fact that a state of affairs has been in existence for some time is not, of itself, a sufficient reason for its perpetuation.
- ii. If, after making a study of the churchyard and identifying its particular character, the committee thinks that these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations do not fully answer local needs, the committee should draft a Parish Churchyard Policy. That should be in the spirit of these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations, but taking account of the local needs and circumstances, for example traditions peculiar to a locality might be that a type of stone not normally permitted has long been established as an acceptable introduction. These Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations should be regarded as the starting point and the policy should only make such alterations to them as are truly necessary to meet the needs of the particular churchyard. At this stage the advice of the Archdeacon and of the Diocesan Advisory Committee should be sought.
- iii. The draft Parish Churchyard Policy should be submitted for the approval of the Parochial Church Council. If the Policy is to be taken seriously it should be the product of as wide an opinion sounding as possible. Publishing the intended policy on the church noticeboard; in the parish magazine or a local newsletter; and informing the local press, are likely to be appropriate. It should be remembered that parish churchyard policies will probably be broader than these Regulations and the Churchyard Memorial Regulations in what they would wish to allow.
- iv. If the draft policy has been approved by the Parochial Church Council the same may be submitted to the Chancellor for approval with the comments thereon of the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

v) Consideration should be given to whether the parish policy should cover matters such as the operation of an Area of the Burial of Cremated Remains; the interment of cremated remains; and requests for the reservation of grave spaces.

SCHEDULE 2 USEFUL ADDRESSES AND PUBLICATIONS

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The Churchyard Handbook (4th edition)
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