



Rev. Richard Coleman
The New Rectory
39 Leake Road
Gotham
NG11 0HW

Regulations Governing the Introduction of a Memorial into a Churchyard or Cemetery.

The grave of a loved one is a very personal place and it is understandable that people want to personalise the grave. However there are a number of rules regarding church graveyards and cemeteries, set by the Chancellor of the Diocese, that do not apply to graveyards and cemeteries owned by the Local Authority, and this can sometimes create confusion for families who may not be aware of the differences.

The introduction or the alteration of a memorial in a churchyard is a privilege and not a right, and permission in writing must always be obtained before any work is carried out.

Monuments conforming with the following regulations may be introduced into a churchyard or cemetery with the written permission of the Rector who is acting as the Chancellor's deputy in these matters. The existence of a memorial which does not conform to these regulations is not of itself a reason for giving permission; each application will be decided on its individual merits. The Rector has no authority to approve any memorial that does not comply with these regulations. For any request for a memorial that is outside these regulations, the family may request that the matter is referred to the Chancellor to consider giving permission; please be aware that there will be an additional cost involved.

- i. A headstone shall be between 750mm (2 feet 6 inches) and 1200mm (4 feet) high, measured from the surface of the ground, between 500mm (1 foot 8 inches) and 900mm (3 feet) wide and between 75mm (3 inches) and 150mm (6 inches) thick.
Slate memorials may be between 38mm (1 and a half inches) and 75mm (3 inches) thick.
Granite memorials may be between 50mm (2 inches) and 75mm (3 inches) thick.
- ii. A base forming an integral part of the design of the headstone may be permitted provided that it does not project more than 102mm (4 inches) beyond the headstone in any direction, save that where a receptacle for flowers is provided the receptacle shall be flush with the top of the base and may extend up to 200mm (8 inches) in front of the headstone and up to 102mm (4 inches) behind.
In all cases, due regard must be paid to the nature of the ground and the problem of settlement.
- iii. A foundation slab must be provided which will not interfere with the passage of a mower. This slab should extend between 75mm (3 inches) and 150mm (6 inches) all round.
Gravestones should be fixed in accordance with the Code of Working Practice produced by the National Association of Memorial Masons (www.namm.org.uk).

continued . . .

- iv. Receptacles for flowers as a sole memorial shall be between 200mm (8 inches) and 300mm (12 inches) cubed; and be securely cemented into a sunken slab at the head of the grave.
- v. The stone should be carefully chosen to harmonise with the church building and any other local features. The stone or slate used should have a non-reflective finish, and whilst the surface to be inscribed may have a “fine rubbed” finish, no part of the gravestone may be polished.
- vi. A monument shall not be of imported black, blue or red granite; nor granite darker than Rustenburg grey; nor of white marble; nor of conglomerate, synthetic stone or plastic.
- vii. A monument shall not include chippings (whether of stone or otherwise) or glass shards, or any kerbs, railings or chains.
- viii. Every monument shall be simple in shape but need not be restricted to a rectangular shape — for example, curved tops are to be preferred to straight-edged ones. In particular a monument shall not be in the shape of a cross, heart or book.
- ix. The stencilling upon headstones of general symbols such as candles, tracery windows, etc. is not permitted. However, the hand carving of an appropriate Christian symbol is permitted, as is gold colouring.
- x. Highlighting or colour-shading of scenes on memorials is not permitted, neither are “QR” (Quick Response) codes, porcelain portraits, photographs and “photo-blast etching”.
- xi. Inscriptions must be simple and reverent and must be appropriate in the context of a Christian burial ground. All inscriptions shall be incised or in relief, and may be in black, white, grey or gold. Traditional raised leaded lettering is permitted but plastic or other inserted lettering is not allowed.
- xii. Any addition to, or amendment of, an inscription must be the subject of a separate permission and must conform to the above rules as well as being consistent with the original inscription.
- xiii. No advertisement or trademark may be inscribed upon the monument although the name of the mason or the company’s name may be inscribed at the side or on the back in unleaded letters no larger than 13mm (half an inch) in height.
- xiv. If cremated remains are interred in an existing grave, a separate gravestone or memorial is not permitted, though an inscription may be added to an existing gravestone.

Please use this as a guide to what will be allowed in the churchyard, but be aware that you will need to obtain the Rector’s written permission. This is usually dealt with by the Stonemason, who should obtain this permission before commencing any work on the memorial.

*The information given is for general guidance only
and is not intended to be a definitive statement of the law or the Church’s practice.*

This document was last updated on 10th November 2012.