



PARISH OF ST PETER'S LECKHAMPTON  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
CHURCHYARD REGULATIONS

### **Introduction**

We are fortunate in possessing a beautiful churchyard. It is very important to preserve its beauty, which easily can be spoilt by the introduction of memorials of unsuitable material or design and by inappropriate displays of shrubs and flowers on individual plots.

These regulations are in accord with the Diocesan Regulations. The Diocese encourages an imaginative approach to memorials in churchyards and the PCC is delighted that so many take such an interest in the beautification and upkeep of individual plots.

An individually designed shape and hand-cut lettering need cost little more than a memorial which is machine cut and machine-lettered. Advice on these subjects is freely available from the Secretary to the Diocesan Advisory Committee at Church House.

### **The Introduction of Memorials into the Churchyard**

There is no automatic right to erect a memorial in the churchyard and the plot remains the property of the church. Permission must be obtained and, strictly speaking, requires the authority of the Chancellor of the Diocese. However the Chancellor has delegated certain powers to parish priests and these are detailed below. Certain types of memorial are not permitted, either because they are felt to be inappropriate in appearance, or out of keeping in a Christian burial place, or because they are difficult to maintain, or a combination of these reasons.

Sometimes there will be existing examples in a churchyard of a type of memorial which is no longer permitted. This is not in itself a reason for granting permission for further examples.

### **Applying for Permission**

Requests for permission should be made in writing to the parish priest in the first instance, using the application form at Appendix 1 which may be obtained from the Parish Office. Please note that a minimum of six months must elapse between the death of the person to be commemorated and the application for permission.

If the parish priest is unable or unwilling to grant permission, then a Faculty will need to be applied for to the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches. Advice on how to start this process may be obtained from the Parish Office.

### **What the Parish Priest can permit**

Provided he is happy with the proposed inscription, the parish priest is able to grant permission for

1. **simple upright grave markers** provided they fall within the range and size and material described below,
2. **sloping 'open-book' memorials**, provided that they fall within the range and size and material described below,
3. **wooden crosses** provided they do not exceed the dimensions described below,

4. **additional inscriptions on existing memorials,**
5. **in respect of cremated remains within the Garden of Remembrance,** the memorial should measure 18" (450mm) by 12" (305mm) and the inscription should be portrait oriented.
6. **in respect of burial of cremated remains within an existing grave,** simple flush horizontal markers.

### **Size of the Memorial**

Headstones may be up to the following dimensions above ground

Height	4'0" (1200mm)
Width	3'0" (900mm)
Thickness	6" (150mm)

NB. These measurements are not intended to define standard proportions of memorials which may be of any dimension within the given limits.

### **Shape and Design**

The parish priest may only approve grave markers as set out in 1-6 above. He is not allowed to permit any other form of memorial, including horizontal ledger slabs, crosses other than wooden, stone kerbs, chippings, sculpture or statuary. A simple wooden frame may be allowed in order to outline a plot or part thereof. Maximum dimensions are 900mm x 2000mm. The wood is to be no more than 50mm thick and is to be flush with the ground. Applications should be made to the parish priest.

### **Erection of Memorials**

The base of the memorial may be shaped so that it can be inserted into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability. Alternatively, a headstone may stand on a stone base, provided that it does not project above ground level. It must be an integral part of the design and must not project more than 4" (102mm) beyond the headstone in any direction, except where a receptacle for flowers is provided in which case this should be flush with the top of the base and may extend up to 8" (200mm) in front of the headstone.

Earth from the excavation of the plot should be heaped over the grave to a maximum height of 15" (382mm), to allow for sinkage, and the turf replaced.

All excess earth is to be removed from the churchyard immediately after the funeral.

### **Materials**

The parish priest may permit memorials made of any natural stone or hardwood with the following exceptions:

- White or Black Marble
- Any granite other than unpolished grey
- Any other use of a reflective polished surface.

### **Lettering**

Inscriptions should be incised or in relief and may be infilled in a colour. Lead infilled lettering is permitted, but no other form of applied lettering. Great care should be taken in selecting the wording and advice may be sought from the parish priest. An imaginative approach to the epitaph is encouraged but excessive sentimentality is to be avoided. Any subsequent alteration to the wording must be separately approved.

The mason's name or mark may be inscribed on the side or on the reverse in letters no longer than ½ inch (13mm) in height. No other advertisement or trade marks may be inscribed on or fixed to a memorial.

## **Decoration**

The parish priest may permit appropriate Christian or other symbols, for example depiction of items connected with the profession or leisure interest of the person commemorated.

The parish priest is NOT allowed to permit photographs or ceramic portraits or any other form of depiction of the person commemorated.

## **Responsibility for Maintaining Memorials**

The PCC cannot be responsible for maintaining memorials in the churchyards. Checks may however be carried out from time to time to ensure that memorials have not become hazardous. If it appears that a memorial is in a dangerous condition, the PCC may decide that it should be laid on the ground in order to avoid accidents.

Those wishing to erect a memorial should bear in mind that the church insurances do not cover damage to churchyard memorials, and they may wish to consider arranging their own insurance cover. Anyone who erects a gravestone is legally responsible for any damage it may cause.

## **Maintenance of Plots**

Except where the design of a headstone includes an integral vessel for plants or cut flowers, flowers may only be placed in a removable container. Wreaths and cut flowers may be placed on any grave but should be removed as soon as they appear to be withered or dead.

No artificial flowers are allowed except for Remembrance Day Poppies and Christmas wreaths and these should be removed after a reasonable time

The PCC may at its discretion at any time remove and dispose of any wreaths or cut flowers placed in the churchyard if it is considered that they have deteriorated and/or become unsightly.

Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of any grave. No trees or shrubs may be planted without the agreement of the PCC.

Where possible, a minimum of 24" (610mm) is to be left around the plot to allow access by the mowers.

Further details can be found at [www.glosdioc.org.uk/Downloads/Docs/ch018.pdf](http://www.glosdioc.org.uk/Downloads/Docs/ch018.pdf)