



# St Thomas' Churchyard

## information and guidance

St Thomas' churchyard was officially closed in 2004. This means that there are **NO NEW** spaces available for burials or interring ashes.

However, a number of people reserved spaces before the churchyard was closed, and these may continue to be used. It is also possible, where there is room, to use an existing family plot either for another burial or to place (inter) ashes in that grave or ashes space.

### **This booklet contains**

**Guidance prepared by the Diocese of Coventry** about the types of gravestones and other monuments that are permitted in the churchyard. This is a summary of the full regulations which can be found at the web address shown on the back page.

**2 copies of the application form;** if you wish to have any sort of new gravestone in the churchyard, or to change an existing one, both copies must be filled in and signed by yourself and your stonemason.

# **Churchyard Regulations**

## **Guidance for the erection of memorials**

We understand that you would like to erect a memorial in your local churchyard and your local vicar with your stonemason will want to do all that they can to help with this.

A Churchyard memorial is very significant. It is important, therefore, to make sure that every memorial erected in a churchyard meets a family's needs. Yet, at the same time, we have to think of the needs of: -

- Other families, who will have loved ones buried nearby
- The local church, on whom the upkeep of the churchyard normally falls
- Generations to come, who will be looking at the memorial long after today's bereaved people are themselves dead

The burial of a relative does not automatically give the right to have a memorial. Permission must, therefore, always be sought for any memorial. This can only be given by the Chancellor of the Diocese. (He is the senior legal officer of the Church of England locally and it is his responsibility to do what he believes is best for the churchyard both now and for future generations.)

However, there are some memorials for which the Chancellor will nearly always give permission through the local vicar – as outlined on pages 4 to 7. For other memorials, a Faculty (a legal permission) will need be obtained from the Chancellor and he will normally need to be given a convincing reason as to why he should give permission for this particular type of memorial.

It is important to note that the existence in a churchyard of a similar memorial to the one desired will not usually be a reason for permission to be granted. For example, the existence of kerbs around a memorial is not a reason for permission to be given for new kerbs to be installed – once immediate relatives of the deceased leave the area or themselves die, the burden of tending the grave falls directly on the local church, which will find the task more straightforward if there are no kerbs.

## How do you go about erecting a memorial?

1. Please do not enter into any agreement with a memorial mason for supplying a memorial until you have received written permission from the local vicar, or a faculty has been obtained from the Diocesan Chancellor.
2. It is a good idea, at an early stage, **before** talking to a memorial mason about design and material to consult your local vicar (this will help to avoid difficulties later in the process) and to obtain the appropriate form.
3. Then you need to decide whether to create an individually designed memorial, or to approach a firm of memorial masons to produce one of a more standard design from a catalogue.
4. Once the proposed memorial is agreed in principle, and provided it falls within the vicar's delegated authority, you need to make an application to the local vicar on the form supplied for this purpose and permission can be given quickly.
5. If the proposed memorial falls outside a vicar's delegated authority, you will have to apply to the Chancellor for a faculty (permission) for which a fee is payable. You will need to complete a faculty application form, obtainable from the Diocesan Registrar, to whom it should also be returned.

Mr D J Dumbleton  
Diocesan Registrar  
Rotherham & Co  
8 & 9 The Quadrant  
Coventry  
CV1 2EL  
T: 024 7622 7331  
F: 024 7622 1293  
E: d.dumbleton@rotherham-solicitors.co.uk

6. If you wish the memorial mason to act on your behalf, you must ensure that (s)he knows which memorials may be agreed by the vicar and which ones will need faculty permission from the Chancellor.
7. The mason is not permitted to erect a memorial until (s)he has received written permission. The Chancellor of the Diocese can require the removal of any memorial installed without the proper permission.

# Churchyard Regulations

## Memorials in Churchyards

Summary of guidelines for what will normally be acceptable for a memorial and may be permitted by the local Vicar under delegated powers from the Chancellor of the Diocese.

Any proposed memorial not meeting these guidelines requires permission from the Chancellor for its installation.

The Vicar has the right to refer to the Chancellor the installation of any memorial, even if it complies with this summary.

### BURIALS

VERTICAL STONES	Height	Adult	No more than 4 feet (1200mm) high (measured from the surface of the ground), or less than 2 feet 6 inches (750mm) high (measured from the surface of the ground)
		Child	May be smaller, but should be no less than 2 feet (600mm) high
	Width	Adult	No more than 3 feet (900mm) wide, or less than 1 foot 8 inches (500mm) wide
		Child	1 foot 3 inches (375mm) wide
	Thickness	Adult	No more than 6 inches (150mm) thick, or less than 3 inches (75mm) thick If a slate memorial: - may be thinner, but no less than 1.5 inches (38mm) thick
		Child	2 inches (50mm) thick
HORIZONTAL STONES OR LEDGERS	No larger than 7 feet (2100mm) by 3 feet (900mm), including the base. Should be flush with the surrounding ground so that a mower may pass freely over them.		

<p>HEADSTONE</p> <p>Design</p>	<p>EITHER: -</p> <p>a) Shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons guidance</p> <p>b) On a stone base provided that it is an integral part of the design, no more than 9 inches (225mm) high, 3 feet (900mm) wide or projecting 4 inches (100mm) on either side; the base being no more than 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) front to back</p> <p>c) On a vase base, no more than 4 inches (100mm) on either side; the base being no more than 1 foot 3 inches (375mm) front to back.</p> <p>N.B. Your vicar may not authorise memorials in the shape of a heart or a book, nor kerbs, railings or chippings.</p>
<p>Materials</p>	<p>Natural stone of a colour, type and texture traditionally used within, or in the locality of, the churchyard concerned. In St Thomas' Churchyard the traditional colours are greys and browns. White or black marbles, granites and the like are not permitted</p> <p>N.B. Your Vicar may not authorise a synthetic material which is polished or has a reflective finish</p>
<p>Engraved Symbols</p>	<p>A plain cross not exceeding 6” in height</p> <p>N.B. Your Vicar may not authorise photographs, portraits or any other symbol</p>
<p>Inscriptions Should</p>	<p>Be consistent with the Christian belief in life after death  Not be simply confined to expressions of personal loss or sorrow  Be simple, reverent and commemorate accurately the existence of the person who has died  Be informative to future readers  Record either his or her full name or else the surname and the Christian name by which he or she was generally known (for example “ Thomas Joseph Smith” or “ Tom Smith” )  Be incised into the stone or carved in relief</p>

<p>Inscriptions May</p>	<p>Appropriately record what he/she did (“ farmer in this village for fifty years” ) or some feature of his/her character (“ a much-loved father and grandfather” or “ a kind and gentle daughter” )</p> <p>Include a biblical text, or an extract from a poem, or some suitable phrase from other Christian sources</p> <p>Be painted black or white or in a colour that harmonises or blends in with the underlying stone</p> <p>N.B. Your Vicar may not authorise gilding or silvering of letters</p>
<p>Additional Inscriptions</p>	<p>Should match the style and appearance of the earlier inscription</p>
<p>Mason’ s trademark</p>	<p>If the applicant so wishes, this may be added discretely on the back of the memorial.</p>
<p>Provision for Flowers</p>	<p>Not more than one container which matches the memorial and must be: -</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Either</p> <p>Fixed onto/into the stone base</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Sunk completely into the ground so as to be firmly anchored and virtually invisible yet removable should maintenance needs require it</p> <p>N.B. Artificial flowers are not allowed except for Remembrance Day poppies and Christmas wreaths, which must be removed after 2 months. The planting of trees and shrubs is not permitted.</p>
<p><b>FIXING</b></p>	<p>All new monuments and all repairs <b>MUST</b> be undertaken to the Nationally Agreed N.A.M.M. standard. This ensures that the monument is securely anchored to the ground beneath, and that the separate stones are strongly held together.</p> <p>Please ensure that your mason is aware of this requirement when they quote for any work in St Thomas' Churchyard.</p>

# CREMATED REMAINS

**[the same permissions apply]**

Marker stones	<p>Permitted ONLY in existing Gardens of Remembrance, where currently allowed.</p> <p>The style at St Thomas' is for small vertical memorials not more than 27 inches (685mm) high (measured from the surface of the ground) 17 inches (430mm) wide by 3 inches (75mm) thick. The design may incorporate a stone base 18 inches (460mm) wide, by 12 inches (300mm) front to back, by 3 inches (75mm) thick, provided that no part is above 27 inches (685mm) high.</p> <p>Apart from the sizes, all the same permissions and restrictions apply as for burials</p>
Ashes interred in an existing grave	<p>Additional inscriptions may be made to existing grave memorials provided that: -</p> <p>Such additions exactly match the style and appearance of the earlier inscription</p> <p>They are approved by the local vicar</p>

## **Further Information**

Completed application forms for a new monument or inscription should be sent (in duplicate) to the vicar at

**Keresley Vicarage  
34 Tamworth Road  
Coventry  
CV6 2EL**

Additional application forms can be obtained from:

**[www.leicester.anglican.org/DAC/pdf/memorial\\_app.pdf](http://www.leicester.anglican.org/DAC/pdf/memorial_app.pdf)**

The full regulations may be consulted at

**[www.leicester.anglican.org/DAC/pdf/chyardregs\\_coventry.pdf](http://www.leicester.anglican.org/DAC/pdf/chyardregs_coventry.pdf)**

For additional help and information please contact the vicar at the address above, or:

**Tel (024) 7633 2717**