



St John's Churchyard Policy

Extract from Diocesan Churchyard Regulations for the Bereaved as they apply to the Parish of Badshot Lea and Hale.

1 Introduction

This extract from the Churchyard Regulations gives guidance on the procedure for burials and the interment of cremated remains within the churchyard. The full set of Diocesan Churchyard Regulations is available from the Rector.

Our churchyards are places of great beauty and historical value. The Regulations are designed to maintain and enhance these values with a minimum of bureaucracy. There are also practical reasons for some of the rules to allow for ease of maintenance. The family of the deceased bear the cost of any memorials and of maintaining them but they do not own the grave space and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the task of keeping the churchyard in good order.

The rector, priest-in-charge, team vicar or, in the case of an interregnum, the rural dean, has delegated authority under the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations. This does not include the curate who does not have the Incumbent's delegated authority.

2 Burials

Parishioners (including all those on the Church Electoral Roll), and others who die in the parish, have a right to burial in the churchyard if there is still space available. Permission for the burial of other persons may be granted by the Rector. The Rector will decide where a burial will take place and will usually allocate the next available grave space in the row that is currently being used for burials. It is possible to have a grave dug "double depth" such that a second coffin can be buried on top of the first at a later date. Gravespaces cannot be reserved, except by faculty. It is the policy of the PCC not to support the reservation of gravespaces, except in exceptional circumstances, as space in the churchyard is limited. The fees for a burial in a churchyard are contained in the current Parochial Fees Order.

3 Memorials

3.1 The Rector has discretion to authorise the erection of any headstone which falls within the types and classes authorised in Appendix A (Memorials in Churchyards). They may refuse to permit the erection of an authorised headstone if they believe it would be detrimental to the churchyard. However they have no discretion to allow the erection of a headstone that falls outside those authorised.

3.2 If individuals wish to erect a memorial which falls within the Rector's discretion they should apply on form CR1 (available from the stonemason or Rector). Permission is always required and no work should be ordered or put in hand until permission has been granted. If individuals wish to erect a memorial which falls outside the Rector's discretion they may apply for a Faculty giving the grounds for their request. The Rector will advise them how to approach the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) before seeking a Faculty. Applications for a Faculty will incur additional costs, details of these costs can be found on the Diocesan Registry website at www.guildforddiocesanregistry.co.uk

3.3 To keep the churchyard tidy:

- a) The surface of the churchyard shall be kept, as far as possible, level and free from mounds. The PCC may at its discretion level the ground at any time more than twelve months after the latest interment in the grave.
- b) Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of a grave being within the area previously excavated.

- c) Plants or flowers may be placed in a removable sunken container, but unless they are kept tidy, the PCC may treat the grave as part of the turf and mow over it.
- d) Wreaths or cut flowers may be laid directly on any grave or placed in any vase authorised by these Regulations.
- e) If a built-in vase ceases to be used for a period of twelve months or more, the PCC may insert a matching stone stopper in the vase hole.
- f) Artificial flowers of good quality may be placed on a grave, but both natural and artificial flowers will deteriorate after periods of time. The PCC may remove flowers of whatever kind and wreaths at their discretion if they judge them to be unsightly and all artificial flowers after two months.

4 Cremated Remains

4.1 A Garden of Remembrance has been set aside in the churchyard for Cremated Remains.

4.2 A copy of the Regulations as they apply to our parish are attached as Appendix B.

5 Approval

5.1 This extract from Diocesan Churchyard Regulations has been approved by the Diocesan Registry and came into force on 24/02/2015.

APPENDIX A

Memorials in Churchyards

An appropriate variety of design is encouraged in choosing memorials. Relatives should take the surroundings of the grave and churchyard into account. A suitable choice can often be made from the range of memorials offered by some masons, but individually designed memorials are encouraged. In order to ensure quality and suitability of material and design, memorials which are outside the range of simple designs commonly found in churchyards, whilst not necessarily discouraged, must be authorised by Faculty. The Faculty process will be explained by the Rector or you can speak to the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee on 01483 790313. The Rector may authorise the erection of memorials which comply with the following provisions provided the Inscription is acceptable to them.

1 Materials

1.1 Memorials must be of weathering natural stone or slate, or hardwood, so that they harmonise with the surroundings. Stones traditionally used in local buildings or closely similar to them in colour and texture are to be preferred. The stone (including the lettering surface) shall not be finished with a polished or reflecting surface. It may not be black, dark grey or red, and no memorials or vases shall be of synthetic stone or plastic.

2 Design

2.1 Memorials may comprise a simple headstone, cross, stone vase or urn. A stone wedge or a stone book may also be appropriate for the churchyard but will require a faculty.

- A headstone may have maximum dimensions of 1200mm high above ground level, 900mm wide, 150mm thick (4ft x 3ft x 6ins).
- A cross may have a maximum height of 1500mm above ground level, 900 mm wide and 150 mm thick (5ft x 3ft x 6 ins). The permitted design requires the cross to be made from a single piece of stone whose width in the earth is at least equal to the width of the cross.
- A stone vase or urn may have maximum dimensions of 300mm in height by 200mm by 200mm (12ins x 8ins x 8ins).

2.2 The minimum size of a memorial is 350mm high, 500mm wide and 50mm thick (but smaller for a child).

2.3 All headstones and crosses must be securely fixed in the ground and due regard must be paid to the nature of the ground and the risk of settlement. Masons/funeral directors are strongly encouraged to have regard to the Guidelines issued by the Association of Burial Authorities. The PCC may decide to lay flat any memorial which, in its opinion, is unsafe.

2.4 A headstone or cross may stand on a base provided that it is an integral part of the design and firmly fixed to it with non-ferrous dowels. The base may project no more than 100 mm (4ins) beyond the headstone in any direction, except where a receptacle for flowers is provided (which must be flush with the top of the base), in which case the base may extend up to 200 mm (8ins) in front of the headstone. The base must be securely fixed on a foundation slab which is flush with or below the ground so that a mower may pass freely over it. The foundation stone must extend from 75 mm (3ins) to 150 mm (6ins) all round the base.

3 Exclusions

3.1 There are many practical reasons (e.g. maintenance, appearance) why horizontal ledgers, raised kerbs, railings and stone or other chippings are no longer normally permitted as part of memorials. Similarly, memorials in the shape of a statue or bird bath, or including any image of the deceased or any photograph or coloured drawing are specifically excluded from the delegated authority given to the Rector.

4 Memorials over Cremated Remains

4.1 Where cremated remains have been interred in a Garden of Remembrance then a plaque may be erected on the Memorial wall (see Appendix B).

4.2 Where cremated remains have been interred in an existing grave, an inscription should be added to an existing memorial wherever possible. If there is insufficient space, an additional stone not exceeding 500mm (1ft 8ins) square may, with the consent of the Rector, be laid flush with the turf in front of the existing memorial. The stone should match the existing memorial and may incorporate a vase for flowers provided that the top of it is level with or below the surface of the stone. Any other memorial will require a Faculty. A fee is payable for an additional inscription or stone.

4.3 For good reason, a Rector in conjunction with the PCC may agree to the interment of cremated remains in any other part of the Churchyard (provided it is not closed). Any memorial over such a burial must fall within the Rector's delegated authority or be authorised by Faculty.

5 Inscriptions

5.1 Inscriptions must be simple and reverent and appropriate to a churchyard. The Christian and surnames of the deceased should be given, with the dates of birth and death (or age and date of death). Relations named should normally be limited to parents, children and spouse or partner. Quotations compatible with the Christian faith are permitted. The terms of any epitaph must be agreed with the Rector as part of the necessary permission.

5.2 Lettering should normally be incised and may be leaded, but plastic or other inserted lettering is not permitted. Incised lettering may also be painted in black or white, as appropriate for the colour of stone. It should be noted that paint may become illegible in a relatively short period, and may require re-painting.

5.3 No advertisement or trademark shall be inscribed on any memorial but the name of the mason may be inscribed low down on the side or reverse of the stone in unpainted and unleaded letters no larger than 13mm (½ in) in height.

APPENDIX B

Regulations for the Garden of Remembrance in the Parish of Badshot Lea and Hale.

1 Rights of Interment

1.1 A parishioner, or a person whose name is on the church electoral roll, has a right to the burial of his/her cremated remains ('ashes') in the churchyard and the remains of non-parishioners can be also be buried there if the Rector consents.

1.2 Applications for the interment of ashes must be made to the Rector, who will decide the place of interment.

1.3 The names of those whose ashes are interred, together with a record of where they are interred, will be recorded in the Burial Register to be kept in the Church safe.

2 Garden of Remembrance

2.1 Cremated remains may be interred in a family grave but otherwise will normally be buried in the Garden of Remembrance.

2.2 In the Garden of Remembrance the ashes should be buried without a container. At the discretion of the Rector, in a family grave such remains may be buried in a casket or urn, provided it is made of a biodegradable material.

3 Memorials

3.1 In the Garden of Remembrance, no marker may be placed on the burial plot but permission can be sought from the Rector to erect a plaque on the Memorial Wall. Elsewhere in the graveyard, the Rector's approval is required for the wording, design, dimensions and materials of the memorial. The Rector will provide an application form.

3.2 Flowers, or good quality artificial flowers, may be placed at the foot of the Memorial Wall but not on the burial plot. Both natural and artificial flowers will deteriorate after periods of time. The PCC may remove flowers of whatever kind and wreaths at their discretion if they judge them to be unsightly and all artificial flowers after two months.

3.3 The fees for the interment of ashes are contained in the current Parochial Fees Order.