

# Churchyard Regulations

## for St Matthew's Worthington

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### Introduction

The Diocese of Leicester's Churchyard Regulations governs what sort of memorials can be introduced to the churchyard. You can find a link to these guidelines at [stmatthewsworthington.net/churchyard](http://stmatthewsworthington.net/churchyard)

The Diocese's Churchyard Regulations begin with commending consistency in the headstones introduced into a churchyard: *A new memorial should not overshadow or outshine its neighbours, nor be flashier or larger than them. In death we are all equal, and it is pleasing to see an equivalence between the memorials, and between the stone (or other) old and new memorials in a Churchyard.* The Diocesan Regulations are designed to achieve this equivalence.

This leaflet summarises these Regulations and one important exception. In working with a stone mason, a family should take into account these regulations as the incumbent (the Vicar) will not be able to give permission for a headstone that falls outside these regulations.

### Size of headstone

#### Diocesan Regulations state

*Upright headstones should be:*

- a. *no more than 1200 mm high (measured from the surface of the ground), or less than 750 mm high (measured from the surface of the ground);*
- b. *no more than 900 mm wide, or less than 500 mm wide;*
- c. *no more than 150 mm thick, or less than 75 mm thick, except in the case of slate memorials which may be no less than 40 mm thick; 4*
- d. *for a child the headstone may be smaller, but should be no less than 600 mm high, 375 mm wide and 50 mm thick 12.*

*Horizontal stones should be no larger than 2100 mm by 900 mm.*

*Headstones may be of three types:*

- a. *so shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability;*
- b. *on a stone base, provided that it is an integral part of the design, no more than 225 mm high, 900 mm wide or projecting 100 mm on either side; the base being no more than 360 mm front to back;*
- c. *on a vase base, no more than 100 mm on either side; the base being no more than 375 mm front to back.*

### Materials

Usually, only headstones formed out of natural stone are permitted in churchyards within the Diocese of Leicester (paragraphs 14 and 15 of the Diocesan Regulations). Inscriptions on these headstones may be picked out in black, gold or silver.

In the churchyards at Worthington, plain black polished granite can also be used. Inscriptions on these headstones may be picked out in gold or silver.

## Design

### Diocesan Regulations state

*A memorial in the form of a natural boulder, or of a cross of stone or wood including a Celtic cross is not allowed. But a wooden cross intended as a temporary memorial to mark a grave is permitted for a maximum period of two years after the burial.*

*The following designs or features are not permitted:*

- a. *other shapes of memorials, such as an open book or in the form of a heart;*
- b. *kerbs, chippings, railings and chains;*
- c. *\*the incorporation of a photograph or ceramic portrait of the deceased;*
- d. *stone, concrete, metal, glass, plaster or plastic objects, such as model people, animals or toys, and windmills and jangling trinkets designed to make a noise when the wind blows.*

*Other than the traditional Christian plain cross, no symbols, insignia or motifs such as flowers or things of interest in the life of the person who has died, such as a dog, a bird, a fishing rod, a tractor, a musical instrument or a motorcycle, are permitted.*

Please note that (d) above includes **any** form of lighting. This is not permitted.

## Inscriptions

### Diocesan Regulations state:

*The inscription should be simple and consistent with the Christian belief of life after death. It should not be confined to expressions of personal loss or sorrow. It may record what the deceased did or some feature of his or her character ("a skilled tailor", or "a much-loved father and grandfather" or "a kind and gentle daughter"). It may include a biblical text, or extract from a poem, or a suitable phrase with Christian connotations. Sentimental expressions should be discouraged.*

Words on headstones must be in a simple type-face.

## Cremated remains

These can be buried either in existing family graves, or the garden of remembrance at Worthington. At Worthington, a brass plaque can be affixed to the wall which surrounds the garden of remembrance.

The Schedule to the Faculty, dated 26 February 2021, paragraph 2 it specifies the conditions for brass plaques:

*2. That the brass plaques affixed to the low wall surrounding the area used for interment of ashes shall:*

- a. *Be of a uniform size, design and font; and*
- b. *Only contain text first approved by the incumbent.*

## Flowers

Graves must be left to lawn to facilitate mowing and appropriate churchyard maintenance.

Funeral flowers will be left on graves for 14 days after the funeral. Other flowers may be laid on graves or placed in vases integral to the headstone. No other vases may be used. All packaging must be removed from flowers before they are laid on the grave or in an integral vase.

Artificial flowers are not allowed with the exception of flowers for Remembrance- tide or Christmas. Seasonal flowers placed on graves for Christmas or Valentine's Day, for example, must be removed four weeks after the date of the festival.

## **Permission to erect or make changes to a headstone**

Any headstone that meets the criteria set out in these Regulations must be approved by the incumbent.

The stonemason engaged to create the headstone must seek this approval in writing using the appropriate Diocesan form. Only once this form is returned signed by the incumbent has permission been granted. Informal discussions which take place before this form is submitted do not constitute the granting of permission.

Permission to erect any headstone that falls outside these criteria must be sought via Faculty application. There is a cost associated with any such application and permission will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. The incumbent will be able to explain this process to those wishing to erect such a headstone.

Any headstone erected without permission is subject to removal at the expense of those erecting it.

## **Date**

These instructions came into force on 26 February 2021 with the support of the Parochial Church Council of St Matthews, Worthington and with permission of the Chancellor of the Diocese of Leicester.