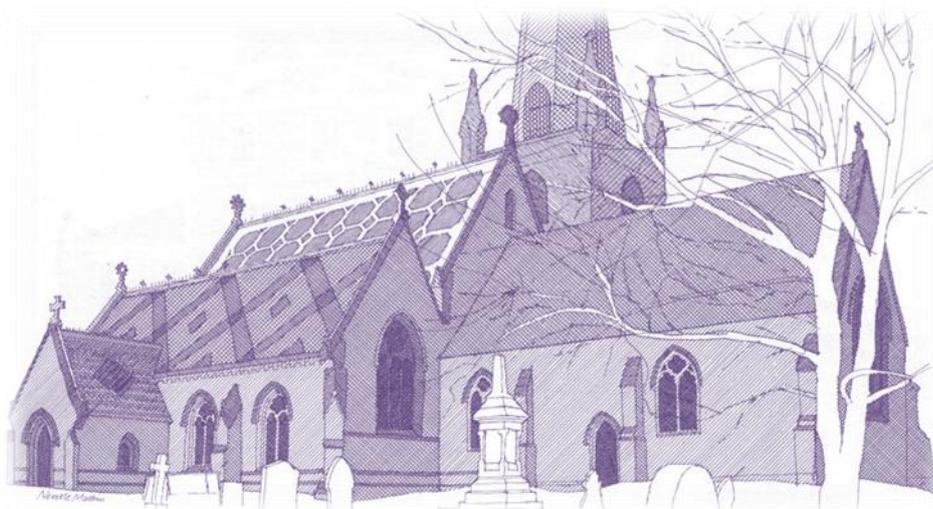


The Parish of Wolstanton

St. Margaret



Churchyard Policy

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Area Dean of Newcastle

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1. The Churchyard Policy

This Policy, based on the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations of May 2013, sets out what is and what is not permitted in the churchyard of St. Margaret's – Wolstanton. In particular it sets out those memorials and related items which can and those which cannot be permitted by the incumbent without the need for a faculty from the Chancellor.

Reference to the Chancellor (through the Registry) or to the Archdeacon will be made where...

- a) an application raises any doubt as to whether the proposed memorial is of a permitted type;
- b) the incumbent or churchwardens believe that they are being subjected to pressure to permit an unauthorised memorial;
- c) the memorial is of a permissible type but where the incumbent, for any reason, is not willing to give permission.

The Nature of Churchyards

First and foremost this churchyard is consecrated to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Accordingly, it must be treated and cared for in a manner consistent with that consecrated status. Churchyards can fulfil important spiritual rôles and can be a powerful part of the Church's witness to the world. They provide appropriate settings for Christian places of worship and as such send out a message of the Church's commitment to worshipping God in the beauty of holiness. They contain memorials to departed Christians demonstrating the Church's continuing love for them and its belief in the communion of saints. The circumstances of interment and the memorials in this

churchyard should provide powerful evidence of the Church's love for its local community. The churchyard is a place of solace and relief for those who mourn. In addition many people find comfort in knowing that their mortal remains will be interred within a particular setting. That comfort derives in part from a confidence that the character of that setting will be preserved. The churchyard is also an important part of the parish's heritage and the Parochial Church Council's care for it is part of the Church's work of stewardship concerning such heritage and of the created world. Accordingly, the memorials placed in this churchyard must be fitting and appropriate not just for today but also for the future.

The Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to preserve and enhance the quality of the churchyard while minimising the scope for conflict and discord when decisions have to be made as to the form of memorials. The Policy exists to create fairness, equality and consistency of treatment for all. It seeks to promote peace, dignity and good order in churchyard where it is necessary to balance the concerns of the past, present and future and where there will, inevitably, be a spectrum of views about what is appropriate.

This Policy sets out those matters which may and which may not be authorised by the incumbent. Any proposed memorial or inscription which is not within the scope of this Policy can not be authorised and would require the applicant to petition the Chancellor for a faculty. Nothing may be erected or placed in the churchyard without either the written consent of the incumbent or a faculty from the Chancellor.

Any person who is found responsible for the unlawful introduction of memorial of any kind into a churchyard is likely to be required by the Chancellor to remove it and to meet the cost of doing so.

This Policy is intended to offer guidance, at the earliest possible stage, to those thinking of applying for their loved ones' mortal remains to be interred within the churchyard; it is not a comprehensive statement of all the legal provisions governing churchyards. Any person who has doubt as to those legal provisions should consult the Archdeacon or the Registry.

To afford wide publicity to this Policy, it will be presented to local funeral directors and monumental masons that they may share and explain its content to their clients so that they understand the scope and nature of the restrictions imposed on memorials. A summary of the Policy's content will also be displayed on churchyard noticeboards.

Burial in the Churchyard

Many people have a right to be buried in St. Margaret's churchyard and the Church welcomes those who wish to exercise that right. However, even when there is a legal right to burial in the churchyard there is no right to a memorial nor to have any particular inscription on a memorial. Those are matters which need separate permission.

The Church seeks to minister with love to the bereaved; to extend to them the Good News of Christ's victory over death; and to provide a fitting resting place for the remains of the departed. However, no one is obliged to bury their departed spouse or relative in consecrated ground. It follows that those who seek to arrange a burial and to

erect a memorial in the churchyard will have chosen to do so. When making that choice the family of a departed person need to understand that this Policy will apply to a burial in a churchyard.

All applicants are urged to note that...

- a) the restrictions imposed by this Policy are not a matter of their personal choice and that they cannot depart from them.
- b) the churchyard is not a private place. It is a place where many people have a shared interest in its appearance. Accordingly, the decision as to what is placed in a churchyard cannot be simply a matter of private choice.
- c) The maintenance of memorials is the responsibility of those who erect them and after those persons have died of the heirs of person commemorated.
- d) The application form for interments will cite this Policy. All applicants will be required to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the contents of this Policy.

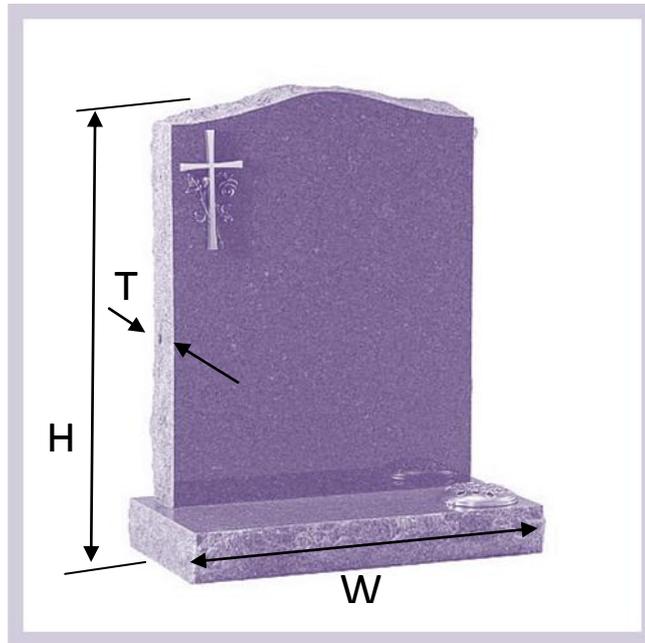
The considerable cost of maintaining the churchyard falls on the local parish and churchyard users are therefore invited to make periodic gifts towards the cost of its upkeep by registering as a 'Friend of St. Margaret's Churchyard'. Friends receive an annual newsletter.

It is important that those making decisions about memorials do so after proper reflection and not when they are most acutely feeling their loss. For that reason no application for a new memorial may be made within six months of an interment. Where a grave has been reopened for the interment of cremated remains, this period may be shortened at the incumbent's discretion.

The Shape, Fixing, and Material of Memorials

The incumbent can permit memorials which are in accordance with the following requirements.

- a) An upright memorial stone with dimensions falling within the following table and shown diagrammatically on page 5:



| | | |
|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Height | Maximum: 1220mm (4') | Minimum: 762mm (2'6") |
| Width | Maximum: 915mm (3') | Minimum: 510mm (1'8") |
| Thickness | Maximum: 152mm (6") | Minimum: 76mm (3") |

- b) In the case of the burial of a child a smaller memorial stone may be permitted but in such a case the stone should be no less than 610mm (2') high, 380mm (1' 3") wide and 51mm (2") thick.
- c) The incumbent may permit memorial stones with any shape or style of top provided that he or she is satisfied that the shape and style of top are appropriate for the churchyard.

The incumbent may not permit memorial stones the body of which is of an irregular or unusual shape. In particular those in the shape of hearts or teddy bears are not permitted. A memorial in the shape of an open book is permissible only in the new area, east of the Chetwynd Street gate.

If the incumbent has any doubt as to the suitability of the shape or style proposed the matter shall be referred to the Archdeacon.

- d) The incumbent may not permit a memorial which includes kerbs, railings, or chippings.
- e) The incumbent may not permit any memorial or element of a memorial which involves stone, concrete, metal, glass, plaster, or plastic objects whether in the form of model people, animals, or toys or otherwise.
- f) The incumbent may not permit any object designed to make a noise when moved by the wind.

- g) Stone crosses of similar dimensions to headstones and hardwood crosses may be permitted. A wooden cross is to be no more than 915mm (3') high and the transom is to be of commensurate length.
- h) A flat memorial stone without kerbs and flush with the ground may be permitted if it is of equivalent dimensions to those set out above save that a length of no more than 1830mm (6') shall be permissible for flat memorial stones.
- i) An upright headstone may stand on a stone base provided that the base is an integral part of the design and does not project beyond the upright stone by more than 101mm (4") in any direction unless a vase hole is included when it may project 180mm (7") in front and 101mm (4") behind the upright stone.
- j) The upright stone or base must be fixed on a foundation slab which is flush with the ground. The slab should extend no more than 152mm (6") nor less than 76mm (3") all round.

The incumbent may permit the inclusion in a memorial of a stone vase which is not less 203mm (8") cube and not more than 304mm (12") cube provided that the same is securely cemented into a sunken slab. The incumbent will consult the Archdeacon if he or she has any doubt as to the suitability of the design or appearance of the vase. Unless the incumbent is satisfied that the proposed vase is of a high quality of design and appearance permission will be refused and an application for a faculty required.

It is important for the safety of those visiting churchyards that memorials are securely and properly fixed. All memorials must be fixed in accordance with BS8415. Incumbents will ensure that any monumental mason fixing a memorial is aware of this requirement. The application form must contain a certificate from the monumental mason to be engaged:

- Stating the proposed method of fixing.
- Confirming that due regard has been had to the nature of the ground and the problem of settlement.
- Certifying that the proposed method of fixing accords with BS8415.
- Stating the registration scheme, if any, with which the monumental mason is registered.

If a memorial is found to have been inadequately fixed the Chancellor is likely to order its removal or refixing and require the person responsible for the inadequate fixing to pay the costs of such work.

Memorials are not considered in isolation but in their context as part of the churchyard as whole. Memorials which are clearly visible from the church itself and which are of a

different material from the church, or from the other memorials nearby, can harm the appearance of the churchyard and mar the setting of the church. Accordingly, particular care is to be taken in the choice of the material for memorials.

The starting point is that a memorial should be made of a stone of the colour, type, and texture used in building the church. Where memorials are to be located eastward of the Chetwynd Street gate (i.e. in the new area for burials – at the extreme east end of the churchyard), the materials in Schedule 1 can be used.

The presence of a memorial which does not accord with these Regulations does not authorise the incumbent to permit another non-compliant memorial. However, an exceptional course can be taken if there is already a group of at least six memorials of the same material, design, and colour which do not comply with this Policy and which occupy a clearly defined area or row. In such circumstances the incumbent after consultation with the Archdeacon may (but is not required to) authorise further memorials of the same material, design, and colour to complete that area or row but not to extend beyond that area or row.

Inscriptions and Symbols

Particular care must be taken with regard to the inscriptions and symbols on a memorial. The first and key principle is that inscriptions must be consonant with orthodox Christian belief. Not only is this because of the purpose of the churchyard but also because inscriptions convey a message to those who visit churchyards. It is important that the message that such visitors receive is one which proclaims (or at the very least is not inconsistent with) the message of hope and faith being given to them by Christ's Church. In addition it is to be remembered that the memorial will be read not just by those who knew the deceased in question but by those who did not. Indeed, the message conveyed to those who did not know the deceased is in many ways more important than the message being given to those who did know him or her.

Inscriptions are to be incised into the stone or carved in relief. They may also be painted in black, white, gold or silver. Plastic lettering is not permitted.

Inscriptions are to be simple, reverent, and appropriate to a churchyard. They should commemorate accurately the life of the person who has died. They must also be consistent with orthodox Christian belief and should not be confined solely to expressions of personal loss or sorrow. However, the inscription need not be confined to the name and the dates of birth and death of the person who has died. There does not have to be a characterless uniformity in the inscriptions in a churchyard. Human individuality and diversity – indeed human eccentricity and non-conformity – are gifts from God and are to be celebrated as such. Accordingly, individuality and diversity in churchyard inscriptions reflecting the diversity and different characters of those commemorated are to be encouraged. Very many churchyards are enhanced and their purpose reaffirmed by inscriptions which are varied (and often quirky or eccentric) and which convey something of the character or life of the departed person. The message that we are individuals and are loved by God as individuals with our God-given differences and eccentricities is an important part of the Christian message proclaimed in our church buildings and to which our churchyards should bear witness.

In short, individuality, even quirkiness, is encouraged in the inscriptions on memorials but what cannot be permitted is anything which can be seen as inconsistent with the Church's message. In addition there is a difference between quirkiness and humour which are to be welcomed on memorials and flippancy and irreverence which would be impermissible.

Accordingly, the incumbent may exercise considerable latitude as to the wording of inscriptions within the following boundaries. The incumbent may permit an inscription provided that the wording proposed:

- is accurate.
- is consistent with orthodox Christian belief. Bible verses or classical Christian poetry are likely to be appropriate while those from the writings of other faiths or from popular culture will not normally be appropriate.
- is not over-sentimental and is more than an expression of loss no matter how deeply felt.
- is neither flippant nor irreverent.

The incumbent may not permit an inscription which does not clearly satisfy each of those pre-conditions. If the incumbent has any doubt as to whether the conditions are satisfied he or she must consult the Archdeacon. If the conditions are not met or if the incumbent is unwilling for any reason to allow the inscription then the inscription can only be permitted if authorised by a faculty.

Care has to be taken in permitting incised symbols to be included on a memorial. Nonetheless, well-designed symbols can be visually delightful; can make a positive contribution to the churchyard; and can provide a fitting record of an aspect of the life of person who has died. The incumbent may permit either...

- a plain cross not exceeding 152mm (6") in height
- a single floral symbol of similar proportions

The incumbent may alternatively permit the inclusion of a symbol which has a particular relevance to the life of the deceased (such as the symbol of a patron saint, the tool or symbol of a particular trade, occupation, hobby, or pursuit, a regimental badge, professional insignia, or the like). Symbols may express an element of humour and the tradition of symbols in the form of a rebus or visual pun is to be encouraged. Such symbols should be small in size and incised or carved in relief. These incised symbols may be painted in a maximum of two colours complementary to the inscription and memorial material.

Where there is any doubt as to the suitability or appropriateness of the symbol or where the incumbent is for any reason unwilling to permit its inclusion the matter should be referred to the Chancellor (through the Registry). Similarly requests to include more than one symbol on a memorial require to be authorised by faculty and cannot be permitted by the incumbent.

Memorials may not bear photographs or portraits (whether ceramic, engraved, or painted) of the deceased. Nor should they bear embossed symbols. No advertisement or trademark can be placed on the face of a memorial. However, the stonemason's

name may be discreetly incised on the side or the reverse of the memorial. The letters of such an inscription are not to exceed 13mm (½") in height.

An incumbent may permit additional inscriptions to be added to an existing memorial provided that the additional inscription is itself in acceptable terms.

The incumbent may not permit to be placed on a memorial any inscription or symbol which takes the form of a QR (Quick Response) code or any other item which permits access to a website or other remote electronic site.

What the Parish Incumbent cannot permit

The incumbent may not permit a memorial which does not fully comply with the foregoing Policy. The incumbent may not permit a new memorial to be installed unless there is an interval of at least six months between the date of interment and the making of the application for the memorial.

How to apply to the Incumbent for Permission

Applications should be made to the parish priest on the official diocesan application form and the information required on that form should be provided in full. No order for a memorial should be placed before the applicant has obtained either the incumbent's written consent on the official form or a faculty.

The application form can be obtained from parish priest and will also be downloadable from the parish website; usually, local funeral directors and monumental masons also have a stock of current application forms. Those considering seeking permission for a memorial are strongly recommended to consult the relevant parish priest before engaging in discussions with a monumental mason.

Applications for Permission to erect Memorials which do not comply with this Policy

This Policy is intended to ensure the application of a consistent approach which is fair to all. A proposed memorial which does not accord with the Policy can only be authorised by the grant of a faculty. Those seeking permission for a memorial falling outside the Policy will need to establish that there is a good case for departing from it in the particular case. Nonetheless, it is not the purpose of the Policy to suppress quality or individuality in favour of an unthinking uniformity. Those considering applying for a memorial which is non-compliant with this Policy should consult the incumbent at an early stage. If necessary guidance can then be obtained from the Archdeacon or the Registry as to the procedure to be adopted.

It will only be in the most exceptional of cases that the Chancellor will, by faculty, permit a memorial or other item which contravenes this Parish Churchyard Policy. The Parochial Church Council will review this Policy at least every five years from the date it came into operation to ensure that it continues to meet the circumstances of the churchyard.

Area for the Burial of Cremated Remains

The existing Area for the Burial of Cremated Remains ("ABCR") is governed by the faculty which authorised its creation. Each application for a faculty for the creation of a new ABCR or for an extension to the existing one will be made in accordance with the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations in operation at the time of application.

The Interment of Cremated Remains

The well-established practice of burying cremated remains in or immediately adjacent to an existing family grave is encouraged. The incumbent may permit additional inscriptions to be added to memorials on such graves so as to record the further interment provided the proposed inscription otherwise accords with this Policy.

Cremated remains must not be scattered or strewn in a churchyard.

Cremated remains are to be interred by being poured directly into the ground at a point not less than 101mm (4") below the surface.

If desired the pouring of cremated remains may take the form of placing a casket in the ground and opening the base of the casket to allow the remains to flow out provided that the casket is then removed. The opening of the base and removal of the casket can take place after the departure of the bereaved from the graveside (provided that they have been told in advance that this will be done).

In exceptional circumstances the incumbent may on pastoral grounds permit the interment of cremated remains in a casket. However, this course should be genuinely exceptional. It should only be undertaken after the incumbent has sought to dissuade the bereaved from such an arrangement and after consultation with the Archdeacon. In such cases the casket must be unlined and must be made of cardboard or some equivalent material which is rapidly biodegradable. The interment of cremated remains in a hardwood casket is not to be permitted.

Coffins and Caskets

The material used for coffins must be biodegradable. The use of coffins made of wool, wicker, or cardboard (suitably lined) is strongly encouraged as part of the Church's stewardship of the created world. The interment of a coffin which is made of metal or of any other material which is not readily biodegradable is not permitted other than by faculty granted by the Chancellor. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that such a faculty will be granted.

Coffins are to be of size such as to fit into a standard sized gravespace. The interment of a coffin requiring more than one standard gravespace is not permitted other than by faculty granted by the Chancellor. American style caskets are not permitted.

Flowers and other Items

Receptacles for flowers set within memorial tablets are discouraged; however, if an incumbent believes that such provision is justified on pastoral grounds he or she may permit the inclusion of the same in a memorial.

The churchyard is set to lawn to facilitate maintenance. Following the installation of a memorial, grass will be laid up to the edges of the plinth on which the memorial sits. No items such as vases, solar lamps, curbing, chippings, toys, flags, plaques (including shrubs or plants) etc., should be placed around the memorial's plinth as this will interfere with mowing and strimming operations. Items found contravening this requirement may be removed by churchwardens or persons authorised by them.

Wreaths and poppies are the only acceptable artificial flowers permitted to be placed on graves in the periods of and leading up to Remembrance Day, Christmas, Easter and on the anniversaries of death, marriage and of birthdays. Such items are to be removed not more than one month after those occasions. If the items are not removed by those who placed them on the memorials within that period they should may removed by the churchwardens or a person authorised by them.

No balloons or other portable items are to be left on a grave save that such items may be left in position for the period of one calendar month after interment. If the items are not then removed by those who placed them on the grave they may be removed by the churchwardens or a person authorised by them.

Reservation of a Gravespace

The Parochial Church Council does not support the reservation of gravespaces and no gravespaces were reserved at the time of implementing this Policy. Gravespaces are allocated from the churchyard plan as and when compliant applications are made with an imminent need for such.

**The PCC of St Margaret's – Wolstanton
August 2018**

SCHEDULE 1

STONE TYPES PERMISSIBLE FOR MEMORIALS IN THE 'NEW' AREA (EAST OF THE CHETWYND STREET GATE)

- Limestones
- Sandstones
- Granites (including black, dark grey and ruby)
- Nabresina
- Serena Stone
- Marbles (including white)

The stones should not be polished so as to have a reflective appearance but the face which is to be inscribed may be honed or polished.

2. Notes for Memorials in Other Areas

For memorials located in areas other than the new burial areas (shown on the following map – Section 3), the Diocesan Chancellor's Churchyard Regulations in their current form apply. They can be accessed online at...

<https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/documents/churchyard-regulations/>

In summary, the Chancellor's Regulations **preclude** the following which are permitted within St. Margaret's local policy...

- memorial materials other than stone (e.g. granite or marble)
 - inscriptions other than in black or white (e.g. gold or silver)
 - any more than one symbol in a single colour matching the inscription
 - irregular shaped memorials and 'open book' style
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3. Churchyard Plan

