

St. Laurence Church, Alvechurch
Rules for Memorials (Headstones and Cremation Stones)
for Families, Churchwardens, Funeral Directors and Gravediggers

1. The family of the deceased, wishing to introduce a memorial in the churchyard, may engage a stonemason, who will apply to the minister for the necessary permissions (please contact Roger Wardle 0121 445 0505 in the first instance)

The Diocesan Chancellor, Cr Charles Mynors, has issued a very helpful booklet, 'Churchyard Memorials - A guide for the bereaved', which contains full details of what a gravestone and monument might look like, what wording it might contain, and the process by which approval may be obtained. The booklet also contains the necessary application form.

The booklets are distributed via, and available from, all local monumental stonemasons, who will assist with the choice of stone and the filling-in of the application form.

2. The minister may approve the introduction into the churchyard of any memorial if:

(a) at least six months have passed since the most recent of the deaths being commemorated.

(b) the form of the memorial is:

- a vertical headstone
- a vertical headstone on a horizontal stone base
- a horizontal stone slab
- a simple timber cross

(c) the memorial is adequately secured into the ground so as to ensure that it is stable

(d) in the case of a stone memorial

- it is of natural stone (either sandstone or limestone, granite not darker than Rustenberg grey, or slate)
- it does not have a highly polished reflective finish

(e) in the case of a memorial consisting of a vertical headstone, with or without a horizontal base,

- the maximum height of the vertical stone above ground level is between 500mm and 1200mm (1ft 7.75 inches and 3ft 11.25 inches),
- its width is between 500 mm and 900 mm (1ft 7.75 inches and 2ft 11.5 inches),
- its thickness is, in the case of a slate memorial, between 40mm and 150mm (1.75 and 6 inches) or, in any other case, between 75mm and 150mm (2.75 and 6 inches),
- any foundation slab is located so that its upper surface is either flush with the surrounding ground level or at least 300mm (1 ft) beneath it

(f) in the case of a memorial consisting of a vertical headstone on a horizontal slab

- the base is an integral part of the design
- where it incorporates a receptacle for a flower vase, the base does not project more than 200mm (8 inches) beyond the face of the vertical stone
- in any other case it does not project more than 100mm (4 inches)

(g) in the case of a memorial consisting of a horizontal slab

- it is no more than 600mm (1ft 11.75 inches) wide and 1800mm (5 ft 8.75 inches) long
- its upper surface is flush with the surrounding ground

(h) the inscription on the memorial contains at least

- the name of the deceased
- the date of his/her death
- the date of birth or the age at death
- any factual information in the inscription is accurate

(i) the memorial contains no advertisement or trademark other than the name or mark of the mason which shall be at the base of the side or rear of the stone and no more than 13mm (0.5 inch) high

3. Any other memorial may only be introduced into a churchyard with the authority of a faculty.

4. The minister shall not approve a memorial, notwithstanding compliance with paragraph 2 above, if he/she considers that it is

- likely to be controversial for any reason
- in any way inappropriate

Please note that these rules supersede any previous guidelines

5. Grave surrounds, trees/large shrubs on graves, and gravel are not permitted. Spare earth must be left along the edges of the churchyard, preferably the Church Walk edge and not along the beech hedge. Items left on memorials may be moved to facilitate maintenance.

Based on Guidance issued by the Chancellor for the Diocese of Worcester 1 March 2004

November 2018
Alvechurch PCC