

Instead of putting flowers on a grave, where they may soon spoil, why not consider having them placed in Church - talk to the Vicar.

The Vicar and PCC are responsible for maintaining the Churchyard - please help them by removing dead flowers etc - which anyway are unsightly. And please do not leave soft toys, photographs or other such items by the grave - again they look unsightly, and are not allowed.

Cremated remains

Many churches, even those whose Churchyards are closed or full, have a Garden of Remembrance for the burial of cremated remains. Normally, cremated remains are buried without a container - poured into the ground. At the discretion of the Vicar, a container made of biodegradable material may be used - so you should check this before purchasing an expensive wooden container.

It is usual in a Garden of Remembrance that no individual markers are allowed; instead names are recorded in the Church's Burial Register, or Book of Remembrance, or in some Churches on a single communal memorial stone.

Applying for a Faculty

You should talk to the Vicar before applying for a Faculty for a memorial or to reserve a grave space etc; but once you have done this, you will need to be in touch with the Diocesan Registrar - a Church solicitor - who handles these matters and passes them onto the Chancellor:

Carlisle Diocesan Registrar (Mrs Jane Lowdon)
The Cube, Barrack Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 6DB
0191 226 7878 j.lowdon@sintons.co.uk

Alternatives

While many people value the Churchyard Regulations as preserving the special character, peace and dignity of a churchyard, others may find them too restrictive. If you feel that you cannot in honesty abide by them, you may need to consider a burial in a local authority cemetery.



Guidance for those arranging a burial in a Churchyard in the Diocese of Carlisle

When someone dies there are a number of complex practical things to sort out, alongside all the emotions which you may feel. This leaflet is to guide you through some of the complexities associated with a burial in a Churchyard. We hope that all we do will help you to celebrate the life of the person who has died, will allow you to express your sadness and loss and will encourage you in the hope of the resurrection.

Churchyards are very special places and they are protected and regulated by law. The rules associated with them are sometimes felt to be more restrictive than those for municipal cemeteries. This is to ensure that churchyards are kept in decent order so as to show respect for those who have died and so far as is possible to comfort those whose loved ones are buried there.

Our Churchyards are uniquely important in several ways - family associations, local history, art and architecture, sacred space, wildlife and natural beauty (many of our Churchyards are in areas of outstanding natural beauty).

The law governing Churchyards is explained in more detail in The Churchyard Regulations which may be downloaded from the Diocesan website, www.carlislediocese.org.uk/support/policies and are available for inspection in Churches.

Outline of Regulations

We apologise for the inevitably bureaucratic feel of these Regulations - please remember that the point of them is to protect our Churchyards for everyone, for ever. Early discussion with the Vicar usually means that problems are avoided. This is especially important because some of the decisions you make cannot be undone at all, and some would be expensive to undo.

In particular, the Church believes there is a finality to burial, so except in very very exceptional circumstances there is no prospect of permission being granted for exhumation and re-burial elsewhere.

Who can be buried in the Churchyard?

Parishioners have a right of burial if the Churchyard has space and is not closed. Others may be buried with the permission of the Vicar and PCC. There is no right of burial in a particular part of the Churchyard - but it is usually possible to reserve a grave space by means of a Faculty. (A Faculty is the Permission to do things in Church or Churchyard and is granted by the Chancellor (the ecclesiastical Judge) of the Diocese).

A reserved grave space should be marked by the applicant, having agreed the method of marking with the Vicar - typically a durable metal or wooden stake with initials and the date of reservation. Those reserving a grave space may be required to pay an annual fee to the PCC as a contribution to the upkeep of Church and Churchyard. There is a fee for burial - again this money helps to maintain Church and Churchyard.

NB No animal may be buried in a Churchyard.

NB All of this does not affect the ownership of Churchyard which always remains the legal property of the Vicar - you do not and cannot purchase a grave space: the money you pay is a legal fee for the burial. However, memorials (headstones etc) themselves are the property and responsibility of the heir of the person commemorated.

Memorials

You must get permission (a Faculty) to erect a memorial. The Chancellor delegates to Vicars (but not Churchwardens) a discretion to give permission in certain limited cases - but if the request falls outside these limits, or there is any doubt, the Vicar ***must*** refer the case to the Chancellor.

Size, shape, material, wording, and finish etc of memorials are all governed by the Churchyard Regulations - so it is best to discuss all these early on with the Vicar. Photographs, portraits etc are not permitted; nor are “mass-produced” memorials of “unusual” shape (eg hearts, teddy bears), but etched drawings of objects and motifs associated with the Christian faith or with the person who died are permitted. The regulations are not meant to stifle originality, and specially designed memorials are encouraged: local craftsmen are usually the best first point of contact but there are also resources on the internet: eg: **www.memorialsbyartists.co.uk** **www.namm.org.uk**

Local Memorial Masons should be aware of these new Churchyard regulations and what is permitted - but please check before making any decisions. Just because someone has “got away” with something in the past is not a guarantee that it would be allowed in the future.

Memorials should not be erected before 6 months after the burial (in some places, because of ground conditions, it may need to be longer).

Inscriptions on memorials should be simple, reverent, and in keeping with the Christian faith; epitaphs should honour the dead, comfort the living and inform posterity; so pet names and personal comments would be inappropriate.

Flowers

Artificial flowers are not permitted - except Christmas wreaths and poppies at Remembrance - but these should be removed once the season is over. Glass vases are discouraged - for the safety of those maintaining the Churchyard - they break! You may plant bulbs (though it's always courteous to ask first) but not larger plants like trees, shrubs or bushes.