**CHURCHYARD POLICY ST ANDREW BLUNSDON NORTH SWINDON**

**A. Introduction**

This Policy is consistent with the Diocese of Bristol churchyard regulations, issued by the Chancellor (latest edition revised August 2021) and the Chancellor’s recommendation that every PCC formally adopt a set of Churchyard Rules to cover use and maintenance of the churchyard. The PCC is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Churchyard under the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956.

**B. Rights of Burial**

Provided the churchyard has not been closed by Order in Council:

1. Parishioners (including those on the Church Electoral Roll) and others who die in the parish have a right of burial in the churchyard, if there is space remaining.
2. The incumbent, PCC and churchwardens may also grant permission for burial of other persons at their discretion.
3. A grave space may be reserved by faculty, but not otherwise.
4. The whole churchyard is vested in the incumbent alone. *No right of ownership* is conferred upon relatives of the deceased (or upon any other person) by any of the following:
	* The reservation of a grave space
	* The exercise of the right of burial
	* The erection of a memorial

**C. Permission for Memorials on Graves**

The erection of a memorial is a privilege not a right, the ultimate authority is that of the Chancellor of the diocese, some powers are invested in the incumbent and PCC.

1. Every application to erect a memorial, or place anything whatsoever, or do any works in the churchyard shall be made in writing in the first place to the incumbent, stating a full description of the proposed designs, measurements, materials, inscriptions, style of lettering and like particulars. In any case, where the authority of a faculty is required, the application shall be made to the Diocesan Registrar. Designs must be submitted to the incumbent before any order is given to a stonemason.
2. Nothing shall be erected or placed in the churchyard until such proposals have received consent of the incumbent in writing, or until a faculty has been received, as the case may be.
3. The incumbent may, if s/he thinks fit, allow a memorial to be erected in the churchyard without faculty, provided that:
	1. The memorial is preferably made of local stone, but where this is not possible it must be one of the following materials
		1. English limestone or pennant stone
		2. Unpolished grey granite
		3. Nebrescina (Roman stone)
		4. English oak
		5. English or Welsh slate
		6. British sandstone.
	2. The memorial consists of:
		1. A headstone of not more than 4ft high (120cm)
		2. A cross not more than 4ft 6in high (135cm)
		3. A horizontal slab laid flush with the surrounding earth so that a mower can pass over it
	3. No identification of the maker or supplier appears on the monument other than the name only of the craftsman or supplier, in letters not more than ½ in high (13mm). Lettering may only be in the following colours:

Gold, copper, silver, matt white, matt black, matt grey

* 1. A memorial shall not include any photograph, metal or plastic inserts, railings, chippings, statuary, bird baths or other artefacts
1. Only memorials which conform to these requirements can be permitted under the powers delegated to the incumbent. In all other cases an application for a faculty must be made.
2. **Existing Memorials:**

With regard to existing memorials introduced in the past (with or without faculty), which do not conform with these regulations, such memorials are not to be followed as precedents. If there is any doubt, the advice of the Diocesan Registrar or the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) should be sought.

**E. Decorations**

1. Bulbs and small annual plants may be planted in the soil of any grave.
2. Stone vases or flower pots without inscriptions may be permitted to be kept on any grave, provided that the material of the same complies with rule C3a above.
3. China, metal or glass vases or flower pots maybe placed on any grave, provided that the same are sunk into the soil.

**F. Clearance or alterations to Gravestones or memorials; Exhumation.**

1. No gravestone or memorial maybe moved or removed without a faculty. In the case of repairs the DAC decides whether the works are substantial and require a faculty.
2. Exhumation is only with permission of the Chancellor, guidelines apply.

**G. Cremated Remains**

1. The designated areas in the churchyard for the burial of cremated remains are along the west and south churchyard walls.
2. The same restrictions on the rights of burial within the churchyard (section B) apply to the interment of ashes.
3. Ashes can be interred in a designated area or within an existing grave where this is appropriate.
4. The same rules with respect to the material and form of any memorial apply in the case of cremated remains.
5. The memorial should no more than 450mm (18”) by 400mm (16”).
6. Ashes should be interred directly into the ground or if they are in a container, it must be biodegradable.

**H. Recording**

1. All burials must be recorded in the Burial Register and Service Register of the church, including the name of the deceased, date of death, age, date of burial, position of the grave and signed by the officiating minister.
2. All interments of ashes must be recorded on a plan to be kept with the Burial Register.

These rules shall come into force on 1st January 2022 and remain effective until revoked and shall apply to the churchyard of St Andrew, Blunsdon, North Swindon.