

Introduction

The marking of the place of burial is extremely important; it not only gives due respect to the departed, but for many people is an important focus within the grieving process and beyond. Your parish priest will be able to assist you as you seek to do this as sensitively and appropriately as possible. This leaflet is intended to give you some initial help as you plan a grave stone, or a memorial for the interment of cremated remains in a churchyard.

A churchyard is a place of Christian burial and as such it is right that we are sensitive to the tradition and nature of the churchyard, which is different in some respects from that of a local authority cemetery. Your parish priest can give permissions for memorials within certain constraints, but it may be that s/he has to ask permission elsewhere. If this does happen it does not mean that your request is unreasonable, just that s/he does not have the authority to give permission to a particular request.

How do I proceed?

In normal circumstances it is recommended that nothing is fixed over a grave or ashes for the first six months after the burial. This allows the ground to settle, and more importantly it allows you and the family time to give proper thought to what will be the most appropriate memorial.

It is most important that no agreements are made with a stone mason until you have spoken with the parish priest and obtained her/his permission.

The parish priest will give you a formal application form to complete when you know what you want to do; when this is complete and permission obtained you can with confidence approach a stone mason.

What memorials are allowed?

The parish priest may give permission for the following

- 'headstones' not exceeding 150cm x 90cm
- Crosses not exceeding 180cm high or 90cm wide
- Flat stones, not exceeding 150cm long by 90 cm wide.
- Plain open books up to 45 cm high and 75 cm wide
- Fixed memorial vases up to 30cm x 20cm x 20cm
- Flat stones over cremated remains up to 30cm x 37cm

Inscriptions should be simple, dignified and reverent.

The formal application form gives further details about stone type (which should be natural and non-reflecting) and some more detailed guidance about wording.

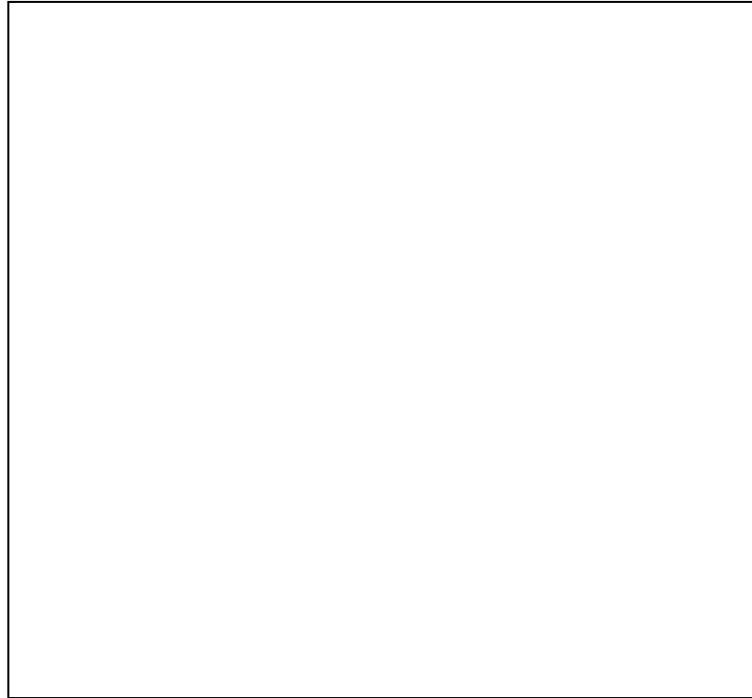
Are some things *not* allowed?

For a number of reasons, many of them to do with maintenance and aesthetics, there are some things that the parish priest cannot her/himself give permission for

- Kerbs, railings, fencing, chippings
- Heart-shaped stones
- Anything fixed or hanging to the monument
- Plastic or synthetic materials
- Any carving other than flora, fauna and small crosses

Some of these *may* be allowed, but the permission cannot be given by the parish priest; s/he has to pass the matter on to the person in the Diocese who has the statutory legal oversight of churchyards.

Your parish priest is very willing to help you and will happily give you advice, particularly for example about what kind of stone is best in the churchyard and about inscriptions that are simple, dignified and reverent. You will find her/his name and contact details below.



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GRAVES AND MEMORIALS IN CHURCHYARDS



A GUIDE