

St Peter's Dunchurch

Churchyard Regulations

The Churchyard at St Peter's is one of the loveliest in the county, with marvellous views and a peaceful atmosphere. It is also one of the largest in the county, with a small but dedicated team of volunteers who maintain it.

The following rules are absolutely essential for the maintenance of the churchyard, so that it can be kept tidy and retain its charm and character. They are an extract from more comprehensive directions issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese which can be found on the Coventry Diocese website.

Guidelines about Monuments in the Churchyard

A. General Rules

No Memorial of any kind may lawfully be placed in the churchyard without the Vicar's written permission having first been obtained. Applications shall be made in writing to the incumbent, with details of dimensions and materials. The wording of any inscriptions must be stated and the type, size and position of the lettering should be indicated. [Generally the stonemasons will make this application.]

The Vicar, by licence of the Chancellor of the Diocese, is only permitted to approve those monuments which conform to these rules. Applications for monuments that do not conform to these rules require the submission of a faculty application to the Chancellor, who will then decide whether to allow the proposal.

Nothing may be erected or placed in the Churchyard until the written consent of the Vicar or Chancellor has been received.

The maintenance of the memorials is the responsibility of those who erect them or the heirs of the person commemorated.

Those authorised to look after the churchyard may remove any items not permitted under these rules and any permitted items if they consider they are not maintained in an acceptable and tidy condition. It should be noted that around February each year (to coincide with Lent) Christmas wreaths and other decorations, artificial flowers, ornaments and other items precluded under these rules may be removed. A notice to this effect will be placed on the noticeboard outside the church.

B. Rules for Burials

Vertical headstones or crosses shall not exceed 1220mm (4') nor be less than 762mm (2' 6'') in height.

Slabs shall be laid flat and sunk level with the surrounding ground, for ease of mowing.

Monuments may only be made of: English oak or natural stone in keeping with the character of the churchyard. [Acceptable materials are limestone, sandstone, slate and granite – but not black granite]

Polished granite or marble is not permitted and stones may not be polished.

Monuments may not incorporate any other material.

Lettering should be incised.

The gilding or silvering of lettering or designs is not permitted, but lettering may be highlighted in black, grey or brown only.

Monuments in the shape of books or hearts are not normally permitted.

Kerbs, chippings, railings or chains are not permitted.

Photographs are not permitted as part of a memorial.

Any objects designed to make a noise in the wind or to radiate light from a solar cell are not permitted.

Statues and figurines of any material or other ornaments are not permitted as a decoration on a grave.

St Peter's is an eco church and plastic objects, including flowers should be avoided wherever possible.

The use of wooden crosses as a temporary memorial is permitted providing the rules A1 & A3 are complied with. The fee for a cross will be credited against the fee for a headstone, if the headstone replaces the cross within eighteen months. If a wooden cross is intended to be a permanent memorial then rule B3b applies and the maximum height is one metre.

C. Rules for Cremated Remains

Ashes may be interred within an area of the churchyard specially reserved for that purpose.

Ashes may not be scattered in the churchyard.

Ashes should be buried either without any container or in a bio-degradable container.

Ashes may be buried in an existing family grave. Additional inscriptions may be made to headstones or slabs.

Vertical headstones are not permitted in the ashes area.

Horizontal slabs not exceeding 30 centimetres square are permitted, providing that they are sunk level with the surrounding ground so that a mower may pass freely over them.

Materials and other details to be as in Section B above,

Artificial flowers and planted pots are not permitted in the Ashes plots

D. Rules for Flowers and Containers

The following are allowed on a grave:

- a. A single stone vase or pot matching the monument.
- b. China or metal vases or pots, but only if sunk into the ground so as to be firmly anchored and virtually invisible.
- c. Wreaths and cut flowers, which may be laid on the grave.

No glass or plastic vases or jars are permitted, nor planted pots.

Artificial flowers are not allowed, with the exception of Remembrance poppies and Christmas wreaths.

After the grave has been levelled, bulbs and annual bedding plants may be planted within 30 centimetres of where the headstone would be. Shrubs, bushes, trees, heathers and other similar plants are not permitted and no such planting is permitted in the ashes plots.

These local rules are a digest of the Chancellor's Regulations for Churchyards, which is always the authoritative document. This may be viewed at: [Diocese of Coventry - Memorials in churchyards](#)