

Funerals

Headstone, Memorial & Flower requirements

There are regulations governing headstones and memorials and flowers in Diocese of Truro graveyards.

Funeral Directors or the local church will be able to provide more information as to what applies in your local graveyard.



DIOCESE OF TRURO
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Headstones & Memorials size regulations

Regulations

The Diocese has regulations about memorials and headstones in churchyards and burial grounds.

There is no right to a memorial headstone. Strictly speaking permission from the Chancellor of the Diocese is required in every case but in practice he has delegated this authority:

- To the minister of the parish provided that the memorial conforms to these regulations and
- To the Archdeacon who may permit an individually designed memorial which is of artistic merit.

Otherwise you must obtain a faculty. All work carried out shall also conform to the Code of Working Practice of the National Association of Memorial Masons.

Delay

A memorial headstone should not be erected for at least six months after the burial to allow the ground to settle. This does not apply to cremated remains.

Parish Regulations

A Parochial Church Council may provide regulations which are complementary to, but not less stringent than these regulations. Such regulations are approved by the Archdeacon.

Consent

You must obtain the written consent of the minister (vicar, Priest-in-charge) of the parish before any memorial is ordered from the funeral director or monumental mason. You must make an application on the standard form which you can download (see Useful Resources). You should send the form to the minister of the parish. To search for contact details see Find a Church under Useful Resources.

If you want the Archdeacon to authorise your memorial because it does not comply with these regulations but you believe it has artistic merit, you should make that clear when you send the form to the minister of the parish. Your Minister can then refer it to the Archdeacon.

What size is allowed by the regulations?

Headstones

Height: not more than 1200mm (4'0") nor less than 750mm (2'6") measured from the surface of the ground

Width: not more than 900mm (3'0") nor less than 500mm (1'8")

Thickness: not more than 150mm (6") nor less than 75mm (3") except in the case of slate memorials which may be thinner but no less than 38mm (1½")

Headstones for infant burials

Height: not less than 600mm (2'0")

Width: not less than 375mm (1'3")

Thickness: not less than 50mm (2")

Cross and base memorials

Height: not more than 1 metre 525mm (5'0") nor less than 900mm (3'0") high measured from the surface of the ground.

Width: not more than 900mm (3'0") nor less than 600mm (2'0")

Thickness: not more than 380mm (1'3") nor less than 150mm (6")

Ledger stones

Not more than 2100mm (7'0") by 900mm (3'0")

Not less than 1200mm (4'0") by 600mm (2'0")

These measurements are not intended to define standard proportions of memorials which may be of any dimensions within the given maximum and minimum. (The metric equivalents given above are slightly less than the imperial dimensions but are recommended for use by the National Association of Memorial Masons).

Base and Foundation Slab

Headstones may be of three types:

So shaped that they can be inserted directly into the ground at sufficient depth to ensure stability;

On an integral base not more than 900mm (3'0") wide, nor projecting more than 100mm (4") in any direction, nor more than 225mm (9") high

On a vase base not more than 900mm (3'0") wide, nor projecting more than 100mm (4") on either side, nor projecting more than 180mm (7") in front of the headstone, no more than 100mm (4") high. The base must be no more than 375mm (1'3") overall, front to back.

It should be noted that since the base may not be more than 900mm (3'0") wide, the use of a headstone more than 700mm (2'4") wide will reduce the extent to which the base may project on either side. Due regard should be paid to the nature of the ground and to settlement. Ledger stones must be laid flush with the ground.

What materials are allowed?

Memorials must be of approved natural stone or of hardwood. The following stone is approved in the Diocese, and examples are deposited at Diocesan House:

Granite

Preferred: Silver grey, quarried in Cornwall and Devon.

Permitted: Tarn (France), Karin (Finland), Marlow (Portugal).

Slate

Cornish, Welsh Blue and Grey, Lakeland Green and Grey.

No other materials are permitted. In particular blue, red, black and dark grey granites, white marble, synthetic stone and plastic are not permitted.

Sculpture, Design, Finish and Epitaphs

Individuality and excellence of design of memorials is encouraged. Headstones need not be restricted to a rectangular shape.

Sculpture

Sculpture or statuary are not discouraged but must be authorised by faculty.

Designs

Individuality and excellence of design of memorials is encouraged. Headstones need not be restricted to a rectangular shape. For example, curved tops are preferable to straight-edged ones. However, memorials in the shape of a heart are not permitted other than by faculty. A design carved into the face of the stone or hardwood is permissible, provided that it is of high quality, relevant and reverent.

Photographs or porcelain or other portraits or pictures are not permitted. Kerbs, railings, chains, chippings or glass shades are not permitted unless allowed by regulations issued by the incumbent and PCC. A cross should be individually designed if a permanent memorial in this form is desired. A book or Bible design is acceptable but should be mounted upon a tick-rest or a second base, and the overall height may be of less than 750mm (2'6"). Applicants who want an individually designed headstone may wish to read the booklet 'Memorials by Artists', which can be consulted at Diocesan House.

Finish

A smooth finish is preferred, which shall not be more polished than a non-reflective or honed finish. A rough finish is acceptable. Where desired, the inscribed face but no other part of the stone may be polished to a reflective finish.

Epitaphs

Inscriptions must be reverent and may include literary quotations. Inscriptions must be incised in the surface or carved in relief, and may be painted in black, white or goldleaf. Lead lettering may be used. Plastic or other inlaid lettering is not permitted.

Additions may be made to an inscription at a later date following a subsequent interment in the same grave or for another suitable reason. However, any such addition must be separately approved by the incumbent, and the lettering, layout and wording must be consistent with the original inscription.

References to the bereaved family in the inscription should be restricted to parent/child or spouse relationships. The inclusion of siblings' or other relatives' names in addition to those of

parents/children of the deceased is not normally permitted. Brothers or sisters may be referred to as the only bereaved, or of course where they are interred in the same grave.

Trademarks

No advertisement or trademark may be inscribed on the face of a gravestone.

The mason's name may, however be inscribed at the side or on the reverse in unleaded letters, no larger than 13mm (½") in height.

Cremation

Each churchyard has its own policy for the interment of ashes following cremation.

The regulations concerning memorial headstones or tablets are the same as for burials, except that the minimum dimensions will be 250mm (10") by 300mm (12"); 50mm (2") thick in granite and 38mm (1½") in slate. Where a special area has been set aside by faculty for interment of ashes, the rules laid down for interments and appropriate commemoration must be observed.

Flowers

Except where the design of a headstone includes an integral receptacle, plants or cut flowers may be placed in a removable container which must be sunk flush with the ground.

Where a flower vase is the only memorial, it must be no more than 300mm (1'0") high, measured from the surface of the ground, nor more than 300mm (1'0") wide, or more than 250mm (10") front to back, and must be securely fixed to a foundation stone which itself shall be flush with the ground and nor more than 300mm (1'0") in either dimension.

Wreaths and cut flowers may also be laid on a grave, but must be removed as soon as they have withered. No artificial flowers are allowed except for Remembrance Day poppies and traditional Christmas wreaths, which must be removed after a period of not more than two months.

Any vase, flowers or wreath not complying with the above rules may be removed by, or with the authority of, the incumbent or the churchwardens during a vacancy.