

*What is allowed on a headstone? Continued...*

The following short words describing family relationships are allowed: Mum, Dad, Mummy, Daddy, Grandma, Grandad, Gran, Granny, Grandpa, Nan and Nanny. All words must be in English, since they must be able to be understood by visitors to the churchyard.

An appropriate Bible verse can be quoted on a headstone, or other words which reflect Christian belief. Also, certain words which reflect the character, job or role of your loved one are allowed.

### **Decoration**

Any decoration must be in keeping with Christian belief, and must be in proportion to the size of the headstone. Christian symbols like a cross or the ICHTHUS sign are allowed under a CR1, as is a single flower or spray of flowers or other plant (e.g. ears of corn), as is an Armed Forces emblem (if there is written evidence that the deceased was entitled to use that emblem). Other decorative designs which reflect the deceased's work or passions may be allowed under a Faculty (e.g. a car or musical instrument), if wording is also added to make sense of the design (e.g. "mechanic" or "a talented musician").

### **Am I allowed a temporary memorial?**

Yes. A temporary wooden cross bearing a plaque to commemorate your loved one is allowed, until a new headstone is in place (or new inscription added to an existing headstone), or until three years after their burial, whichever is sooner. At this point, the cross must be removed. Permission may be given for the cross to remain for more than three years. The cross must have a natural wood colouring, and must be no larger than 380mm (15ins) high by 305mm (12ins) wide. Your Funeral Director can provide a wooden cross. Please ensure they have the Vicar's permission before the cross is fitted.

### **Am I allowed a bench bearing a memorial plaque?**

This might be possible, depending on space and location, and would need the special legal permission called a Faculty – please contact our Sexton to apply. The exact location of any memorial bench is at the discretion of the Vicar.

### **Who cares for memorials?**

All memorials remain the property of the person/family who paid for them, and it is their responsibility to care for them. The Church will occasionally perform safety tests on headstones, and may sometimes commission work to care for benches.

### **Why are photos not allowed?**

Because they fade over time, and may need glass to protect them (which can be dangerous). Also, a photograph is a record of the deceased at one particular point in their life, whereas the headstone and its inscription speak of their whole life, from birth to death. A better place for a photographic tribute to your loved one is in your home.

### **Statutory fees**

The Church is under legal obligation to charge fees for memorials. These fees are set by the Church of England, and are adjusted in January every year. Please ask the Church for details.

### **Contact**

For help with headstones and wooden crosses:  
Revd David Cattle, Vicar, on  
[vicar@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk)  
or 01245 956953

For help with benches: Anne Pepper, Sexton, on  
[sexton@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk](mailto:sexton@stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk)



# Memorials for our loved ones

Headstones,  
temporary wooden crosses,  
and benches



Updated July 2024



## How can I commemorate my loved ones?

When a loved one dies, one of the most important decisions we need to make is how to commemorate them. This leaflet summarises what is allowed in our churchyard. The Vicar and Sexton are always happy to give advice and support.

It is important to note that **all memorials need permission from the Church**. This is because everything that happens in our churchyard is covered by a list of rules which are set by the Chancellor of the Diocese of Chelmsford, Philippa Hopkins KC, who is the senior legal officer for the Bishop. The rules are part of a legal framework, and so are part of English law, and they apply to every churchyard in the Diocese of Chelmsford. The full list of rules can be found in “The Churchyard Handbook” here:

[www.stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk/churchyard/](http://www.stmichaelsgalleywood.org.uk/churchyard/)

Within these rules, three types of memorial are allowed in our churchyard: a permanent headstone, a temporary wooden cross, a wooden bench. **No other types of memorial (e.g. plaques, stones, vases, photos or kerbs) are allowed. No memorials of any kind are allowed in the Garden of Remembrance.** The placing of memorials without permission is illegal.

## Why are there rules for memorials?

Firstly, our churchyard is a **shared space** (it is owned by the Church for the benefit of everyone), and like any other shared space there is a set of rules to make sure that the needs of all users are respected, and that everything that happens is fair and safe for everyone. (It is important to note that no grave is owned by an individual family, even if they have paid to reserve the plot, but remains part of the shared space.)

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*Why are there rules? Continued...*

Secondly, any memorials need to be in keeping with the nature of this special place, which is:

**...sacred:** This is land which has been set aside and blessed for holy use. It is a place where memories and sadness are mixed with the Christian hope of the love of God and life after death.

**...historic:** The Church building is an important and historic landmark. The character of the building and its grounds must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

**...sustainable:** In keeping with our desire to care for God’s creation, everything in the churchyard (except headstones, benches, and some limited temporary items) must be living (i.e. not plastic or artificial).

## How do I apply for a headstone or additional inscription?

In the first instance please ask a local stonemason for advice. They will know the rules, and will help you to choose a headstone design and advise you on how to get permission. Your stonemason should not start work on a headstone until the right permission is in place.

Simple designs can be signed off by the Vicar on a form called a “CR1”, which a stonemason will help you to complete. More complicated designs need a special legal permission from the Diocese called a “Faculty” (which takes longer and is more expensive, since there are more people involved in making a decision). The Vicar will help you to apply for a Faculty.

No application for a headstone can be made until six months after the burial (or, in the case of the burial of cremated remains, six months after the date of the cremation). This is to allow the ground to settle, and to allow time for important decisions to be made.

## What kind of headstone is allowed under a CR1?

A stonemason must ensure that any stone is ethically sourced. Only the following types of stone are allowed: **slate; limestone** (Blue Lias, Chilmark, Hopton Wood, Hornton, Nabresina, Oathill Cotswold Cream, Portland, Purbeck Pond Freestone, Purbeck Thornback); **sandstone** (Caithness Stone, Dukes, Forest of Dean, Peakmoor, Scotch Buff, Stoneraise Red, Wattscliffe Lilac, West Stone, Yorkstone); **grey granite**. A headstone can be honed, but not polished.

A headstone must have parallel, straight sides and a curved top, and must not be higher than 1070mm (3ft 6ins) from the ground, wider than 760mm (2ft 6ins), and thicker than 102mm (4ins). Smaller headstones are requested for graves containing only ashes, in keeping with the size of the plot. One flower vase is allowed to be built into the base, which is allowed to extend outwards for 202mm (8ins).

Other types of stone and other shapes might be allowed under a Faculty, but permission can’t be guaranteed.

## What am I allowed to put on a headstone?

### **Words**

Since a headstone is a permanent memorial of the life of the person buried there, formal wording is appropriate. The full name and dates of birth and death of the deceased are allowed. Their name is not allowed to be abbreviated, but if they were known by a particular name this can be added in inverted commas after the Christian name. Nicknames are generally not allowed.

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