

DAC GUIDANCE NOTE

Setting aside an area for cremated remains

DAC policy

The DAC encourages the interment of cremated remains in areas set aside for the purpose within churchyards. Special areas can be created in any churchyard, even if it has been formally closed for burials, but a Faculty to make this provision is always required.

The Church in Wales Regulations concerning burial of cremated remains

The DAC follows the guidance notes provided in the [Churchyard Regulations](#). The DAC strongly encourages PCCs to consult with the Committee early on in the designing of an area. A site visit will usually be made by DAC members so they have a realistic idea of the setting of the church and churchyard as a whole and the parishes' aspirations.

The following issues should be given careful consideration:

- Cremation is becoming more popular, even in rural communities, and the area should provide sufficient space for a reasonable length of time. How large does the area need to be?
- Health and Safety issues, as well as pastoral sensitivity, mean that the plots need to be of manageable size to enable interments adjacent to existing burials. The DAC suggests that a minimum of 60 cm x 60cm (24" x 24") is appropriate.
- A plan of the area must be kept up to date. It is important that there is an accurate written record of interments for all areas, but especially those that are kept as lawns, without individual memorials on plots.
- The area, whatever the size, should be clearly defined. Will existing features such as walls, tombs, paths, or trees define the boundary; or is some other way of identifying the area, such as cornerstones, required?
- Would it be appropriate to have a plaque, standing stone, or wooden sign - suitably inscribed - to tell people what the area is for?
- Would a book of remembrance be a good way to commemorate the dead? This might be appropriate if the PCC decides not to allow individual memorials on plots.
- If memorials are to be allowed, the PCC must ensure they satisfy the Churchyard Regulations. Experience has shown that plaques 45cm x 30cm (18" x 12"), set so that the inscription runs along the longer face (landscape rather than portrait format) are sufficiently large to remain stable in the ground, without giving the area an impression of being paved. If the area is grassed the memorial plaques should be bedded-in just below the surface so it remains easy to mow the area and keep it tidy.
- Is the PCC planning to provide a place for flowers, so that these are not left dotted all over the area?
- Is there to be a seat for people visiting the area? If so, details should be included with the faculty application.
- Is the PCC planning to include any planting in the scheme? if there is to be a rose bed, or tree or bush as a focal point, full details should be provided.
- Is the proposed area safe and accessible? For example, is there a path to it that visitors will be able to use? Is the area tucked away, such that anyone visiting the area could be vulnerable? Are the proposed boundary markers secure and obvious, so that visitors do not trip over them?

Information required for a faculty petition

1. A plan of the church and churchyard showing the proposed location of the new area, its dimensions, boundary markers and any other features (e.g. paths, headstones, trees). If the area is in addition to an existing one, please indicate its location also.
2. Information about the size of plots and where the plan recording all interments is to be kept.
3. If a stone/tablet or some other means of identifying the area is to be included, full details must be provided.
4. If memorial stones are to be permitted, details of size, material, inscriptions, method of securing them: making this clear from the outset reduces the risk of subsequent pastoral difficulties.
5. It is always a great help if photographs of the proposed area can be provided so that it is easier to envisage the location the PCC has in mind; a simple snapshot conveys lots of useful information!
6. If a Book of Remembrance is to be used please provide details of the book; its colour, size and composition (especially whether it has acid-free paper), the calligrapher who will write in it and where it is to be stored.
7. If the Book of Remembrance is to be in a display case, information about the size of the case, its proposed location in the church, and type of wood used to make it.
8. Catalogue illustrations or a sketch of the proposed design should be provided.

Archaeology

On the whole, areas for cremated remains are considered to result in minimal archaeological impact, because the depth of interment is considerably less than that associated with traditional burials. However, some churchyards have archaeological potential, that may affect where such an area can be located, and early discussions with the DAC are advised.

Further information

The setting aside of an area for cremated remains is a sensitive matter. Parishes are strongly advised to visit other churchyards to see how the matter has been approached – even if this only reveals what to avoid! However, each setting is different and the DAC approaches every proposal with an open mind.

The Churchyards Handbook, T. Cocke, Church House Publishing 2012

The Art of Remembering ed. Frazer and Oestricher, Carcanet 1998

Memorials by Artists Commissions acts as a bridge between people looking for a good memorial and fine-lettering artists. MbA is a mine of useful information and publishes an illustrated booklet showing 50 examples. www.memorialsbyartists.co.uk.