



LEICESTER DIOCESAN REGISTRY

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NEW DIOCESAN CHURCHYARD REGULATIONS EFFECTIVE FROM & INCLUDING 20 OCTOBER 2025

The Ecclesiastical Judges Association (EJA) has been aware that there are significant differences in churchyard regulation between dioceses, which has led to confusion for those involved in the memorial mason industry working across diocesan boundaries and more so for families of the deceased.

Therefore, the EJA produced a set of template documents and asked Diocesan Chancellors to consult and produce new Churchyard Regulations for their Diocese based on those templates, the intention being not to produce a uniform set of regulations (as it is recognised that there are often good reasons for different regulations in different parts of the country e.g. local stone) but that there would be greater conformity throughout England.

As a consequence and following consultation, new Churchyard Regulations for Leicester Diocese will become effective on **20 October 2025**.

The legal process

The legal process by which a minister (see definition below) will be able to admit compliant memorials without the need for a faculty will now be as a result of an **Additional Matters Order** (rather than delegated authority as previously).

The minister

An application for a memorial must be made to **the minister** who will determine if the application falls within Schedule 1 and whether permission may be given for the memorial.

The minister is **the incumbent**.

In a vacancy, the minister is:

- the priest in charge; or
- the curate licensed to the charge of the parish; or
- where there is no priest in charge or curate licensed to the charge of the parish, the Area Dean.

The Additional Matters Order

The Additional Matters Order (AMO) consists of:

1. The Order
2. Schedule 1 – **matters not requiring a faculty**
3. Schedule 2 – **approval procedure**
4. Schedule 3 – **application form**

Copies are available to download from the Diocesan website, or by emailing [the Registry](mailto:registry@stoneking.co.uk).

The Order

- revokes the 2014 Regulations;
- provides that the matters specified in Schedule 1 may be undertaken without a faculty provided the procedures in Schedules 2 and 3 are followed;
- provides for any questions as to whether an application falls within Schedule 1 to be referred to the Chancellor;
- provides that **if an application is refused by a minister, it may be referred to the Chancellor and if the applicant wishes, the Chancellor may direct that upon payment of the statutory fee the application be treated as a faculty petition;**
- is applicable to the whole of the Diocese, unless a particular churchyard or burial ground has been expressly excluded by the Chancellor;
- is not applicable to consecrated parts of municipal cemeteries operated by local authorities;
- does not affect parish churchyard regulations which have been granted by faculty prior to 20 October 2025 – these will continue in force where applicable until the Chancellor directs otherwise.

For example, Schedule 1 does not permit polished granites but if you have a faculty for parish churchyard regulations which permits memorials to be made of polished granite, you can continue to permit memorials made of polished granite in your churchyard.

Schedule 1

This sets out:

- the specifications of a memorial that may be permitted in a churchyard; and
- the circumstances in which an existing memorial may be replaced, repaired or altered.

provided in each case that the procedures in Schedules 2 and 3 are followed.

Schedule 2

Part 1 sets out the application process: the application form signed by the applicant and the memorial mason is to be sent to the minister, who may give permission by endorsing the application form. If the minister refuses permission or does not respond to the application within 28 days, the application may be referred to the Chancellor for directions.

Part 2 sets out the basis upon which the Chancellor will exercise her discretion to consider and determine faculty applications for memorials which have not been approved by the minister.

Schedule 3

This is the application form that must be used from and including 20 October 2025 to apply to a minister for the introduction of a memorial into a churchyard, or for the repair or replacement of an existing memorial in a churchyard, or to change the inscription on an existing memorial in a churchyard.

What are the changes?

Below are listed what we consider to be significant changes.

- a headstone or cremated remains tablet may be made of
 - slate;
 - sandstone;
 - limestone; or
 - granite
- the colour of the slate or stone may be natural, black, dark grey or a colour of which a significant number of memorials already exist in the churchyard (so that the colour proposed is not discordant in the specific context);
- inscriptions
 - must be factually accurate, unoffensive, uncontroversial and not contain slang or abbreviations;
 - may include commonly shortened names to describe a family member e.g. Gran, Nan, Gramps, Pops;
 - subject to the above can be in a language other than English provided a translation has been supplied for the parish records;
 - may include reference to someone **related to the deceased** but buried elsewhere **in the churchyard**;
- lettering may be uncoloured or coloured in black, white, grey, silver or gold provided only a single colour is used and it does not render the memorial discordant with the context of the church and churchyard;
- incised, uncoloured motifs are permitted if
 - simple in design
 - has no more than two illustrations
 - is a traditional Christian cross or symbolism of a character commonly found in churchyard memorials (designs of comfort, pointing to a belief of life after death, rest, peace, hope), or relevant to the life of the person commemorated;
 - not inconsistent with Christian doctrine.
- cremated remains tablets may be either flat or of a desk top design.

Always note that...

Any memorial erected other than in accordance with Regulations or a faculty may lead to the removal of the memorial at the expense of the persons or memorial masons responsible, who may also be required to pay the cost of Consistory Court proceedings.

Any dispute between family members or others about a memorial or the Regulations may be resolved through faculty petition to the Chancellor.

Next steps

Please have a thorough read of the AMO and the three Schedules, familiarise yourself with the contents and ensure copies of them are displayed on church and churchyard noticeboards, and on your church website.

Please dispose of all copies you may have of the 2014 Regulations and all old application forms after 19 October 2025.

September 2025