

Interment of cremated remains: St Augustine's Church, Locking.

The Churchyard at St. Augustine's was closed for burials in 1983. At this time a licence was obtained from the Diocese of Bath and Wells to allow for the interment of cremated remains to take place within a defined area of the Churchyard, that being the North West corner by the tower. This licence contains quite specific directions as to how each plot is to be marked. Please see the appendix to Churchyard rules attached to this letter. In essence the plot may only be marked with a flat memorial plaque measuring 450 mm x 400mm laid just below the level of the surrounding grass. No other ornamentation is allowed and a separate area is provided for the placing of flower vases and the like.

Over a period of some years now, a few interment plots have been modified to include metal trays, wooden surrounds, stone chippings, and flower containers. This is a direct contravention of the terms of the licence and the Church law governing its issue. Such alterations also make the maintenance of the Churchyard more difficult in that the mower cannot get up to the edges of the plots and the strimming has on occasion caused chippings to be thrown up risking damage or injury.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), who are responsible for the maintenance of the Churchyard, have taken legal advice from the solicitors acting for the Diocese and following that advice have made the following decision.

From the 1st September 2019 the Churchyard rules will be strictly adhered to and all memorials must be laid out as prescribed by the regulations. This will apply to existing memorial tablets as well as those placed in the future. If it is desired to have anything other than the prescribed arrangements, an application for a faculty to the Consistory Court would have to be applied for.

With regard to the plots that have already been altered to include borders etc. it has been decided to allow these to remain in situ to avoid undue distress and pastoral upset to the relatives of those departed.

That said, these non compliant tablets will not be accepted as a precedent for others to follow, on the basis that 'two wrongs do not make a right'.

By keeping the Churchyard in a tidy and well looked after state it will remain a beautiful and peaceful place where loved ones can be laid to rest.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Signed: - Revd. Anne Wilkins

On behalf of St. Augustine's Parochial Church Council.