

Memorial Tablets in Churches

If you have any questions please contact the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC):

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For more information about the care of churches visit the DAC pages on the Diocese of Manchester's website: www.manchester.anglican.org



“A special privilege reserved for exceptional cases.”

A faculty is always necessary for the purpose of placing memorial tablets in churches and according to a well-established rule, observed by succession of Chancellors in this diocese and elsewhere, the granting of such a faculty is to be regarded as a special privilege reserved for exceptional cases.

Evidence would normally be required that the person has given outstanding service to the Church and/or the community as a whole, and even then the granting of permission would not follow as a matter of course.

Consideration would have to be given to the character of the church, the design of the proposed memorial, the availability of suitable wall-space, etc.; on such matters the Chancellor would take particular note of the recommendation of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

The strictness with which the court’s discretion is exercised may sometimes, in the short-term view, appear excessive; but it is the Chancellors duty to protect the interests of future generations.

If faculties were freely granted, albeit in deserving cases, the walls of a church might in the course of years become crowded with tablets to the detriment of the church's appearance.

It is happily true in many parishes that each generation sees examples of devoted and meritorious service by churchwardens and others which clearly deserves to be kept in remembrance.

Alternative forms of Commemoration

It is suggested that an acceptable mode of commemoration may often be the provision of some article or feature, suitably inscribed, which can be dedicated as a permanent addition to the contents or perhaps the structure of the church.

Examples in this diocese include memorial windows, panelling, pews, candlesticks, communion plate, altar frontals and dorsals, fontcovers, lecterns and service books.

Seeking authorization for a memorial tablet

Any person who has a legitimate interest may of course present a petition seeking authorization for a memorial tablet. But it should be understood that a substantial burden of proof will normally rest on the petitioner and that, even in the absence of formal objection by other parties, a hearing in court may well be required.

Intending petitioners would usually be well advised to seek the opinion of the parochial church council and the advice of the Diocesan Registrar at an early stage, before detailed designs are prepared and submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee.