

DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BOOKS OF REMEMBRANCE

GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARISHES

Revised November 2006

BOOKS OF REMEMBRANCE

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Increasingly, cremations are becoming more popular than burials. Current Churchyard Regulations mean it is possible that the exact spot where ashes are interred will be marked, but it is recognised that many people need a place on which to focus their grief. Often, the name of the deceased is recorded either on a plaque or a specially designed wall or memorial in the churchyard, or in a Book of Remembrance kept within the church.
- 1.2 A Book of Remembrance should be of lasting quality to accord the necessary dignity and respect to the memory of the deceased person.
- 1.3 Such books can be expensive to purchase and it will be worth visiting churches which already have one (the DAC can suggest names of parishes) to see what is possible and what is preferred.
- 1.4 It is possible to purchase a good book of blank pages from a specialist supplier, or art shop, and these books may be ready bound or bound to order. Loose leaf books are not suitable.
- 1.5 Advice on suppliers can be obtained from the Diocesan Resources Centre (tel. 01245 294405).

THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

- 2.1 The most common practice is for each page (or double page) to be designated for each day or week or month of the year depending on the frequency of burials. The book should be left open and the pages regularly turned. There is then a real sense in which the deceased person will be remembered on the anniversary of his or her death.
- 2.2 This practice will mean that each page will have recorded on it the names of those who died on that day or week or month. Space available and the number of deaths each year in the parish will determine whether just the person's name and dates of birth and death are recorded, or whether it is possible for the PCC to encourage the addition of a few words describing the life or character of the person commemorated.
- 2.3 The Book of Remembrance may be supported by a plan indicating the location of the burials, but is not to be treated as a substitute for legal registers.
- 2.4 In order to encourage the remembering to develop into a meditation or prayer, it can be helpful to have some words of scripture or a prayer nearby, or a votive candlestand (a faculty is required for the latter).

CALLIGRAPHY

- 3.1 It is essential that entries are competently and expertly written in order to maintain the excellence of its presentation. No entry should be made by anyone other than a calligrapher.

- 3.2 A good calligrapher will only use paper and ink that are compatible and permanent. In general a smooth acid free paper and ink known to be non-fading, such as carbon based Chinese ink, are preferable.
- 3.3 The Book may include appropriate designs or illustrations at the head or foot of a page, if space permits.
- 3.4 Subsequent calligraphers should follow the style and quality of the original.

THE CASE

- 4.1 The book is usually displayed in a lockable, glass-topped cabinet, which may include an internal light. It should be placed where it can be viewed easily without noisy disturbance, as the visitor will wish to reflect quietly.
- 4.2 The cabinet should be sited away from strong light or heat, and not directly on stone, as damp can be very destructive. If damp in a church is a problem, place a desiccant in the cabinet and change it frequently. In some cases a cover may be necessary to protect the book from strong sunlight.
- 4.3 The cabinet should be designed to suit the particular features of the church and the chosen location. The type of wood, size and shape will all have to be considered, and a full sketch design will need to be submitted to the DAC when applying for a faculty.
- 4.4 In choosing an architect/designer and woodworker it is always good to see other examples of their work first. It will be essential to supply a clear brief, agree fees and costs, and allow them to design appropriately.

COSTS

- 5.1 Relatives are usually charged a fee for inclusion of an entry in the book and this should cover the cost of the calligrapher and a small portion of the initial cost of the book and case.

REFERENCES

DAC Guidance Notes on Cremated Remains Areas.

POLICY

1. The DAC recommends that parishes have a Book of Remembrance, particularly in connection with areas of cremated remains.
2. The book must be of a high and lasting quality.
3. Calligraphy must be of a high standard of workmanship and the DAC will wish to see a sample.
4. The cabinet is to be designed and located to reflect the dignity of its purpose and of the church, and it will require faculty consent.

This is one of a series of DAC Guidance Notes obtainable from the Diocesan Resources Centre (Tel: 01245 294405)

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