

# Saint Nicholas Church, Mavesyn Ridware

(A Grade 1 listed church building & churchyard)



- Faculty Application for the following work:
  - Create a new Garden of Remembrance within the existing churchyard
  - Proposed layout of new garden of remembrance.
  - Limit the cremated remains markers to a maximum size of 18" x 18"

# Statement of Need

## 1) Existing Garden of Remembrance is now full

The Mavesyn Ridware churchyard already contains a Garden of Remembrance. This is located from north-south along a pathway located at 90 degrees to the proposed new Garden of Remembrance (further west of the proposed Garden of Remembrance).

St Nicholas Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) also noted that the current Garden of Remembrance also allows the provision of cremated remains markers to denote individual graves.

The PCC are now making this application, because this Garden of Remembrance has now reached its capacity. **See also pages 14ff**

## 2) Location of the proposed extension to the Garden of Remembrance



The picture above shows the south east corner of the churchyard. The boundary is marked out by the wall along the eastern elevation (ie at the top of the picture) and also by the wall to the south that separates the churchyard from the farming land to the south (on the right of the picture).

The distance from the pagoda located in the central background of the picture to the stone embedded in the grass in the immediate foreground, is approximately 9 meters. The distance from the south to the edge of the first grave to the left of the picture is 4.5 meters. The PCC concludes that there is plenty of available space.

### 3a) Why the PCC no longer requires this area for full burials

As you can see in the picture above, there is a line of full graves butting along the proposed site for the New Garden of Remembrance. Our plans for a Garden of Remembrance allow for a path to run east-west to the left side of these graves. Mindful of the black grave, this is in line with embedded stone referred to in the previous paragraph, and so the new Garden of Remembrance will not extend as far up as this grave.



From both these pictures, we can deduce that the new Garden of Remembrance will be in rectangular in shape. Our Grave Digger has been digging graves in the churchyard for over 30 years, taking on the business of his father. In the absence of a full graveyard map, he has confirmed that he has never dug graves in this area. Also the ground shows no tell take signed if being disturbed.

To answer the question of using this space for future full burials, the PCC notes that it is fortunate to have retained for over the 30 years the service of the same grave digger. Over time, the grave digger has acquired a professional knowledge of the soil structure in this part of the churchyard. It is on the basis of his familiarity with soil, that our gravedigger indicates that the soil structure in this part of the churchyard, only permits the safe digging of single depth graves.

The grave diggers' conclusion is reflected in Faculty #2019-043641. This states that double depth graves should be accommodated in the churchyard on a side by side orientation - on account of the restrictions arising from the soil structure.

**An expression of its desire to continue serving the parish through making available churchyard space for burials, the PCC decided that it was more expedient -given the nature of the soil structure- to use this remaining space for a new Garden of Remembrance. This was made on the basis that the footprint for a cremated remains plot was much smaller than a full burial plot.**

### **3b) A note on the provision for full burials in Mavesyn Ridware**

Despite the difficulties laid out in the previous paragraphs, the PCC remains committed to serving families, who when preparing to inter a loved one, require a full burial plot. As we have established available space for full

burials is in short supply with only 8 new plots available. These however can only ever be single depth graves.

In response to this, St Nicholas Church PCC has been working with other interested parties in the community, considering whether the St Nicholas Churchyard should be extended. These discussions have been in process at least since before 2007. As is known by Lichfield Diocese, the discussions have been historically very difficult at times.

More recently, the PCC has considered again this opportunity. In Autumn 2022, after gauging the view of other interested parties, the PCC decided to no longer pursue the option of extending the churchyard to the east and south.

As part of it's deliberations before this decision, the PCC considered how a Christian burial could still be offered if they could not to be interred in the churchyard. The PCC became aware of the Bishop of Lichfield's legislation in this regard. This legislation enables Anglican clergy to bless a single grave in a civic cemetery, immediately prior to the internment. This means that it will be possible to continue offering a Christian burial in Mavesyn Ridware, once the new proposed extension to the burial ground has been achieved.

#### **4a) Preparation of the new Garden of Remembrance**

The PCC is very mindful of the need to create an organised space for its new Garden of Remembrance. As part of this, it felt that it was important to continue the practice of offering a marked space for the burial of cremated remains.

Having arrived at this conclusion, the PCC then considered the following options concerning the preparation of this space for the new Garden of Remembrance will be made fit for use.

##### Option 1: Grass to be removed in preparation

The Rector consulted with with several local monumental masons and the parish gravedigger, about creating this new Garden of Remembrance. The first monumental mason consulted was a representative from Cannell Memorials, Curborough. They suggested that an area be prepared to accommodate the new Garden of Remembrance. Their proposal was for the grass in the area to be removed, and the resulting bare soil would be covered by a membrane. Gravel would then be applied on top of the membrane. Each internment would then be carried out by the insertion of a localised cut in the membrane, to allow cremated remains to ben interred. After the internment, the cremation marker would be placed over the top.

The PCC gave serious consideration to this option, but noted that the location of the proposed new Garden of Remembrance, is within a large grassy section of the churchyard. The PCC came to the view that, stripping back a large section of the grass in order to create the new Garden of Remembrance, would spoil the aesthetic of the churchyard. This first option was therefore rejected by the PCC.

##### Option 2: Grass to be retained in New Garden of Remembrance

As we have already noted, the Rector consulted with several local monumental masons about creating this new Garden of Remembrance.

A second monumental mason who was consulted was Alex Ashcroft ([www.ashcroft-memorials.co.uk](http://www.ashcroft-memorials.co.uk)). Alex recommended that we consider the relatively new Garden of Remembrance at St John Church Armitage. In Mr Ashcroft's view this was a well laid out facility. Each grave can be accessed easily by the family (for the graves back on to each other). Critically, the cremated remains markers are of all the same size.



The PCC decided to adopt this layout for their new Garden of Remembrance, in the existing churchyard.

## **5a Layout proposal and the management of associated risks**

The PCC believed that Alex's proposal based on the practice at St Johns church Armitage, would be more aesthetically in keeping with the immediate surrounding area of their churchyard. However PCC was also aware that the suggestion carried with it a number of associated risks.

The PCC then proposed steps to manage the risks.

### Managing associated risks: Trip hazard & Mowing hazard

When cremation markers are simply left on top of the grass surface, they represent trip hazards.

The PCC came to the view that Cremated Remains Markers should be installed in such a way that their upper most surface, is below the line of the grass turf. In other words, just after a new cremated remains grave had been filled in, the previously cut out piece of grass turf is discarded. The turf is laid to one side, and the new cremation marker is then laid directly over the top. Through following these steps, the PCC is of the view that this potential trip hazard is reduced.

The PCC was also of the view that installation of cremation markers below the level of the grass, would also reduce problems associated with lawn mowing. If the cremation markers were installed above the surface of the grass, a lawn mower could inadvertently come into contact with the cremation marker. When this happened both the mower and the cremation marker were susceptible to significant damage. However with the cremation markers set lower than the surface of the grass, the PCC is of the view that the mower will glide across the top of the marker, without contacting it.

### Managing associated risks: Grass cutting

The PCC then reflected over grass cutting practices in the churchyard. The PCC noted that trimming already occurs around standing, upright headstones. The PCC was of the view that this current grass cutting regime could be adapted to accommodate the likely need to maintain the grass around cremated remains slabs.

## **5b) Spacing between plots and memorials.**

Mr Alex Ashcroft ([www.ashcroft-memorials.co.uk](http://www.ashcroft-memorials.co.uk)) also stated that he was of the view that the Garden of Remembrance at St John Church Armitage was well laid out. Each grave can be accessed easily by the family (for the graves



back on to each other). Critically, the cremated remains markers are of all the same size.

Given that the available space for the new Garden of Remembrance in St Nicholas churchyard, was still relatively small, PCC recognised the need to regulate the space between each cremated remains marker. A critical factor arising from this, was that cremated remains needed to be the same size - which would facilitate a managed approach to spacing.

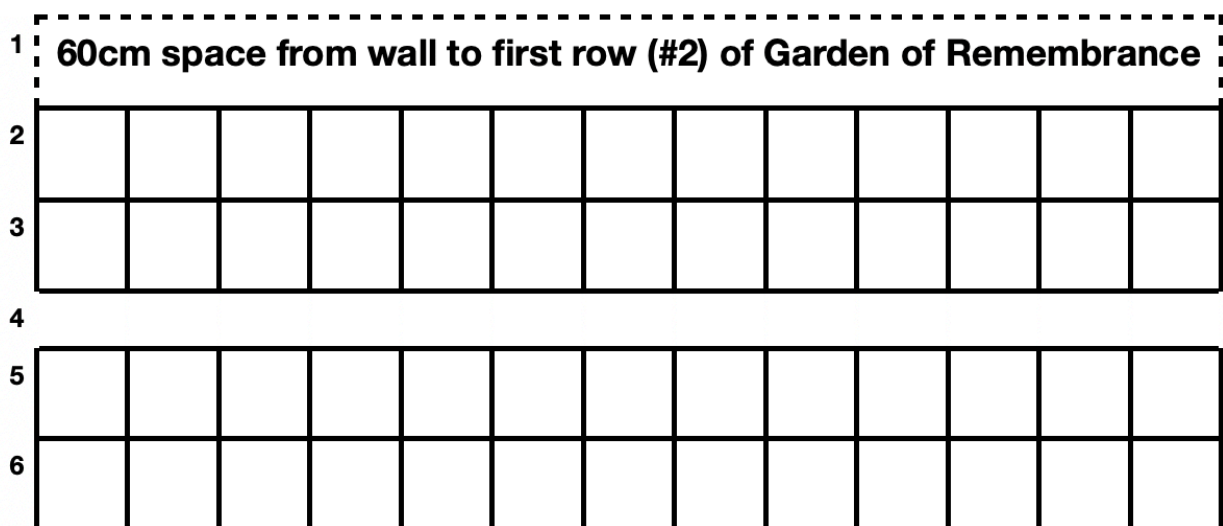
The PCC noted that in this deanery, there is significant variation concerning the size of memorials. Some memorials are 18" x 18", others 21" x 21" and still others - even larger. If the PCC is to make use of the maximum available space in the new Garden of Remembrance, an optimum size is needed.

On the basis of his experience working with cremated remains slabs, Alex expressed his view that 18" x 18" (45cm) memorials were the optimum size. In his view the 18 inch sized memorial enables 2 sets of names to be inscribed (or etched), comfortably in the available space. Furthermore the layout of the Garden of Remembrance, enables further family internments to be made in the vicinity of each initial cremation marker.

On the basis of this conversation and the restriction of 18" x 18" cremated remains markers, the PCC calculated the size and grave capacity of the new Garden of Remembrance.

Length It will be 800cm from West to East

Height It will be 400cm from north to south



This equates to 4 rows of the 13 plots; a total of 52 cremains plots.

The PCC is of the view that this would provide as many as 25 years worth of cremated remains burial space. In the same space, whilst single depth full burials could be accommodated - it would be for as long.

### 5c) Restrict markers to 18" square

The Mavesyn Ridware PCC is aware that there are many different forms of 18" cremation marker available the market. It also accepts that the Chancellors Churchyard regulations provide some clarification as to the options available to clients.

That said, whilst accepting the Chancellors regulations the PCC would also request that a Faculty restricts cremated remains markers to 18" square.

## 5d) 18" Slab or preferred 18" Desk markers

Within the existing Garden of Remembrance, the PCC notes that square 'slab markers' and especially 'desk markers' have been regularly chosen by past clients.

Consulting once again with our Monumental Mason Alex Ashcroft, the PCC has decided that the 18" 'Desk' markers are our preferred choice. This is because the rear of these markers has a sufficient depth to accommodate a flower vase. Whilst it is still possible to have a similar flower vase in an 18x18inch 2 inch depth slab marker, there is less depth to securely keep the vase in place.

Alex also indicated that one advantage of having a flower vase within the footprint of the memorial, is that it helps prevent the encroachment beyond the footprint of the grave, of unauthorised plants, pots etc



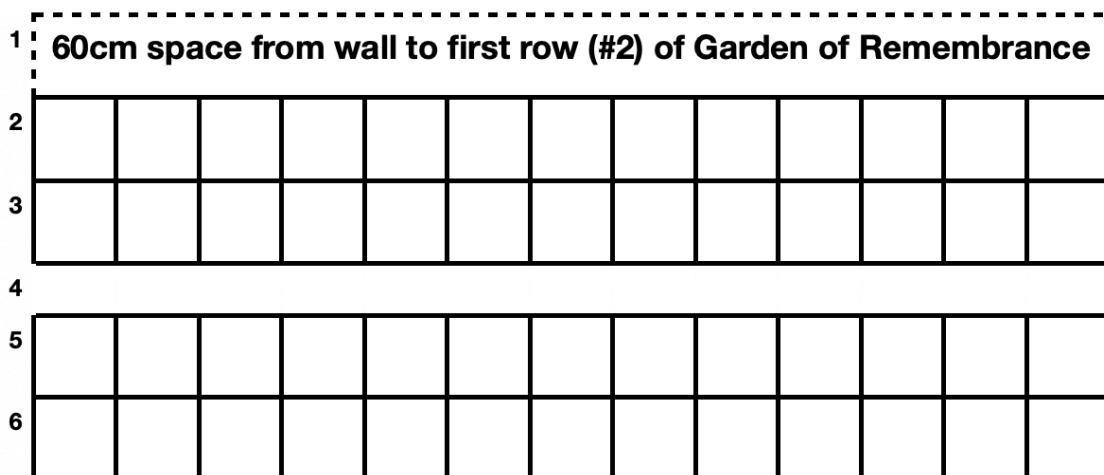
#### 4) Summary of Proposal for a New Garden of Remembrance

- This section located along the south east corner edge of the churchyard. It will be rectangular in shape.

Length It will be 800cm from West to East

Height It will be 400cm from north to south

- The grass of the churchyard will be retained for the new Garden of Remembrance.
- With our preference for desktop cremated remains markers, we will only permit 18" x 18" markers. This converts to 46cm x 46cm.
- In order to space each marker, we will assume 50cm x 50cm for each marker. This means that each 18" cremated remains marker is separated by 4 inches on all four sides.
- This means that we anticipate creating 4 rows of the 13 Cremation Plots, each 50 x 50 cm. This will produce 52 available cremated remains plots.



5) **PCC Motion**

At its meeting on 18th January 2023, the parochial church Council of St. Nicholas Church, Mavesyn Ridware passed the following resolution unanimously among those present and voting:

**Motion:**

**“This Parochial Church Council authorises the incumbent and Churchwarden to petition for a faculty: “For a New Garden of Remembrance, to be located within the churchyard.**

**The PCC also petitions that in the New Garden of Remembrance, created remains markers should be a maximum of 18” inches.”**

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'A. K. ...'. There is a small blue mark below the line to the right of the signature.

Chairman