



Diocese of Ripon & Leeds Diocesan Advisory Committee Guidelines

MEMORIAL TABLETS IN CHURCH

A faculty is always necessary for the purpose of placing memorial tablets in churches; and according to a well-established rule, observed by a 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 to be commemorated had rendered 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.

The strictness with which memorial tablets are controlled may sometimes, on a short-term view, appear excessive; but it is the Chancellor's 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. 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, fontcovers, lecterns and service books.

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. 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.

This advice and information is given in good faith and is based on our understanding of the current law. The DAC cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for any errors or omissions which may result in injury, loss or damage including consequential or further loss. It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that it complies with its statutory obligations.