

Closed churchyards are also covered by some of the same rules, but the management of these are done by the person stated in the Order of Council closing the churchyard. If none is named then it is owned by the PCC. Although bodies cannot be buried in a closed churchyard, ashes can still be buried.

In certain cases permissions and approvals are required before anything can be done in the churchyard. However repairs to headstones can be carried out without permission, but the headstone cannot be dismantled without permission. A Faculty would be needed to do that. Any work to be done has to be advertised.

There is no fee for a Faculty if it is submitted by the PCC.

Repairs to walls and boundaries do not need a Faculty unless they need to be taken down.

War Memorials, if public, then the local authority pays for that maintenance.

There are separate rules for trees in churchyards and if the trees are in a conservation area or are protected then authority would be needed from the local planning authority to carry out any work in connection with them.

Mr. Thomas then distributed a guidance note on funeral arrangements, churchyards and memorials, a copy of the Churchyard Memorial Rules, 2013, and a Practice Direction of 2012 in relation to trees in churchyards.

There then followed a question and answer session, which was most interesting and informative.

Mr. Thomas stressed that in dealing with problems, one needed to be sensitive, but firm. It can be helpful to issue notices either to persons wishing to use the churchyard, or to Undertakers setting out what can and cannot be done.

Where items were taken off graves they should not be thrown away, as, although they may not be appropriate they belong to the family.

If there is any doubt about what can be done, or if a headstone is not within the rules then people should be advised to apply for a Faculty and the Diocese will then take over the matter and this will avoid the Minister or PCC getting any flack about the matter.

He pointed out that Memorials in the church are not allowed without a Faculty.

The Lay Chairman thanked Mr. Thomas for his most interesting and informative address.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.20 p.m.