

Policy on memorial plaques in church

Introduction

This paper proposes a policy for handling requests for memorial plaques within church.

Background

The PCC already allows memorial plaques to be put up in memory of a loved one in the graveyard, but recently the son of a previous parishioner enquired about putting up a plaque for his mother within church, citing previous memorial plaques on the walls.

Management Committee discussed the request and concluded

- the majority of memorial plaques commemorate military service and those killed in action
- they and others on the walls are very much of their time and were before the construction of the memorial wall in the churchyard to cater for this purpose
- plaques on doors, shelves, pew ends etc are not appropriate both because furniture items may be disposed of as the needs of the church and each worshipping generation change (so they do not serve as a permanent memorial to a loved one) and because they can often go unnoticed

Management Committee did however agree that many people may wish to come into church and remember loved ones there rather than across the road in the graveyard. It is for this reason that the parish has offered suggestions to families as to items which can be donated or restored in memory of a loved one. These have included the new stained glass windows, kneelers, benches and trees outside in the church grounds. A small plaque is then added stating in whose memory these items were donated, thus providing a permanent memorial but one which also enhances the worshiping and community life of the church.

It should be noted that:

- Any item or plaque would require DAC approval and a Faculty or Archdeacon Letter of Authority, as applicable
- stained glass windows, candle stands, kneelers etc. are part of the church inventory and cannot be disposed of without very valid reason and the Archdeacon's permission.

Policy

The PCC endorsed Management Committee's conclusions and agreed that

- in future, plaques should only be allowed in association with a donated item
- the donated item should meet the approval of the Management Committee (new items that have recently been suggested include a votive candle stand, a book of remembrance in the church, and – for use outside the church – a home communion set)
- this policy should apply to Christ Church and to St John's (albeit St John's does not have the same conditions on inventory)

Paper written by Jeremy Newton on behalf of Management Committee

Policy approved by PCC January 2017

July 18th 2017 – PCC approved this update

This policy is in line with Diocesan Advice – see website:

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Gifts-for-use-in-Churches-Archdeacons-Directions.pdf>