

**IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF THE DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD**

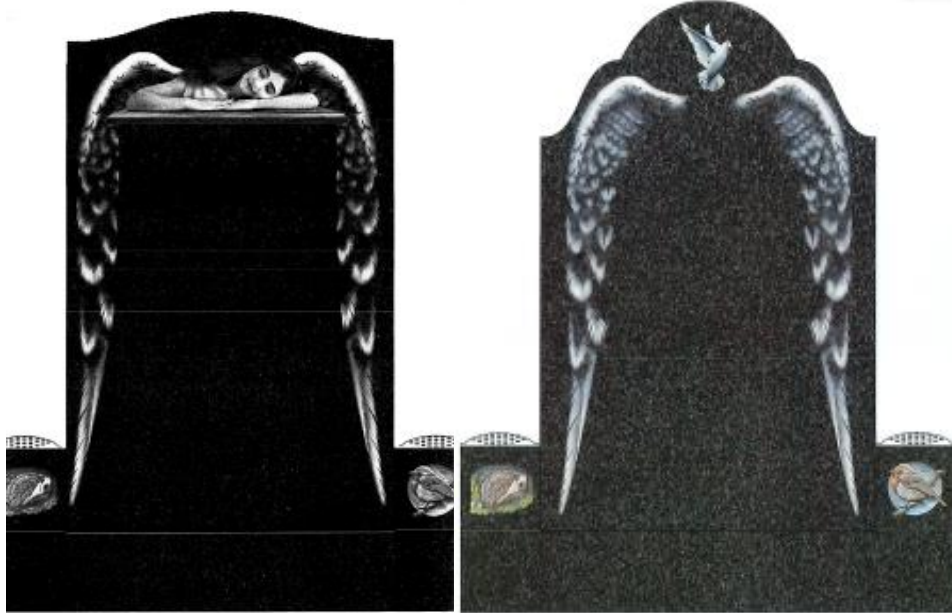
**ST JAMES, NORTON CANES**

**ON THE PETITION OF Ms JULIE ANNE WARD**

**JUDGMENT**

- 1) Ms Julie Anne Ward petitions for the erection of a memorial to her beloved parents whose mortal remains were interred in the churchyard at St James the Great, Norton Canes, in 2020 and 2021.
- 2) Ms Ward has presented two, alternative proposals for the memorial which both fall outside the scope of the Churchyard Regulations (i.e. memorials which incumbents can permit without the need for a faculty application). I have read and considered Ms Ward's heartfelt submissions, but these do not really address the design of the memorial in any detail, and she deals mostly with the struggles of recent years, including with this petition. Whilst it is impossible not to feel sympathy for Ms Ward, it is the design that is in issue.
- 3) The designs do not enjoy the support of the Parochial Church Council ("PCC") and only one of them has the support of the Diocesan Advisory Committee ("DAC"). Public Notice was made of the Petition, but this elicited no response.
- 4) A number of features common to both memorial designs are essentially uncontentious: the wording (so long as "ne" is used in respect of the father's previous name, rather than the female form "nee"); the appearance of the stone, in polished grey granite (which is well-established in use in the Churchyard); and, the presence of more than one image (again, because two are common in other memorials). All these can be permitted in a faculty, accordingly.

- 5) The controversial issue is the large image of an angel with wings (which is the preferred design of Ms Ward) or (her fall-back design) the angel's wings, but with a dove substituted for the head and upper body of the angel:



- 6) The DAC considered the latter acceptable after some corporate consultation with the Archdeacons. The PCC appear to have thought otherwise.
- 7) I consider that the angel takes matters significantly outside the range of designs local to the memorial in the churchyard (in contrast to the smaller images of the hedgehog and robin for the vases, and the dove). They are out of character and detract from the harmony of the churchyard in its given location. In respect of a churchyard account not only needs to be taken that it should provide a fitting setting for the church and a seemly resting place for the remains of those interred in it, but also that the memorials represent a broad equality in death and remembrance. Memorials can be individualised, as this one would be without the angel and its wings, but should not risk overwhelming their neighbours. Both proposals, I find, fall outside the range of what is appropriate to the location, by reason of the angel and its wings. It is unprecedented and out of keeping with other memorials.

- 8) In these circumstances the petition for a faculty for a memorial in either of the proposed forms will be refused. However, if the Petitioner wishes it, a faculty may issue for all features save the angel and its wings.

*Dr Anthony Verduyn*

CHANCELLOR

5<sup>th</sup> June 2024