

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

**CHURCHYARD OF ALL SAINTS, RANGEMORE**

**ON THE PETITION OF Mrs LILIANA MYERS**

**JUDGMENT**

1. I grant a Faculty in this petition for a memorial outside the parameters of the Churchyard Regulations (2013) for the Diocese of Lichfield, by permitting a monument to the late Mr David Myers in a form essentially (although not completely) as sought by his widow, Mrs Liliana Myers.
2. Mr David Myers was a larger than life figure in more ways than one: known as “Dave Myers” he was one half of the “Hairy Bikers”. He had thus appeared on British television since 2014, bringing “great verve, energy, passion and professionalism” to educating the public on “food, cooking and motoring”, to quote his widow. I am told his creative life extended to 38 television series and almost as many books. His energy extended to charitable works and he was nominated an ambassador for the MS Society in 2022, but was unable to take up the role because of cancer to which he succumbed on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024. He was buried at All Saints church, Rangemore, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024. His passing was marked in June that year by a “convoy” of motorcyclists riding from London to Barrow in Furness, where he was born, and numbering up to 20,000 riders. It raised over £100,000 for charity and the event was repeated this June.
3. All Saints Church is a Grade II\* listed building, constructed in stone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The churchyard wall, gate piers and gates are also listed, as Grade II. The churchyard has a variety of memorials, including to prominent members of the Bass family, notable for their brewing business and philanthropy:



4. The petitioner seeks a memorial comprising two parts: a headstone and “full kerb”; the latter being a flat grave covering (albeit raised somewhat off the ground). The headstone would be wider than the regulations permit (1498.6mm compared to a maximum of 915mm) and in mid-grey and lavender blue polished granite (the use of polished granite also being outside the regulations). The flat monument would be in the same material, and is also outside the terms of the regulations.
5. The proposal set out in the petition has the unqualified support of the incumbent, the Rev. Terry Williams, the parish ministry team and the Parochial Church Council. It has been subject to public notice, without any objection being registered.
6. The Diocesan Advisory Committee (“DAC”) has not recommended that I grant a faculty for this monument. Along with all others, the DAC accepts that Mr Myers warrants a memorial reflecting his public standing and outside the strict constraints of the Churchyard Regulations. The features and words proposed are considered unobjectionable, save in two respects: firstly, that the material of the memorial proposed for introduction would not be sufficiently in keeping with the character of the churchyard or the majority of the existing memorials. It was suggested that a local Staffordshire stone, such as Hollington, would be more suitable for this context and location; and, secondly, that the raised horizontal element of the proposed memorial would be better situated if designed flush with the ground. It was intended that this would also facilitate the upkeep of the churchyard, as referred to in the Regulations.
7. Aware of these concerns, the Petitioner and Ms Amy Lamb of Art Stone Memorials have provided detailed submissions.
8. In respect of mid-grey and lavender blue polished granite, it has been observed that the colour is less striking than might at first be thought. The granite is

essentially grey in tone “within a muted natural palette”; as evidence by photographs. An adjacent headstone to one side of Mr Myers’ grave is also polished granite, of apparently stronger colour. It is also asserted that this granite “will not disrupt the character or visual harmony of the surrounding area as it is round the back of the churchyard away from the older local materials.”

9. The Petitioner has offered to compromise somewhat from the terms of the petition, by expressing a willingness (if necessary) to have granite which is not polished.
10. The evidence of Ms Lamb also relates to the DAC proposal of Hollington stone. It is stated that this is expensive and not apparently being quarried at present. It is a sandstone which appears to be primarily used for architectural features. Furthermore, it is a softer stone than granite, and more prone to weathering, discolouration and staining, including through lichen and algae growth, and liable to become illegible through degradation of the inscription in the short to medium term. It may also weaken in the long term and lose some structural strength. Photographic evidence was presented of such deterioration, contrasted with grey granite both polished and unpolished.
11. In considering the evidence as a whole, I note that there is a significant variety of stone already in use in the churchyard at Rangemore, including Hollington stone and granite in various shades, polished and unpolished. The use of granite, including the proximate polished mid-grey granite memorial, is not so prolific or otherwise such as to justify a new, substantial polished granite memorial. Further, the cost of Hollington stone is not a relevant consideration, since there is no suggestion it is unaffordable to the Petitioner. Availability of Hollington stone is more of an issue, but other, similar, sandstones may be available, like Portland Basebed. The weathering of such stone is a natural process and, were that to be a decisive matter in favour of the petition, then it would lead to wholesale use of granite in all circumstances.
12. Even so, and taking account of the prominence of Mr Myers in public life and the more substantial stone memorials for other public figures in the churchyard, I consider that there is just sufficient material provided in favour of the petition, taken as a whole, to permit a granite memorial in this case. Given, however, the prominence of the proposed memorial in terms of headstone and flat features, I consider that the granite should in this case not be polished. To add polish to this substantial memorial would, I consider, be to make it too substantial a feature within the churchyard as a whole. The concession of the Petitioner on this point was appropriately made and is accepted.

13. The second issue is whether the flat part of the memorial should be flush with the ground, as DAC contends, or raised by about 19cm. The DAC point to Churchyard Regulations where ease of maintenance and grass cutting justifies the requirement for horizontal memorials to be level with the ground.
14. The Petitioner and Ms Lamb identify memorials with kerbs flush to the ground that can present concealed trip hazards, including immediately behind Mr Myers' grave. Further, the church's incumbent and groundkeeper have each stated that the ground is not merely settling after an interment, but there is ground movement present and influencing monuments. The need for stability facilitation by a raised memorial reflects the safety principles of BS 8415:2018, which states that "memorials shall be installed to remain stable and secure for the long term ... ", as well as the need to minimise risk of injury in public spaces.
15. I am satisfied that in this case, as a horizontal feature to be part of this monument is uncontroversial, that for it to be raised is permissible. This is because there is evidence of some ground movement, and a raised platform may be rendered more stable and less liable to create a trip or other hazard. In respect of maintenance, I note that the parish is fully in support of such a feature for this monument. Finally, I note that the other, raised monuments to the Bass family would support a comparable feature in this case. Once again, this is a holistic approach, whereby the aggregation of supporting matters in this case is decisive, when individually and in isolation that may not be the case.
16. Consequently, I will grant the Faculty as sought, save that the granite will not be permitted to be polished. I do not doubt that the monument will be much visited and sufficiently conspicuous to be found, without overwhelming other memorials or the listed features of the church and churchyard.

*Dr ANTHONY VERDUYN*

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

18<sup>th</sup> August 2025