

**'Review by the Diocese of Coventry in relation to the headstone of the late Margaret Keane' ("the Bratton Report")**

**LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:** in text with eleven findings, (pp27 to 31), and summarized at (35 to 38)

**Recommendation 1** My recommendation is that the Diocese evaluates how its administrative practices and processes in the Church of England are perceived by outsiders. This evaluation can be a useful initial step in pinpointing areas that require improvement.

**Recommendation 2** My recommendation is that the Diocese give priority to enhancing engagement and communication with people who seek support from the church during vulnerable moments in their lives, particularly those who are not regular church attendees. One way to achieve this is by offering training and guidance to church staff on developing effective and empathetic communication skills.

**Recommendation 3** My recommendation is that the Diocese looks into ways of simplifying and streamlining the faculty process, while still balancing pastoral care against legal considerations. The Diocese should consider the needs of those seeking support during difficult times and ensure that pastoral care is a weighty factor in the decision-making process.

**Recommendation 4** My recommendation is that the Diocese reviews and simplifies the language and procedures linked to ecclesiastical roles, offices, and titles to make them more accessible and understandable to the general public. This could entail simplifying the language used in official documents and providing clear explanations of the roles and responsibilities of church officials to assist the public in better comprehending their functions.

**Recommendation 5** My recommendation is that the Diocese should evaluate how families seeking memorialisations in parish churchyards can be informed and reassured about the legal processes that govern them in a timely and appropriate manner. This could be achieved by providing families with clear and concise guidelines and resources in plain language, such as brochures or online materials, to assist them in understanding the requirements and procedures for obtaining a headstone.

**Recommendation 6** My recommendation is that the Diocese should establish regular communication with families who are seeking headstones by providing timely updates on the status of their petition and explaining any delays or requirements in a clear and supportive manner. Families should be given a clear point of contact who can address their questions and concerns throughout the process.

**Recommendation 7** My recommendation is that the Diocese should evaluate how the appeals process for families seeking permission to erect headstones can be improved to provide a better experience. This may involve offering additional support to families during the appeals process or exploring alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

**Recommendation 8** My recommendation is that the Diocese should assess its website to ensure that it offers clear and accessible information regarding the faculty and appeals process for obtaining headstones. The website should also provide guidance on how families can obtain further support and advice if needed.

**Recommendation 9** My recommendation is that the Diocese should collaborate with national church and ecclesiastical law authorities to standardise Churchyard Regulations across Dioceses, promoting consistency in the faculty process. This may involve reviewing current regulations to address any inconsistencies or discriminatory practices and creating guidelines for new regulations.

**Recommendation 10** My recommendation is that the Coventry Diocese should enhance the transparency of its Churchyard Regulations by providing clear and concise explanations for any prohibitions on inscriptions, materials, or designs. This will foster public confidence in the faculty process and ensure that decisions are based on objective criteria.

**Recommendation 11** My recommendation is that the Diocese should urge national church and ecclesiastical law authorities to consider standardised support and guidance to Dioceses and families regarding Churchyard Regulations and the faculty process. This may involve creating user-friendly resources such as handbooks or online materials.

**Recommendation 12** My recommendation is that the Diocesan Churchyard Regulations should be reviewed to remove subjective language that could be open to interpretation, such as "quirky" and "eccentric." Instead, the regulations should establish clear, objective criteria for what is and what is not acceptable in headstone inscriptions.

**Recommendation 13** My recommendation is that the Churchyard Regulations should be examined to ensure that they are culturally sensitive and do not unintentionally discriminate against any specific group.

**Recommendation 14** My recommendation is that the Churchyard Regulations should be made clear and transparent to families who wish to petition for headstone inscriptions. This will ensure that families understand the criteria for acceptance and the process for obtaining approval.

**Recommendation 15** My recommendation is that the Diocese implement a more systematic and inclusive approach to developing Churchyard Regulations that includes input from a wider range of perspectives, including those from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. The Diocese should ensure adequate representation from various groups and stakeholders during these discussions.

**Recommendation 16** My recommendation is that the Diocese, national church, and Court of Arches review the principles governing costs in appeals proceedings, particularly where the petitioner has been granted leave to appeal. The current system, in which the petitioner bears the cost burden even if they succeed, should be reconsidered to avoid a sense of unfairness.

**Recommendation 17** My recommendation is that the church establish a comprehensive and systematic training programme to better equip clergy members to provide pastoral support to bereaved families and intervene in the faculty process more effectively. This training should cover topics such as the care and maintenance of churchyards, the interpretation of regulations, and the development of relationships with funeral directors, stonemasons, and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

**Recommendation 18** My recommendation is that the Diocese takes measures to ensure that parish clergy members are adequately trained to offer pastoral support to families throughout the faculty process. This could involve providing relevant training to equip clergy members with the skills and knowledge needed to provide effective support to families.

**Recommendation 19** My recommendation is that the Diocese clarify the roles and responsibilities of parish clergy, diocesan officers, and the Bishop when handling disputes that may arise during the faculty process. This will help to avoid confusion and ensure that everyone is aware of their specific roles and duties.

**Recommendation 20** My recommendation is that the Diocese and national church take steps to clarify and explain the work of the Consistory Court and the specific role of judges in the faculty process. This could include providing clear and accessible information on the church website, developing educational resources for clergy and other stakeholders, and conducting public outreach to promote greater awareness and understanding of the court's function and responsibilities.

**Recommendation 21** My recommendation is that the Diocese establishes protocols that provide clear guidance to the Bishop and other diocesan officers in situations where there may be competing obligations or interests, to ensure that the Bishop's role in memorialization disputes is not hindered. These protocols should be developed to help balance the competing interests and obligations that may arise in these situations.

**Recommendation 22** My recommendation is that the decision-making process be made more impartial. One possible approach could be to seek legal counsel from an independent Chancellor or to seek guidance from the national church. This will help to ensure that the decision is made without any undue influence or conflict of interest.