

DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

CHANCELLOR'S GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSED EXHUMATIONS

1. Once a body or ashes have been interred in consecrated ground, whether in a churchyard or in a consecrated section of a municipal cemetery, there should be no disturbance of the remains save for good and proper reason.
2. The petitioners must advance a case showing good and proper reason for the exhumation taking place, eg:-
 - (a) A mistake by the applicant or by a third party such as the Incumbent, churchwarden, next of kin, an undertaker or some other person as to locality.
 - (b) Unsuitability of the site adopted for the grave.
 - (c) Other exceptional circumstances justifying exhumation

Note that a change of mind on the part of the deceased's relatives, or that the spouse or another close relative of the deceased has subsequently been buried elsewhere, is unlikely to be a sufficient reason.

3. Factors likely to lead to an unsuccessful application are:-
 - (a) Passage of a substantial period of time.
 - (b) Public health factors.
 - (c) Improper motives, unreasonable conduct or family feuds.
 - (d) The applicant moving to a new area and wishing the remains to be moved to that area.
 - (e) No intention to re-inter remains in consecrated ground or other established place of burial.
 - (f) If removal would be contrary to the intentions and wishes of the deceased.
 - (g) Reasonable opposition from other family members, from the Incumbent, or from the PCC.
 - (h) A risk of affecting the sensibilities of the congregation or the neighbourhood.

