



St Giles Church, Exhall (Coventry) Parish Statement regarding a Ruling of the Consistory Court on an application for a Memorial Headstone in the St Giles Meadow including an inscription in the Irish language.

As the Parish Church of St Giles, Exhall (Coventry) we wish to express our deep sadness and regret at the distress and offence caused to the Irish Community, and beyond, as a result of a recent ruling of the Consistory Court in relation to a faculty application from a local family for a memorial headstone in the St Giles Meadow to bear an inscription in the Irish language. We would like to make it clear that, as a Parochial Church Council (PCC), we do not share the Chancellor's view that 'there is a sad risk that the phrase would be regarded as some form of slogan or that its inclusion without translation would of itself be seen as a political statement'.

As part of the faculty application process, the PCC of St Giles discussed the memorial application and voted in favour of supporting the request. No objections were raised to the use of the Irish language in any of our discussions. The PCC's only concerns, also shared by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), were connected with the original shape of the proposed memorial but, after a later discussion with the family the shape of the memorial was amended in a way which addressed the concerns raised.

We are a parish church committed to celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity, and to supporting grieving families to honour their loved ones by memorialising them in ways which reflect their unique character and cultural identity, within the scope of churchyard regulations we are legally required to adhere to.

We are entirely in agreement with the sentiments expressed by the Bishop of Coventry in his recent letter regarding this judgment and responses to it, see <https://coventry.anglican.org/letter-040620.php>. We share with him a sincere dedication to the ministry of reconciliation, which is at the heart of our Diocese, recognising the tremendous contribution of the Irish Community in the Coventry area and beyond. We also fully endorse a recent statement from the Church of England which emphasises that this Consistory Court judgment does not reflect the church's national policy and affirms the Irish language as being an important part of the Church of England's own heritage.

We remain on good terms with this grieving family and our hearts go out to them in the additional delay and distress this ruling has caused them. We will continue to offer the family our support and we very much pray for a satisfactory and pastorally sensitive conclusion to this matter.