

IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF THE DIOCESE OF CARLISLE

Re: Church of St. Cuthbert, Kentmere

Determined on the papers and without a hearing

The Petition of Mr. Andrew Yeats

JUDGMENT

Delivered on 4.12.25

1. By his petition dated 15 August 2025 Mr. Andrew Yeats seeks a faculty authorising him to put up a headstone in the graveyard of St. Cuthbert's Church, Kentmere. The stone is to commemorate his late wife Lucy Nelson, who was widely known as Cinders.
2. Mr. Yeats first applied informally for permission to introduce the gravestone, but I concluded I was unable to deal with his application in that way. This was because of three matters.
3. First was Mr. Yeats' wish to commemorate his wife without referring to her given name, Lucinda, which I understand she actively disliked. That proposal did not appear to comply with the Churchyard Regulations including the requirement (paragraph 2.5.4 of Appendix B) that "*The Christian and surnames of the deceased should be given*".
4. Second was that Mr. Yeats proposed a design showing a large sunflower on the reverse of the stone. At least one member of the PCC expressed reservations about the design.
5. Third was that only a bare majority of the PCC favoured the initial proposal, and some concerns had been raised which were not obviously unreasonable.

6. It was in these circumstances, and following further engagement with the PCC, that Mr. Yeats presented his petition. This proposes a stone to be designed and created by Pip Hall.
7. The revised design received the unanimous support of all PCC members present at its meeting on 23 May 2024.
8. I am very grateful to the DAC for its helpful advice on Mr. Yeats' proposal. The DAC commended the high-quality craftsmanship of Pip Hall's work and the proposed use of V-cut lettering in a stone made from riven slate. For my part, I am satisfied that the proposed stone will be of high aesthetic quality and appropriate within the churchyard of this Grade II listed church.
9. The DAC did not consider that the design would set an unwelcome design precedent; indeed, the tenor of its advice was that this is a high-quality design.
10. The DAC also then helpfully advised regarding use of the names "Lucy" (rather than "Lucinda") and "Cinders". The DAC's view (with which I agree) is that the use of the name "Lucy" is suitable, appropriate and commonly recognised as a familiar form of the name "Lucinda".
11. As to the use of the name "Cinders", the DAC's view *"was not one of outright objection (given its significance for the family), but of concern about its placement and presentation. At the moment it is suggested that the name (in inverted commas) is placed at the base of the headstone, below the sunflower. Given the substantial open space available elsewhere on the stone, the name "Cinders" appeared isolated and without clear context or reference, particularly as the name "Lucinda" does not appear in the main inscription. Further to this, members were also concerned that its low placement could, over time, become obscured by grass or foliage, and thus be easily lost."*
12. For these reasons the DAC favoured placing the name 'Cinders' on the front of the stone, beneath 'Lucy Nelson', leaving the reverse to focus on the carved sunflower motif.

13. Mr. Yeats' response to the DAC's advice was to express gratitude (as I do) for the committee's "*well considered and sympathetic comments*". He would, however, like to avoid putting the name "*Cinders*" on the front of the stone, in part so as to leave space for an inscription in his memory, in due course. He explains that to have "*Cinders*" under the sunflower on the reverse reflected his wife's original design. He also reasons that adding the name "*Cinders*" to the front might risk making the design unduly busy in Pip Hall's hand-carved calligraphy. Further, he explains that "*Cinders was a great lover of nature and wild flowers and would rather like the idea of her name sometimes being partly obscured by the wild grass and flowers*".
14. My view is that the DAC's thoughtful advice about the risk of the word '*Cinders*' appearing acontextual on the reverse of the stone, and of it sometimes being obscured, must be weighed against Lucy Nelson's evident preparedness for part of her design to be intermittently hidden by nature. On balance, I am satisfied that the design proposed by Mr Yeats should be permitted. If that involves allowing elements of personal expression to prevail over strict practicality, I am prepared to entertain that outcome in the particular circumstances of this case.
15. For these reasons I direct that a faculty should issue permitting Mr. Yeats to put up a gravestone in Lucy Nelson's memory to the design he proposes in his petition.
16. I charge no fee for this written judgment, but the Mr. Yeats must pay the costs of the petition, including any fees incurred by the Registry in dealing with this faculty application.

JAMES FRYER-SPEDDING

Chancellor

4 December 2025