

Abingdon Town Council – Memorial Bench Policy

1 Explanatory foreword - Why we have introduced a policy

- 1.1 Some residents wish to remember loved ones with a memorial bench on one of the open spaces owned by the town council. The town council has assisted with many such requests in the past and this assists with the provision of benches for the amenity of residents.**
- 1.2 This policy seeks to be clear as to how residents may apply for a memorial bench and sets down the procedure full. Whilst seeking to accommodate the wishes of residents making such requests the policy also acknowledges that public spaces are for the mutual benefit and enjoyment of all residents of the town and this will always be balanced against such requests.**

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The policy directly links to the council's key objectives and in particular to:*
 - 2.1.1 Key objective 2: To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future.
 - 2.1.2 Key objective 3: To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.
- 2.2 The specific policy objectives are:*
 - 2.2.1 To assist, where possible, those residents who wish to install a memorial bench.
 - 2.2.2 To ensure that requests from residents for benches are balanced with the needs of users of the council's open spaces. The placing of a bench in a particular location should be for the benefit of the community and there should be a real need for a bench in that location.
 - 2.2.3 To ensure that open space areas are not compromised and that the high quality of their appearance is maintained.
 - 2.2.4 To ensure that benches and plaques are of a consistent design and material approved by the town council, will not cause offence to the public and are consistent with their surroundings.
 - 2.2.5 To establish the responsibility for the maintenance repair and replacement of memorial benches.

3 Application Procedure

- 3.1 All applications for memorial benches should be made using the official application form which can be download at [link]. If a paper copy of the application form is required, then this can be requested by telephoning the Town Council on 01235 522642.
- 3.2 All memorial benches must be paid for by the applicant before the installation commences.
- 3.3 Applications for a memorial bench cannot be guaranteed or reserved prior to the subject's death.
- 3.4 The Town Council will try to accommodate the wishes of the applicant regarding location of the memorial bench but this will not always be possible.
- 3.5 The memorial bench and plaque will be the property of the Town Council and the Town Council will ensure that it is repaired and maintained for a 15-year period.
- 3.6 Applications are determined by the Cemetery and Outdoor Services Supervisor. Should a request be refused then the Applicant has the right to request that the matter be referred to the relevant Town Council Committee for a decision and that decision will be final.
- 3.7 The Town Council reserves the right to remove or relocate memorial benches at any time and for whatever reason it deems necessary. Every effort will be made to contact the Applicant in either of these circumstances. Should it not be possible to relocate a memorial bench then the applicant will be refunded a sum based on how many years have elapsed since the bench was installed (rounded to the next whole year) compared with the 15-year life of the bench, e.g. if a bench is removed and not relocated following 5 years in place, then the applicant will be due a refund equal to the 10 remaining years, i.e. 10/15ths (2/3rds) of the original payment made.

4 Memorial Benches and Plaques

- 4.1 The Town Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of Applicants who request a memorial bench but may have to limit the number of benches in a particular open space. Should there already be enough benches in the open space of the Applicant's choice, the Applicant may be offered an alternative choice of location for a bench installation.
- 4.2 Benches must be of the type, material and colour specified by the Town Council. The Council currently specifies Glasdon recycled plastic benches.
- 4.3 Benches will be purchased directly from the supplier and installed by the Town Council. If the bench is to be placed on grass it will usually be fitted to a

concrete base. The Town Council will arrange for all installation work to be carried out.

- 4.4 Memorial plaques will be procured by the Town Council and fitted to benches are to be a maximum height of 5cm and length of 13cm and will be fitted in the centre of the upper most lath of the back of the bench. The applicant will suggest the wording which the Council will then need to approve.
- 4.5 The Town Council, in accordance with its current maintenance programme, will do its best to maintain memorial benches on its own land. However with regret it cannot accept no liability for the plaque or bench at the end of its useful life, which is estimated as 15 years. If the applicant wishes to purchase a replacement bench / plaque, then they must re-apply in line with the policy in place at that time.
- 4.6 People are requested not to leave additional mementoes, eg statues, flowers, wreaths, vases etc on or around the bench due to the hazard they can inadvertently pose to other users of the council's facilities.
- 4.7 The total cost of the installation of a memorial bench will be dependent on a various factors such as the type of bench allowed and the type of fittings required. The Town Council will charge for the bench, base, memorial plaque, material and labour at cost plus an administration and ongoing maintenance charge of 25%. The Town Council will procure the bench, all materials and labour.
- 4.8 No other types of memorial are permitted under this policy and only one memorial bench per subject will be permitted.

5 Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed on or before 31 March 2024 or sooner if the Council so desires.

Adopted: 30 March 2022

Author: Town Clerk