

Policy for Provision of Memorial Benches in Public Open Spaces



The Council will facilitate the purchase and placement of memorial benches in public open spaces owned by the Council on request, where appropriate opportunities exist.

Introduction

The Council receives occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench within a public open space. These are often places with which individuals or families have a particular connection or special relationship. There is no legislative requirement for the provision of public or memorial benches although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity.

The provision and management of all seats and benches on all public open spaces owned by the Council is the responsibility of the Recreation Committee. This policy covers the provision of memorial benches at Radford Park.

Requests have been considered by the Recreation Committee and generally accommodated. In most circumstances, customers have purchased new benches which have been installed by the Grounds Team. Often, there has been little guidance on the type of bench to be provided which can mean maintenance difficulties due to a wide range of bench styles being used, and ineffective recording of memorial bench information.

This policy recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial benches in public open spaces. As resources available to the Council to provide public services reduce, much more consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained is required. A rationalisation of the range and quality of infrastructure is also needed to avoid items which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy. In addition, opportunities to provide infrastructure for public benefit in different and new ways need to be maximised.

The policy therefore continues to welcome donations of suitable benches for appropriate locations in the public open spaces. The operating principles below will ensure that requests for memorial benches are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner. It will result in appropriate bench styles being purchased and installed in appropriate locations to ensure they are easy to maintain and not unduly prone to vandalism.

Operating principles:

1. Only sites which do not already have a sufficient number of benches will be considered. This will be determined by any site-specific management plans.

2. Suitable locations within the site have been identified by the council. These will be areas which lack any seating nearby or are at a likely stopping point such as a particular view or rest point on a path. In addition, the location has been chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism.
3. In locations where there will be several benches in the same area, no more than 50% will be offered as a placement for a memorial bench. This is to prevent the area taking on the ambience of a dedicated memorial garden which may compromise the enjoyment of the space for general recreational activities.
4. A limited selection of suitable low maintenance standard designs for memorial benches will be available at a range of costs, the choice of bench being dependent on the location. Annex 1 shows the range of bench and plaque options with suggested prices.
5. Occasionally a unique rather than standard bench design may be requested as a memorial. In these circumstances, details of the bench construction, materials and specifications will need to be submitted to the Recreation Committee for approval. On approval the bench would then be supplied to the Grounds Manager for installation in an agreed location. There is no guarantee that damage could be repaired and any costly repairs would be at the discretion of the owner.
6. Purchase of a memorial bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it will be removed. The cost will include the bench, plaque, inscription, installation and surfacing and, as the benches should require minimal maintenance, there will be no additional cost for this. The cost and life expectancy of the bench will depend on the type of bench and its location. Any replacement would be treated in the same way as a new memorial bench.

To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the memorial bench with plaque and surfacing in all cases.

7. Where there is no space for an additional memorial bench, requests for placement of a memorial plaque on an existing bench will be considered where the bench is in good condition and point 3 above has been assessed. As the bench has already been provided through public funds, a charge which includes a modest contribution towards the original purchase of the bench, plus the plaque and installation cost will be required. This will accommodate the customer's wishes and ensure a fair contribution is made towards the provision of the bench as a personal memorial. The funds raised will be used for the repair or provision of other public benches. The same conditions on life expectancy and maintenance will apply to any existing benches as apply to new benches.
8. The Council's standards of maintenance will be accepted as keeping the bench fit for purpose and clean. This will involve occasionally removing built up algae and grime, removal of graffiti and repairing minor faults within resources available. There is a move

away from regular painting as in the long term this proves more costly than just replacing the bench when it has reached the end of its natural life. The range of new benches has been chosen for durability without the need for regular painting or treatment.

9. Publicity on the Council website will provide information and an enquiry form for those interested in purchasing memorial benches. The enquiry form is shown in Annex 2.
10. A standard written letter of agreement will be sent by the Council to the customer to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood prior to purchase. The form will be returned to the Council with payment in advance of the memorial bench being placed. Annex 3 shows the standard form of agreement.

Memorial bench purchase procedure

This procedure describes the process which will be followed from the first contact with the customer enquiry to the last contact to inform them that their memorial bench is in place.

1. Customer enquiries are directed to the website to view the policy and sites available and download a memorial bench enquiry form as shown in Annex 3. If required, an enquiry form is posted to the customer.
2. Customer completes the enquiry form specifying a requested location, and bench and plaque style, and sends this by e-mail or post to the Parish Office. It is allocated to the appropriate officer for action.
3. The Recreation Committee considers the requested location for the bench and decides, by applying the operating principles, whether a memorial bench is appropriate in this location. If the requested location is not suitable, the nearest alternative location will be offered.
4. The Recreation Committee ensures that the requested bench and plaque style is suitable for the location and that the plaque text is clear and suitable for use on a public bench. Four bench styles only will be used in situations as shown in Annex 1 and will be at the discretion of the Council for each specific site.
5. The Grounds Manager contacts the customer to confirm or discuss the details by phone. If an alternative location is required, a letter with a map to illustrate the alternative site being offered will be sent.
6. On agreement, a standard agreement letter is sent to the customer to confirm arrangements and request payment.
7. When payment is received, the allocated officer orders the purchase and installation of the memorial bench, for completion within 2 months of receipt of payment.
8. The Grounds Manager ensures the work has been carried out as specified, photographs the bench and ensures all information is recorded in the asset management system for future reference.
9. The allocated officer ensures a letter and photograph are sent by post or email to the customer to notify them that the bench is in place.

Annex 1

Council styles and current prices for installation of new memorial benches with plaques. Plaques can be fitted to some existing benches for £xxx including VAT. This includes the plaque, fitting and a contribution towards the cost of the bench.

Benches

BLPC preferred supplier based on previous experience, product range and pricing is Glasdon Ltd. In order to maintain a consistent style of bench throughout BLPC sites, the available options as at July 2020, which may vary and be updated from time to time, for a memorial bench are as follows:

1. Solo Phoenix <https://uk.glasdon.com/seating/recycled-materials-seating/phenix-single-seat>
£275 + £80 plaque (plus VAT plus BLPC installation charges)
2. Duo Phoenix 2 seat bench <https://uk.glasdon.com/seating/recycled-materials-seating/phenix-double-seat>
£375 + £80 plaque (plus VAT plus BLPC installation charges)
3. Phoenix Bench <https://uk.glasdon.com/seating/recycled-materials-seating/phenix-tm-recycled-material-seat>
£460 + £80 plaque (plus VAT plus BLPC installation charges)
4. Elwood Bench <https://uk.glasdon.com/seating/recycled-materials-seating/elwood-tm-recycled-material-seat>
£641 + £80 plaque (plus VAT plus BLPC installation charges)
5. Phoenix Jubilee Bench <https://uk.glasdon.com/seating/recycled-materials-seating/phenix-jubilee-tm-recycled-material-seat>
£876 + £80 plaque (plus VAT plus BLPC installation charges)

Memorial plaques

Plaques are either bronze or stainless steel and measure 19 x 5cms. Text is Arial font style and can be up to 50 characters. All text must be approved by the Recreation Committee.

Maintenance standard

Benches will be kept fit for purpose with minor faults being repaired and build-up of algae or grime being removed within available resources.

Annex 2

Memorial Bench Purchase Enquiry Form for use on the Website

Memorial Bench Purchase Enquiry Form

Please complete, print and return to: Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council, Haskell Centre, Midhurst Road, Liphook GU30 7TN.

Pre-printed forms are available from the same address on request.

Section A - your contact details (Please supply your contact details below)

Name.....
Address.....
Telephone E-mail:.....

Section B - choice of memorial bench and preferred location

(Please specify your preferred location for the bench below i.e., name of park and nearest settlement)

I would like my bench to be placed within.....
.....

Section C - memorial plaque

All plaques will be provided by the Council and attached to your bench
(Please supply the name to be on your plaque)

Plaque to be in the name of

Please print your memorial message for the plaque below (for Council approval) A maximum of 50 letters can be included.

.....
.....
.....

Annex 3

Form of Agreement for a Memorial Bench to be placed in a Public Area for the natural life expectancy of the bench

Memorial Agreement between Bramshott & Liphook Parish Council and (name & address).....
.....

This letter sets out the agreement regarding the purchase of (delete either 1 or 2)

1. A new (type of bench) bench to be situated at (e.g. Radford Park) at the location shown by the attached map.
2. A memorial plaque to be placed on the existingbench

Your bench will carry a stainless steel/bronze memorial plaque in the name of

Your memorial message will read
.....
.....
.....

(name) will pay the sum of £.....

(delete either 1 or 2)

1. being the full cost of the installation on site of the bench with plaque.
2. being the cost of the installation of the plaque and a contribution to the cost of the bench.

The Council will place the bench with plaque in the agreed location within two months of receiving the cheque and/or plaque. The Council will be responsible for the bench for the period of its natural life (approximately 15 years). Once the bench has reached the end of its natural life, the bench and plaque may be removed. A request to purchase a new replacement bench can be made at the appropriate time. The Council cannot guarantee against theft or vandalism and may not be able to replace either the bench or plaque in this event.

I understand and agree to all the conditions above and confirm payment will be made for £.....

Signed.....

Date..... Contact telephone number.....