



MANNINGTREE TOWN COUNCIL

MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

Manningtree Town Council supports the needs and principles of allowing memorial benches in its open spaces. The Council is mindful that these facilities are enjoyed by a wide range of people and therefore the council will ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual of all through this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a clear, measurable and sympathetic approach to the management of our open spaces is adopted which takes account of the needs of all users.

The Council through this policy will endeavour to always offer the highest standard of service in undertaking its management and regulatory responsibility.

The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances, fashion and trends. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Full Council for approval.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The council is seeking to ensure it is adopting a clear, measurable and sympathetic approach to the management of its open spaces, which will take into account of the sometimes-contrasting needs of a variety of users. The policy will also ensure that only memorial benches are erected which are instigated by the next of kin or the executor and that the benches have a common appearance, style and size which are appropriate for that location and will not cause offence to others.

The policy will establish responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement. The Council through this policy will endeavor to always offer the highest standard of service in undertaking its management and regulatory responsibility.

This policy supersedes all previous arrangements, policies and agreements and applies to all commemorative benches on Manningtree Town Council land.

Location

The Council cannot guarantee a location for your memorial but will liaise with the applicant prior to any placement to ensure that a suitable location is agreed.

Memorials

Manningtree Town Council offer memorials within its open spaces, which include the following:

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- Memorial Bench with or without a plaque (subject to availability)

Memorial benches shall be positioned to maximise the benefit and development of the open space but the council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the applicants. The Council will limit the number of memorial benches in particular areas so they do not detract from the prime purpose of the open space. Therefore, the size and location shall limit the number permitted. The council reserves the right to refuse applications on this basis.

The Council shall specify the type of benches to be installed to be in keeping with the intended location.

Lease Period

All memorials are based on a 10-year lease and can be renewed after this period if the applicant wishes. The fee covers the purchase, delivery and installation of the bench, together with the ongoing repair and maintenance for the 10-year period.

Inscriptions for the Plaque

Memorial plaques shall be affixed in the centre of the upper most lath of the back of the bench.

Process

Once the application has been received, agreed by a council meeting and the location has been agreed, the council shall arrange for the purchase and installation of the bench.

All applications for memorial benches should be completed on the official application form and be signed by the applicant. This is available on the Manningtree Town Council's website.

The Council reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged and are in the view of the council beyond economical repair. The Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial benches from vandals, third parties or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance.

No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreathes, balloons or other ornamentation etc. shall be permitted on or around the bench. These shall be removed without reference to the original applicant.

Payment

Payment is required once the application has been agreed at a council meeting.

Conditions

Manningtree Town Council reserves the right to install benches or place memorial plaques where suitable, but will, where appropriate, accommodate requests.

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Once installed the bench cannot be repositioned or removed from the site. However should a bench become unsafe, Manningtree Town Council reserve the right to remove immediately in the interest of health and safety until repairs or replacement can take place.

Manningtree Town Council will maintain responsibility for the memorial bench and associated plaque during the 10-year lease period. This will include any preservation, treatment, repair works and replacement of the memorial where required due to fair wear and tear or vandalism.

After 10 years, the council will endeavour to contact the sponsor to ascertain whether:

- The sponsor requires removal and the return of any plaque to the sponsor. The bench if still in good repair, can be made available for rededication by another sponsor.
- The sponsor can reapply for a new seat and plaque in the same location, or families may wish to pay for a new seat and plaque in the same location, or families may wish to pay for a further period of sponsorship for the plaque only, if the bench is still in acceptable condition.
- Should contact details not be available, after this period the Council may remove the bench or allow other memorial plaques to be placed on it. Any plaques from removed benches will be retained by the Council for a year, for the sponsor to collect. It remains the responsibility of the sponsors to advise the council of any change to contact details. These will be kept in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation and be used only for the purposes of this service.
- The sponsor may contact the council to seek an extension to the sponsorship one year before the 10-year period is up.
- Benches remain at all times the property of the Council.
- Under no circumstances will any installation of a bench by a third party be permitted. If it is found that a bench has been installed by anyone other than the council, the bench will be removed without notice and without guarantee of safe return.

Date of policy:

Approving committee: MTC

Date of committee meeting:

Policy version reference: 1

Supersedes:

Policy effective from:

Date for next review: **JUNE 2025**