

QUENINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

March 2018

General Responsibilities

The following parties have responsibility for memorial safety in Council cemeteries:

- The Council has health and safety responsibilities to its employees, contractors and visitors to cemeteries. The Council has a responsibility to staff (Section 2 Health & Safety at Work Act 1974) and a responsibility to visitors (Section 3 Health & Safety at Work Act 1974). The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a legal duty on the Council to assess the risks from cemetery structures and work activities and ensure that the risks are controlled.
- A monumental mason has the responsibility to work in accordance with the code of practice and should install memorials to BS8415.
- An owner, the Deed Holder or successor in title, of a memorial has the responsibility to maintain it so as not to present a hazard.

Notice of Intent

Prior to any memorials being inspected, reasonable steps will be taken by the Council to inform grave owners, Deed Holders or successors in title, and members of the public, of the intention to inspect memorials and remove the danger from unsafe memorials.

This will involve giving notice at least three months in advance of any inspection regime commencing, giving details of the inspection and where to find further information. A notice will be placed at the entrance to the cemetery, on the Council website and noticeboards and in a local publication.

Memorial Inspection

An inspection of the safety of memorials will be carried out every 5 years. The Council will risk assess and test memorials in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and inspection will be carried out by a suitably trained person. A risk assessment of the site will be carried out before the inspection takes place.

There are three priorities of action;

- Priority 1 - immediate action is required to make the memorial safe or to stop the public accessing the memorial.
- Priority 2 - the memorial is not an immediate danger to the public but is not fully stable.
- Priority 3 – the memorial is stable and only needs to be inspected in 5 years time.

An inspection sheet will be completed for all priority 1 and 2 memorials. As a minimum, the inspection sheet should contain a photo of the memorial, grave

number, name/s of deceased, height of memorial, date of inspection, name of inspector, observations and urgency of action.

Priority 1 Memorials

A dangerous/unstable memorial is defined as one that will move and continue to fall to the ground with the exertion of a force of 25kg or less.

Memorials deemed to be an immediate danger will either be braced with a stake and banded to provide support or carefully laid flat within the grave space with the inscription visible. Laying flat is considered to be a last resort and will only be used where the danger is acute and immediate and there is no other way of making safe.

The memorial is to have a notice attached explaining the situation and giving contact details for further advice.

Priority 2 Memorials

Memorials deemed not to be of immediate danger to the public but require some stabilisation and will be monitored every 12 months.

Following the identification of priority 1 and 2 memorials the Council will inform the memorial owner where possible by writing to the last known memorial owner, as identified from Burial Ground records, and by displaying a notice on/near each identified unstable memorial. A list of unstable memorials will be displayed on the Parish Council noticeboards, in the Burial Ground and on the Council's website. All public notices shall give the Council's contact details and allow three months for making contact.

Action by Deed Holders

The assessment process may be upsetting for Deed Holders and Quenington Parish Council regrets any distress that it may cause. It is better that the memorial is assessed rather than it is left to pose a potential danger to other people. If a memorial has to be made safe Deed Holders can choose to either:

- Take no further action; if a stake has been used to support the memorial it is considered to be safe. The stake may be replaced to re-stabilise the memorial during any further assessment in the next five yearly round of assessments to stabilise it. If the memorial has been laid flat it is considered to be safe.
- Have the memorial repaired; Deed Holders will need to arrange the necessary remedial work with an approved memorial mason, for which the mason is likely to charge a fee. These memorial masons should undertake the repair up to a minimum standard as recommended by NAMM or equivalent. No attempt should be made to repair or remove any memorial except by a properly qualified memorial mason.

If no Deed Holder can be found, the Council will take a decision as to how the memorial shall be made safe permanently. In doing so, the Council will consider repairing the memorial at the Council's cost subject to funds being available, re-fixing it in a safe manner, laying it flat or removing it.