

PKC Policy for Provision of Memorial Benches Cemeteries and the Crematorium Memorial Garden.



The Council will facilitate the purchase and placement of memorial benches in cemeteries and the Crematorium memorial garden 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 the crematorium memorial garden or a cemetery. Although there is no legislative requirement for the provision of public or memorial benches, it is accepted that they provide a useful and appropriate public amenity in these areas.

Community Greenspace is responsible for the provision and management of all seats and benches on all public open space owned or managed by the Council. **Due to the wider public use of parks, countryside sites and streets there is a separate policy on requests for memorial benches in public areas.**

Memorial benches can be purchased through the Council and most requests are for benches to be placed next to a particular headstone. Site operations, maintenance access, and proximity of other benches restricts the space available for new benches so the nearest appropriate space to the requested location is offered. Memorial benches in bereavement areas can be expected to be used mainly, but not exclusively, by those visiting a specific lair or memorial. In these circumstances the purchaser of the bench is required to accept responsibility for maintenance to ensure the bench remains fit for purpose. To ensure high standards, a quality bench and plaque has been adopted as the standard for bereavement sites. In some cases, customers have purchased an alternative bench and arranged installation to a standard which complies with Council requirements.

In general, most requests have been accommodated but procedures followed have varied over time, with decisions often being left to the discretion of the bereavement officer who has been allocated the request. This approach, although accommodating to the customer, has required considerable officer time, and has contributed to inconsistent recording of memorial bench information over the years.

There is now a need for a consistent policy for the provision of memorial benches in bereavement areas. As resources available to the Council to provide public services reduce, more consideration of the delivery methods for providing infrastructure which can be easily maintained is required. Opportunities to provide infrastructure for public benefit in a variety of ways, including donation, need to be maximised.

The Council will accommodate requests for the purchase and placement of memorial benches in bereavement areas according to the operating principles below.

Operating principles:

1. Location for benches will be agreed as near to the requested location as possible. Benches will be located where they do not impede the operation or maintenance of the site.
2. The bench style for use in all bereavement sites is the high-quality hardwood, low maintenance Glen Isla with an aged bronze memorial plaque with white text as shown in Annex 1.
3. Purchase will include the bench, plaque, inscription, installation, and surfacing and will be for the expected natural life of the bench only.
4. To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the memorial bench with plaque in all cases.
5. Maintenance responsibility lies with the purchaser and benches must be maintained so they remain structurally sound and are kept free from a build-up of algae and grime. Benches will remain on site as long as they are adequately maintained. Unsafe or poorly maintained benches will be removed, and plaques kept for possible return to the owners.
6. Publicity on the Council website will provide information and an enquiry form for those interested in purchasing memorial benches.
7. 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.

Memorial bench purchase procedure

This section describes the procedure 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 coming to the Customer Service Centre or to Community Greenspace are directed to the website to view the policy and download a memorial bench enquiry form. 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 Community Greenspace. It is allocated to the appropriate bereavement officer for action.
3. The allocated officer 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 allocated officer ensures that the plaque text is clear and suitable for use on a bench in a public area.
5. The allocated officer contacts the customer to confirm or discuss the details by phone, and if an alternative location is required may arranging a site meeting to agree an alternative location for the bench.
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 allocated officer 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 is sent by post or e-mail to the customer to notify them that the bench is in place.

Annex 1 - Council standard for the installation and maintenance of memorial benches.



Glen Isla bench (or equivalent) with plaque – cost (in 2023)
£1000 including VAT.

The Glen Isla bench

This is a low maintenance treated hardwood bench. The bench is of excellent quality but as with all timber products placed out of doors there may be some weathering by way of minor cracks which does not affect the durability of the product. There may also be wood grain and colouring variations which do not affect the quality of the product. It is 5 feet long.

Maintenance advice

The bench has not been painted or treated with oil preservative. It will be at the discretion of the Customer if they wish to apply paint or oil preservative to the bench. PKC will not be held liable if the customer is dissatisfied with the appearance of the bench after they have applied a paint or oil preservative.

Memorial plaques

Plaques are an aged bronze gold colour and measure 190 x 58mm. Text is white inscribed lettering and can be up to 50 characters. All text must be approved by the Council.

Maintenance standard

Benches must be kept structurally sound and free from a build-up of algae or grime.