



## CRANLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

### Memorial Bench Policy Dewlands Lane Cemetery

#### Introduction

The Parish Council receives occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench within the Dewlands Lane 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.

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. The Sexton will be consulted on the most appropriate location for the bench with regard to future interments and access.

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 our cemetery. 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 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 the cemetery. The Parish Council will accommodate requests for the purchase and placement of memorial benches in cemetery 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 in consultation with the Sexton. The Parish Council's decision on the bench location will be final.
2. The bench style for use in all bereavement sites is the high quality hardwood, low maintenance Turnberry Bench (or equivalent) with a stainless steel memorial plaque with engraved text as detailed 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 buildup 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. The enquiry form is shown in Annex 2.
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. Annex 3 shows the standard form of agreement.

April 2019

Review: April 2022

## **Annex 1**

### **Council standard for the installation and maintenance of memorial benches.**

#### **Memorial Plaques**

Size 150 x 50mm

Stainless steel with text engraving. (Brass is not acceptable due to theft of brass plaques).

All text must be approved by the Council. Three lines of text, maximum 75 characters in total.

Plaque cost £50 + VAT

#### **The Turnberry Bench**

This is a low maintenance treated hardwood bench. It is 5 feet long. 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 does not affect the quality of the product. Council staff will install the bench using appropriate fixings for the bench location.

Bench cost £600 + VAT

#### **Maintenance Standard**

Benches must be kept structurally sound and free from a build-up of algae or grime. The Council will remove any bench that it considers to be unsafe.

**Annex 2**  
**Memorial Bench Purchase Enquiry Form**

Please complete, print and return to: Cranleigh Parish Council, Council Office, Village Way, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8AF

**Section A**  
**Your Contact Details**

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone .....

E-mail .....

**Section B**  
**Requested Location**

Please specify your preferred location for the bench below:

I would like my bench to be placed near to the following grave:

Grave location:

Name of Deceased:

Please include a map or photograph of the preferred location.

**Section C**  
**Memorial Plaque**

All plaques will be provided by the Council and attached to your bench

Please print your memorial message for the plaque below (for Council approval) A maximum of 75 characters can be included.

Line 1 .....

Line 2 .....

Line 3 .....

**Annex 3**  
**Form of Agreement for a Memorial Bench to be placed in a Cemetery**

Memorial Agreement between Cranleigh Parish Council and (name & address)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

This letter sets out the agreement regarding the purchase of a Bench with memorial plaque to be placed within the Cemetery at the location shown by the attached map.

Your bench is in memory of

Name of Deceased: .....

Your memorial message will read

Line 1 .....

Line 2 .....

Line 3 .....

(name) .....will pay the sum of £550 being the full cost of the installation on site of the bench with plaque.

The Council will place the memorial bench in the agreed location within two months of receiving the cheque.

(name).....will be responsible for maintaining the bench.

- Please note that benches which are not maintained and fall into disrepair may be removed.
- The Council reserves the right to re-locate or remove the bench from the cemetery without prior notice to allow cemetery maintenance and refurbishment works.
- 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 enclose my cheque for £550

Signed..... Date.....

Contact telephone number.....