



RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
MEMORIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY
FOR RINGWOOD CEMETERY

Memorial Safety Testing

Historically there have been a number of accidents in cemeteries around the UK, some of which have resulted in fatalities, due to memorials being unsafe. The council have a responsibility to ensure the Cemetery is safe for both staff to work in and for the public to visit.

Any memorial purchased and erected on a grave space is owned by the registered grave owner and it is that person or persons who are ultimately responsible for its upkeep and maintenance.

Memorial Fixing

As per our regulations - suitable foundations must be provided to prevent memorials from sinking and must be constructed in accordance with the Code of Working Practice issued by NAMM. All memorials must conform to British Standard 8415 for the Installation of Memorials.

Note that any refixing or repair work to memorials must be completed by a BRAMM registered memorial mason. Temporary work to make memorials safe and remove the risk of danger will be undertaken by trained grounds staff.

Memorial Inspections

All memorials over 18" in height and any book-shaped memorials under this height will be inspected at least once during a rolling 5-year period to assess their safety. This will be done through both a visual assessment and a basic hand test to determine if there is movement in the memorial and to what extent.

The person undertaking the assessment will make the decision on the memorial's overall safety based on training they have received.

Once inspected each memorial will fall into one of three categories, detailed as follows:

Category 1 (*high risk*)– The memorial is unsafe and poses a risk. It needs immediate attention to make safe.

Category 2 (*medium risk*) – The memorial is safe but there are minor concerns, and it should be reassessed in 12 months' time to ensure it has not deteriorated further.

Category 3 (*low risk*) – The memorial is safe and should be re-inspected in 5 years as part of the next round of inspections.

Staff undertaking the inspections will record the details of every memorial using InspectEDGE software and as a minimum will record:

- Date of Inspection
- Name of Inspector
- Category of Memorial (1, 2 or 3)
- Details of any Actions Taken

Actions Post Inspection

Should a memorial be identified as a category 1 and fail the inspection staff will need to take immediate action to make that memorial temporarily safe. These actions will be based on several factors and the best solution will be decided based on their assessment of the memorial and the surrounding area. These actions may include:

- Laying the memorial flat – Where a memorial can be laid down on, or within an existing kerb set so as not to cause a new trip hazard. A warning sign will be placed near to the memorial.
- Staked and Banded – The memorial will be fastened tight to a wooden post which will act as a temporary support. The banding will also hold a warning notice. The stake and band will be re-inspected every 12 months to ensure neither have deteriorated.
- Cordoned Off – It may be necessary to cordon off a particular memorial or an area of memorials with a warning sign attached.
- Removal – In extreme cases it may be necessary to remove a memorial from the grave and place into storage if none of the above options are suitable.

All of the above are regarded as 'temporary fixes' and should not be seen as a permanent solution to deal with an unsafe memorial. These methods are carried out to reduce or remove the risk of a memorial causing harm to someone.

Prior to taking any of the actions above, the memorial will be photographed, and details recorded of any existing damage or issues.

Very large memorials over 8' (2.5m) will be visually assessed and if any concerns are recorded, the memorial will be cordoned off. If it is safe to do so, cemetery staff

will carry out works to ensure the memorials are safe. Alternatively, arrangements will be made for a specialist contractor to undertake an inspection and provide options and costings.

Informing Grave Owners

The council will try to contact the grave owner where any action has been taken due to a memorial failing a safety inspection. In our experience, if the grave owner is deceased or the last burial was over 50 years ago it is unlikely that any response will be received therefore no correspondence will be sent but a notice will be left on the grave space. Should grave owners fail to take any action within one year of the inspection date, the council reserves the right to make the memorial safe and attempt to cover the costs from the grave owner where possible.

For any memorials installed within six years that fails the inspection, we will contact the memorial mason directly to request repairs be made to ensure the memorial is fully compliant with BS8415.

Note - 6 years is the standard legal period that must be covered by the installation. The stability guarantee of a memorial is the responsibility of the memorial mason who may provide a longer guarantee period.

Grave Owner's Responsibilities

The registered grave owner has a responsibility to ensure the memorial is made safe by being properly re-fixed to the current BS8415 standard. Works must be undertaken by a qualified and BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) registered memorial mason. Do it yourself repairs by families will not be permitted.