



Memorial Safety Policy

Adopted by Marden Parish Council on: 26th September 2017
Reviewed on: 24th April 2018 / 28th May 2019
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Office Opening Times:
Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon
www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk
Email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk
Parish Council Amenities – Memorial Safety Policy

AMENITIES

MARDEN CEMETERY

MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

The cemetery is situated in Maidstone Road, Marden and is owned and managed by Marden Parish Council.

The cemetery currently consists of four sections:

- Section 1 & 2: graves with both headstones and kerbstones erected
- Section 3: graves with headstones only
- Cremated remains section with small memorial tablets installed.
- Section 4: (*new section*) headstones only

The Health and Safety Commission advises that all local authorities and parish councils responsible for cemeteries check that their cemeteries are safe for visiting members of the public, employees and contractors.

By virtue of their size and weight, some headstones can cause the greatest damage and injury if they fall. However, the smaller headstones are still of sufficient weight to seriously injure anyone they fall on. The degree of danger also relates to the method of fixing as traditional cement and dowels are subject to deterioration over time.

Installation of Headstones

Marden Parish Council request that when applications are submitted for erection of headstones that all memorial works will be carried out in accordance with BS8415 or any Industry Standard or Code of Working Practice which complies and conforms to the above standards. Stone masons have to sign to indicate they meet the above standards and are accountable for any breach of the standards and to confirm that they are BRAMM (**British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons**) registered.

Undertaking Testing

Notification will be given prior to any testing being undertaken by notices being erected at the cemetery and advertised on the Parish Council website and Facebook page.

An upright headstone will be visually assessed and then tested by palm pressure. If the palm pressure does not produce any movement then the memorial will be deemed safe. If movement is detected the owner of the grave* (if known) will be written to advising that they should make contact with a stone mason to assess the situation. Confirmation of this visit and outcome must be given to the Parish Council in writing within 28 days. If the movement is severe the following will be undertaken depending on size, type and ground conditions:

- (a) Providing a make safe support system
- (b) Lowering the memorial into the ground by a third of its height
- (c) Laying the memorial down on the grave, with the inscription uppermost
- (d) Cordoning off very large memorials and seeking the opinion of a structural engineer.

Whoever is considered the owner of the grave* (if known) will be written to and informed of the procedure.

If the owner(s) of the grave is not known or cannot be contacted the Parish Council will take on responsibility and consider each unsafe memorial on an individual basis deciding whether to lay the headstone down or cover costs up to £250 to make it safe.

Responsibility for Cost of Repair

The responsibility for and the costs attached to the repair, or re-fixing of a memorial, rests with the grave owner or his/her descendants. The work must be carried out by a memorial mason currently registered with the National Association of Memorial Masons or BRAMM. Any upright headstone to be re-fixed must now have a ground anchor system fitted to ensure its future safety.

Regularity of Inspections

Each memorial will be categorised when it is inspected. It may require immediate action to make it safe, it may give some cause for concern but not be an immediate danger in which case it will be inspected in a year's time; or it may be secure and will then be re-inspected in five years' time. Ongoing inspections will now be a regular part of the Parish Council's work. All new memorials must now be fitted with a ground anchor system so that they will not cause a danger at some point in the future.

The Council will endeavour to contact the last known grave owner if the information held is less than 30 years old. The Council will not write to anyone where the information is older than this, because we have no way of knowing if the owner has since died themselves and would not wish to distress relatives in this respect. Most people do not think to advise the Parish Council when they change address, or when they inherit the rights to a grave from a relative's estate. We can only contact you if we know who and where you are. If you think your details need updating please contact the Parish Office on 01622 832305 or via email at clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk