



Controlled Document

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1	01.05.2021	Lenham Parish Council	Original Policy	L.Westcott
2	02.09.2026	Lenham Parish Council	Version 2	S.Newell



1. Purpose

Lenham Parish Council recognises that memorial benches provide a lasting and meaningful way of commemorating a loved one while also providing a useful facility for the community. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent process for the consideration, purchase, installation, maintenance, relocation and removal of memorial benches on land owned or managed by Lenham Parish Council.

All applications will be considered on their individual merits and approval of a memorial bench is at the sole discretion of the Parish Council.

2. Operating Principles

2.1 Suitable locations

There are two principal areas where memorial benches may be considered:

- Lenham Cemetery, situated to the north of the A20; and
- Other Parish Council-owned or managed green open spaces, such as William Pitt Field and Cherry Downs picnic site.

For Lenham Cemetery, a memorial bench will only be considered where the person being commemorated is buried or has had their ashes interred within the cemetery.

The Parish Council will determine whether a proposed location is suitable and reserves the right to offer an alternative location where the requested site is not considered appropriate.

2.2 Availability of seating

Only locations where the Parish Council considers there is a need or sufficient space for an additional bench will be considered.

The Parish Council will assess each application individually, taking into account the existing number and distribution of benches within the area.

The Council reserves the right to limit the number of memorial benches within a particular location.

2.3 Selection of location

The Parish Council will consider locations where a bench is likely to be of genuine benefit to users of the area. Preference may be given to locations:

- a. where there is currently no suitable seating nearby;
- b. which provide a natural stopping or resting point;
- c. which offer a particular view or point of interest;
- d. which are readily accessible to the public; and
- e. where the bench can be installed and maintained safely.

Locations that are particularly remote, difficult to access or likely to present maintenance, security or vandalism concerns will not normally be considered.

The final location of a memorial bench will be determined by the Parish Council.

2.4 Number of memorial benches

Where several benches are already present or are proposed within the same area, no more than 50% of the available benches will normally be offered as memorial benches.

This is intended to ensure that public open spaces remain primarily recreational areas and do not take on the appearance of a dedicated memorial garden.

The Parish Council may vary this principle where there are exceptional circumstances.

3. Bench and Plaque Design

3.1 Approved designs

A limited selection of suitable, durable and low-maintenance memorial bench designs will be available. The Parish Council will determine which bench design is appropriate for each location, taking into account:

- a. the character of the site;
- b. existing street furniture;
- c. durability;
- d. maintenance requirements;
- e. security;
- f. accessibility; and
- g. cost.

The Parish Council reserves the right to specify the bench design to be used at a particular location. The approved bench and plaque options, together with indicative prices, are shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 Plaques and inscriptions

Plaque wording must be appropriate for display in a public place and will be subject to approval by the Parish Council. The Parish Council reserves the right to amend or decline proposed wording where it considers this necessary.

Only the approved plaque styles and sizes will be permitted.

4. Ownership

The applicant will purchase the memorial bench and meet all associated costs.

Once the bench has been installed and accepted by the Parish Council, ownership of the bench is by the applicant.

5. Application Procedure

5.1 Initial enquiry

Enquiries regarding memorial benches will be directed to the Parish Council's website, where the Memorial Bench Policy and enquiry/application form will be available.

Where required, a copy of the application form may be provided by post or email.

5.2 Application

The applicant must complete the memorial bench application form, providing:

- a. the name of the person being commemorated;

- b. the applicant's contact details;
- c. the requested location;
- d. the preferred bench design;
- e. the proposed plaque wording; and
- f. any other information requested by the Parish Council.

Applications should be submitted to the Clerk to the Parish Council by email or post.

5.3 Consideration by the Parish Council

The application will be considered at a Parish Council meeting, where the requested location will be assessed against this policy.

The applicant may request a particular location; however, the final decision regarding the location rests solely with the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will endeavour to accommodate the wishes of the applicant wherever reasonably possible but may offer an alternative location.

5.4 Alternative location

If the requested location is not considered suitable, the Parish Council may offer the nearest suitable alternative location.

Where an alternative location is proposed, the applicant will be provided with details of the proposed location and, where appropriate, a map or photograph.

The applicant will be contacted by the Clerk to discuss and confirm the arrangements.

6. Approval and Payment

Once the Parish Council has approved the application, location, bench design and plaque wording, the Clerk will confirm the approved arrangements to the applicant.

The applicant will then be responsible for arranging and paying for the memorial bench, plaque and all associated costs directly with the relevant supplier(s) and/or contractor(s).

The Parish Council will not be responsible for purchasing the bench, processing payments, placing orders or entering into contracts with suppliers or contractors on behalf of the applicant.

The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the memorial bench, including:

- a. purchase of the bench;
- b. plaque;
- c. inscription;
- d. delivery;
- e. preparation of the site;
- f. installation;
- g. foundations and fixings;
- h. surfacing; and
- i. any other associated costs.

No bench, plaque or associated works may be ordered or installed until the Parish Council has provided approval in writing.

The applicant must ensure that any proposed supplier or contractor complies with the requirements set out by the Parish Council and that all necessary arrangements are made before installation takes place.

7. Installation

All installation works must be approved in advance by the Parish Council.

The bench must be installed safely and in accordance with any requirements specified by the Parish Council. But this must be installed by the applicant not the Parish Council.

The applicant must use a suitably competent and appropriately insured contractor to undertake the installation. The contractor must hold adequate Public Liability Insurance appropriate to the nature and value of the works and, where applicable, Employers' Liability Insurance. The Parish Council may request evidence of such insurance prior to the installation taking place.

No bench may be installed without prior written approval from the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reserves the right to require alterations to the proposed installation where this is considered necessary for reasons including health and safety, accessibility, appearance, maintenance or the protection of the site.

8. Maintenance

The applicant/donor will be responsible for ensuring that the memorial bench is kept in a reasonable condition and does not fall into disrepair.

The Parish Council does not undertake routine maintenance, cleaning, painting, treatment or repair of memorial benches.

The Parish Council may, where necessary and within its available resources, undertake minor works to a memorial bench where it has become neglected, unsightly or is beginning to fall into disrepair. This may include:

- a. removal of algae or accumulated grime;
- b. removal of graffiti; and
- c. minor repairs where reasonably practicable.

The Parish Council will not be responsible for the cost of major repairs, replacement parts or replacement of a memorial bench.

Where the Parish Council considers that a memorial bench has been allowed to fall into disrepair, the named applicant/donor will be contacted and given the opportunity to arrange and fund the necessary remedial works.

If the required works are not undertaken within four weeks of notification, or within another period agreed with the Parish Council, the Parish Council reserves the right to remove the memorial bench.

The Parish Council does not guarantee that any damage, deterioration or disrepair will be repaired and reserves the right to remove a bench where it is considered unsafe, beyond reasonable repair or no longer fit for purpose.

9. Damage, Vandalism and Theft

The Parish Council will not be responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing a memorial bench which has been damaged, vandalised, stolen or otherwise rendered unsafe.

Where significant damage occurs, the named applicant will be notified where contact details remain available and will be given the opportunity to arrange and fund appropriate repairs or replacement. Any repair or replacement must be approved by the Parish Council before works are undertaken.

Where a damaged bench has not been repaired within four weeks of notification, or within another period agreed by the Parish Council, the Parish Council reserves the right to remove the bench.

The Parish Council will not be liable for any loss or damage to personal items left on or around a memorial bench.

10. Relocation and Removal

The Parish Council reserves the right to relocate or remove a memorial bench where it considers this necessary or appropriate.

This may include circumstances where:

- a. the bench is no longer safe or fit for purpose;
- b. the location becomes unsuitable;
- c. the site is redesigned or redeveloped;
- d. access is required for maintenance or other works;
- e. the bench is repeatedly vandalised;
- f. the surrounding area changes;
- g. the bench is causing an obstruction or accessibility issue; or
- h. the Parish Council considers removal to be in the best interests of the site or the wider community.

Where reasonably practicable, the named applicant will be informed before a bench is relocated or removed. The Parish Council cannot guarantee that a memorial bench will remain in its original location for its entire expected useful life.

11. End of Useful Life

A memorial bench is provided for the expected useful life of the bench and not in perpetuity. The expected useful life will depend upon the type of bench, materials used, location and environmental conditions.

The Parish Council will assess benches as part of its ongoing maintenance programme and annual assessment.

Where a bench reaches the end of its useful life and is no longer considered suitable for repair, the Parish Council may remove it.

The Parish Council will not be responsible for replacing a bench at the end of its useful life. Any replacement bench will be treated as a new memorial bench application and will be subject to the Memorial Bench Policy in force at that time.

12. Memorial Plaques on Existing Benches

Where there is no suitable space for an additional memorial bench, the Parish Council may consider an application for a memorial plaque to be placed on an existing Parish Council bench.

Such applications will only be considered where:

- a. the existing bench is in good condition;
- b. the location remains suitable;
- c. there is sufficient space for an additional plaque; and
- d. the Parish Council considers that the plaque would be appropriate.

Approval of a plaque on an existing bench is entirely at the discretion of the Parish Council.

13. Personal Items and Decorations

Memorial benches are located within public spaces and must remain accessible and suitable for use by all members of the community.

The permanent placement of additional items, including:

- a. vases;
- b. statues;
- c. ornaments;
- d. photographs;
- e. balloons;
- f. wreaths; or
- g. other personal memorial items

will not normally be permitted on or around a memorial bench.

The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any items that are considered inappropriate, create a maintenance or safety issue, obstruct access or interfere with the use of the bench.

14. Council Maintenance Standard

The Parish Council's maintenance standard is to keep memorial benches clean, safe and fit for purpose, subject to the resources available to the Council.

The Parish Council will undertake an annual assessment of all memorial benches.

The Council reserves the right to remove any bench that is considered unsafe, beyond economical repair or otherwise no longer fit for purpose.

Where a bench is removed, the named applicant will be informed where reasonably practicable.

Any associated plaque may be removed and returned to the donor where this is possible. Where the donor cannot be contacted, the Parish Council may dispose of the plaque appropriately.

15. Records and Data Protection

The Clerk will maintain appropriate records of approved memorial benches, including:

- a. the location;
- b. date of installation;
- c. bench type;
- d. plaque wording;
- e. installation details;
- f. photographs; and
- g. applicant/donor contact details where required.

Personal information will be collected, stored and processed in accordance with the Parish Council's Privacy Notice and applicable UK data protection legislation.

16. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically by Lenham Parish Council to ensure that it remains appropriate, practical and consistent with the Council's responsibilities.

The Parish Council reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

Applications will normally be considered in accordance with the policy in force at the time the application is approved.

Appendix 1 - Styles for installation of new benches

(examples of benches that are appropriate styles)

Great Maytham

Teak 3 seat garden bench

25 year life expectancy



Marden

Teak 3 seat garden bench

25 year life expectancy



Farleigh

Teak 3 seat garden bench

25 year life expectancy



For remote sites/sports areas

Peak Commemorative Bench

Recycles plastic garden bench (1500mm long)

Long life expectancy – no maintenance



Note: if a base is required for the bench location this must be organised by the family and approved by Lenham Parish Council .

Engraving/Plaques *

The standard size plaque is 5" x 2" and you can have a maximum of 5 lines per plaque. Each line can have 50 characters, giving a total of 250. Cost £35.00 (brass) £45.00 (stainless steel)

The larger size plaque is 10" x 2" and you can have a maximum of 5 lines per plaque. Each line can have 100 characters, giving a total of 500. Cost £65.00 (brass) £70.00 (stainless steel)



Engraved onto the bench up to 100 characters, including spaces, along the top rail of bench back (£60.00)



- Prices correct as of Jan 2025

APPLICATION FOR A MEMORIAL BENCH (Appendix 2)

Please complete this form, print and return it to:

Clerk to Lenham Parish Council
1a High Street
Lenham
Kent

Pre-printed forms are available from the same address on request.

Section A – Applicant's Contact Details

Please provide your contact details below.

Full Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Telephone:

.....

Email:

.....

Section B – Memorial Bench

1. Type of Memorial

Please tick one option:

☐ New memorial bench

☐ Memorial plaque on an existing Parish Council bench

2. Choice of Bench

If applying for a new memorial bench, please indicate your preferred bench from the options provided:

Preferred bench:

.....

.....

3. Preferred Location

Please state your preferred location for the memorial bench or plaque:

I would like the memorial to be located within/at:

.....
.....

Please explain your connection or relationship to the proposed location. Where applicable, please confirm whether the person being commemorated is interred at or has a connection with this location.

Relationship/connection to the location:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Please note that the requested location is subject to approval by Lenham Parish Council. The Parish Council reserves the right to determine the final location of any memorial bench or plaque.

Section C – Memorial Plaque

Please provide the proposed wording for the memorial plaque below.

Name of person to be commemorated:

.....

Proposed inscription:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Preferred plaque material/style:

- ☐ Wooden engraved
- ☐ Stainless steel
- ☐ Bronze
- ☐ Other:

All memorial plaque wording and designs are subject to approval by Lenham Parish Council.

Section D – Additional Information

Please provide any additional information that you would like the Parish Council to consider in relation to your application.

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Declaration

I have read and understood the above conditions and agree to abide by them.

Applicant's signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Contact telephone number:

.....

For Parish Council Use Only

Application received:

.....

Application approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approved location:

.....

Bench type:

.....

Plaque wording approved: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approval date:

.....

Council minute/reference:

.....

Date installed:

.....

Clerk's signature:

.....