

## **Barrowby Burial Ground**

### **Memorial Bench Policy**

**Adopted:** [date]

**Review:** Every three years or sooner if required

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Barrowby Parish Council is the **Burial Authority** for Barrowby Burial Ground. The Clerk is the Responsible Officer for the Burial Authority.

1.2 This policy sets out how the Burial Authority will consider and manage memorial bench requests within Barrowby Burial Ground.

1.3 The Burial Ground is a place of quiet reflection. Space is limited and must be managed carefully for the benefit of all current and future users.

1.4 This policy should be read alongside the Burial Ground Regulations and any other relevant cemetery policies adopted by the Council.

#### **2. Purpose**

2.1 The Burial Authority recognises that a memorial bench can be a meaningful way to remember a loved one and provide a resting place for visitors.

2.2 The aims of this policy are to:

- a) enable memorial benches in appropriate locations;
- b) maintain the dignity and appearance of the Burial Ground;
- c) safeguard health and safety; and
- d) manage scarce space fairly and transparently.

#### **3. Eligibility and general principles**

3.1 Applications will normally be accepted from close relatives or representatives of a person interred, or with a reserved grave space, in Barrowby Burial Ground, or who had a strong connection to the parish.

3.2 Memorial benches will not be permitted for pets.

3.3 All memorial benches are installed for the benefit of all visitors to the Burial Ground, not solely for the applicant or family.

3.4 The Burial Authority may limit the total number and location of benches to preserve a calm, uncluttered environment and to allow for future burials and pathways.

3.5 The Burial Authority reserves the right to refuse an application where it considers that the proposed bench, location or inscription is inappropriate.

#### **4. Bench specification (wood only)**

4.1 Only high-quality, durable wooden benches will normally be permitted, using hardwood or pressure-treated softwood suitable for cemetery use.

4.2 The exact design, including dimensions, style, colour/finish and fixings, must be approved by the Burial Authority before ordering, to ensure it is in keeping with the character of the Burial Ground and compatible with maintenance machinery.

4.3 The Burial Authority may publish guidance or examples of suitable benches and suppliers for applicants, but applicants are not restricted to set models.

4.4 Any anti-vandal or security fixings and all timber treatments must be appropriate for a cemetery setting and agreed in advance.

## **5. Locations within the Burial Ground**

5.1 No bench may be placed in the Burial Ground without prior written consent from the Burial Authority.

5.2 Benches will normally only be sited in designated locations, such as along main paths or viewpoints, and not on individual grave plots, to maintain safe access and the lawned layout.

5.3 When considering a location, the Burial Authority will take into account:

- the pattern of existing and future graves;
- access for mourners and maintenance vehicles;
- visual impact and overall harmony of the site;
- ground conditions (subsidence, drainage).

5.4 If the applicant's preferred location is unsuitable or already at capacity, an alternative may be offered. There is no automatic right to a specific spot.

## **6. Inscriptions and plaques**

6.1 Each memorial bench may have one plaque or carved inscription, the size and material of which must be approved by the Burial Authority.

6.2 All wording must be submitted with the application and is subject to approval by the Burial Ground Committee on behalf of the Burial Authority.

6.3 Inscriptions should be respectful, typically limited to:

- name of the person(s) commemorated;
- dates of birth and death; and
- a short, appropriate dedication.

6.4 The Burial Authority may require changes to wording to ensure consistency, avoid offence, and preserve the dignity of the Burial Ground.

## **7. Installation and base**

7.1 All costs for the bench, plaque, delivery, installation and groundworks are the responsibility of the applicant.

7.2 Benches must be installed on suitable hard standing, normally a reinforced concrete base, to a specification supplied or approved by the Burial Authority.

7.3 Installation may be:

- a) arranged by the Burial Authority using its contractor and recharged to the applicant; or
- b) carried out by a contractor appointed by the applicant, subject to:

- prior written approval;
- evidence of insurance; and
- installation in full accordance with the agreed specification.

7.4 No bench or base may be installed, moved or altered without written permission from the Burial Authority.

## **8. Lifespan, maintenance and repairs**

8.1 A memorial bench is accepted for its expected useful life, which the Burial Authority sets at 20 years from installation (“the Term”), subject to condition and the operational needs of the Burial Ground.

8.2 During the Term, the Burial Authority will:

- include the bench within its routine inspections; and
- carry out basic maintenance or minor repairs where resources permit.

8.3 Where a bench becomes unsafe, badly damaged or beyond economical repair, the Burial Authority may:

- a) remove the bench;
- b) invite the applicant to fund repair or replacement; or
- c) replace the bench at its own discretion if resources allow.

8.4 The Burial Authority accepts no liability for damage caused by vandalism, weather or third parties.

8.5 At the end of the Term, the Burial Authority will, where current contact details are available, write to the applicant (or nominated contact) to offer:

- a) renewal for a further term (which may involve replacement to the current standard design); or
- b) removal of the bench.

8.6 If contact cannot be made, or if renewal is not agreed, the Burial Authority may remove the bench. Any plaque will, where practicable, be returned to the applicant or retained for a reasonable period for collection.

## **9. Additional items and decorations**

9.1 To maintain a tidy and dignified environment, no additional mementoes may be fixed to, placed upon or around a memorial bench, including but not limited to:

- vases, ornaments or statues;
- wreaths or floral tributes (fresh or artificial);
- balloons, toys, photographs or similar items.

9.2 Any such items may be removed by the Burial Authority without notice. Perishable items may be disposed of immediately; durable items may be retained for a short period for collection if practicable.

9.3 The scattering of ashes on or around benches or elsewhere in the Burial Ground is not permitted except in accordance with the Burial Ground Regulations and with prior consent.

## **10. Ownership and rights**

10.1 Once installed, the memorial bench and base become the property of the Burial Authority. Donations do not confer ownership or any right to exclusive use.

10.2 The Burial Authority reserves the right to temporarily remove or relocate a bench to facilitate groundworks, tree works, path repairs or other cemetery operations.

10.3 The Burial Authority's decision on siting, maintenance, repair, removal or replacement is final.

## **11. Fees and payment**

11.1 All costs or donations towards memorial benches must be paid in advance of ordering.

11.2 A schedule of current fees and charges is available from the Clerk and may include:

- administration fee;
- contribution towards future maintenance; and
- any fee for relocation or replacement at the applicant's request.

## **12. Data protection**

12.1 Applicant details will be used to administer the memorial bench and any subsequent contact about maintenance, renewal or removal, and held in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and applicable legislation.

12.2 It is the applicant's responsibility to keep the Clerk informed of any change of address or contact details.

## **13. How to apply**

13.1 Applicants should contact the Clerk:

- Email: [clerk@barrowbyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@barrowbyparishcouncil.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 07710 087124

to request a Burial Ground Memorial Bench Application Form and current guidance on locations and bench specifications.

13.2 Completed application forms should be returned to the Clerk for consideration by the Burial Authority or relevant Committee.