

Memorial Trees and Benches Policy

The policy covers any memorial bench, tree, or other lasting item placed on Barnwell Parish Council managed property and is relevant to anyone who has commissioned or is thinking of commissioning a memorial tree or bench.

Where can memorials and benches be sited?

The planting of trees or installation of benches on land as memorials, is a private arrangement between the friends and relatives commissioning the memorial, and the landowner. As such, the Parish Council can only approve memorials on Parish Council managed land. The Council may support applications for benches placed on the public highway, but permission is required from the local highways authority. Barnwell Parish Council will consider fully all requests for memorial benches and trees. The Council will always endeavour to be respectful, sympathetic, and fair towards those donating trees and benches; to balance the needs of facility users; and to maintain the high quality of the village environment. Enquiries for a memorial bench or tree should be made by email to: barnwellparishclerk@gmail.com. The requests will be determined by the Council.

Consultation

Requests will be accommodated wherever possible, at a site determined by the Parish Council in consultation with the applicant/donor. A bench will be selected in consultation with the applicant, of a type and standard approved by the Parish Council.

Who buys the bench or tree?

When the Council agrees to install a bench or tree, the council purchases the bench or tree and the friends and family donates an amount to cover the costs to the Council for the cost of the bench or tree. The tree or bench is the property of the Council, and the donor does not retain any right to determine its future. Where appropriate the bench will be fitted to a slabbed area under and directly in front of the bench to allow for ease of use by the public.

Plaques and mementos

Memorial plaques fitted to benches must be provided by the bench supplier. Wording for the memorial plaque will be provided to the Council before the bench is ordered. The inscription must be agreed with the Council. No additional mementos e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench or tree. No scattering of ashes of humans or pets at any site either at the time or a later date will be permitted.

Longer term maintenance and repair

The Council accepts no liability for damage to any benches from vandalism, third parties or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance around the bench. The Council shall endeavour to maintain and care for a

memorial tree and bench for as long as possible. However, it reserves the right to re-site or remove any tree or bench that it deems to be unsafe or beyond repair. The donor shall not be permitted to undertake any maintenance of the memorial tree or bench without the permission of the Council. The Parish Council accepts no replacement liability for the plaque or the bench at the end of its useful life and will dispose of any such bench. Any replacements of benches or plaques will be the responsibility of the original applicant.

The Parish Council, should they need to, will notify the applicant in the event that the memorial bench is damaged.

Who is eligible?

The applicant should ensure that the Parish Council is in possession of current contact details. Memorial benches and trees will only be considered from people that can demonstrate a close tie with the person being commemorated. The Council reserves the right to refuse a memorial bench or tree should it have any grounds to believe it would be contrary to the wishes of the commemorated person's next of kin or the memorialisation cause offence to the wider community. The Council reserves the right to refuse a memorial bench or tree for other reasons. The reasons will be supplied to the applicant if requested.

Tree planting

The Council will decide the size of the tree according to the location it will be planted in. Any request to plant a tree that has been grown by the applicant(s) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Tree planting will usually only be permitted between late autumn and early spring, in line with the tree-planting season. Trees will normally be planted by the Parish Council contractor or staff/volunteers. However, donors are welcome to be present at the tree planting and carry out a small ceremony if they wish.

This policy was adopted at a meeting on 21st March 2023 and will be reviewed annually or sooner should need arise.