

HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL MEMORIAL PLAQUES, SEATS AND TREES POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hawkwell Parish Council supports the principles of allowing memorials in parks and green space areas, but is mindful that these areas have many uses and are enjoyed by a wide range of people. The Council will therefore ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual benefit of all.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1 This policy has been produced with the following guiding principles:
- To be respectful, sympathetic and easily understood by residents;
 - To recognise the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorials in public open spaces;
 - To balance the sometimes contrasting needs of a variety of facility users;
 - To maintain and enhance the high quality appearance of sites and not detract from their prime recreational purpose; and
 - To clearly establish the responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement of memorials.

3. Sites Included

- 3.1 The sites under the direct management of Hawkwell Parish Council will be subject to this policy. The sites listed below are included within the policy:
- Magnolia Park & Nature Reserve
 - Spencers Park
 - Glencroft Open Space
- 3.2 The Parish Council has historically sited some seats (including memorial seats) in various locations around the Parish. However, requests for additional seats in locations that are not under the direct management of the Parish Council are no longer permitted.
- 3.3 Any request for a replacement of an existing seat at a location outside one of the sites listed in 3.1 will be treated in the same way as 4.2.3 to 4.2.11. Essex County Council are involved in permissions regarding seats near the highway so requests are not guaranteed and can be time consuming.

4. Rules and Management

Memorial Plaques on Trees – Spencers Park only

- 4.1.1 The location originally designated for memorial plaques on trees is Spencers Park. Two areas of trees have memorial plaques; an area of Oak and Lime trees. Council agreed in 2008 to end this project as the trees in the designated areas were full and Council did not wish to turn the park into a memorial ground by permitting other groups of trees to have memorial plaques.

- 4.1.2 The Council does not take responsibility for any plaque if it is damaged through vandalism or natural wear or its replacement at the end of its life.
- 4.1.3 A request for a replacement plaque on a tree (in the areas stated in 4.1.1) may be considered if an existing plaque is lost or comes to the end of its useful life, at the discretion of Council.
- 4.1.4 In order to maintain consistency of appearance, quality and control over location, all replacement plaques will be ordered and installed by the Parish Council. The installation will take place at a time agreed with Council, by an agreed installer.
- 4.1.5 The total cost of a replacement plaque, associated backing plate and post and installation works will be borne by the applicant with payment in advance of any works.

Memorial Seats

- 4.2.1 Historically Council has permitted a small number of memorial seats in Magnolia Park & Nature Reserve. The number of memorial seats in a particular location will be limited in line with the policy aims in 2. above. [There are currently two memorial seats in Magnolia Park & Nature Reserve and six other seats. There are five seats in Spencers Park and two in Glencroft Open Space.]
- 4.2.2 Remote locations with poor access for maintenance and users will not be considered. Locations that would minimise future maintenance issues and vandalism will be considered.
- 4.2.3 Council has the right to close applications for memorial seats if it is decided that more seats are unsuitable in a particular location. Alternatively, an option to refurbish or replace an existing old seat with a new one may be offered subject to Council's consideration.
- 4.2.4 In order to maintain consistency of appearance, quality and control over location, all seats will be ordered and installed by the Parish Council. The installation will take place at a time agreed with Council, by an agreed installer.
- 4.2.5 The total cost of the seat including memorial plaque and installation costs will be borne by the applicant with payment in advance of any works.
- 4.2.6 The Parish Council's standards of maintenance will be to keep the seat fit for purpose and clean. The maintenance of the bench will be the responsibility of the donor, or their representatives. This may involve occasionally repairing minor faults, removal of graffiti and making good damage incurred from whatever source.
- 4.2.7 The seat will remain an asset of the Parish Council. However, no replacement liability will be accepted at the end of its useful life or if it is damaged beyond repair through vandalism.
- 4.2.8 Permission for a memorial seat will be for the expected useful life of the seat only, after which time it may be removed. Should a donor request a replacement seat it will be treated in the same way as a new seat.

- 4.2.9 The same conditions on expected useful life and maintenance will apply to any existing seats as apply to new seats.
- 4.2.10 The Parish Council retain the right to move the position of the seat at any time, should they consider this appropriate. All reasonable attempts will be undertaken by the Parish Council to advise the donor or their representative of this action and the new siting of the seat.
- 4.2.11 The Parish Council retains the right to remove the seat from the site should the seat be considered unserviceable. All reasonable attempts will be undertaken by the Parish Council to contact the original donor or their representatives before this action is taken.

Memorial Trees

- 4.3.1 Council does not permit planting of memorial trees at any of the sites it is responsible for.

General Management

- 4.4.1 Flowers left at a memorial bench are permitted for a short duration. They will be removed by council staff/contractors after a week (maximum) if the family do not remove them.
- 4.4.2 Council will not permit requests for memorials for, or scatter the ashes of, pets at any of the locations listed in 3.1 above.
- 4.4.3 The scattering of human ashes will not be permitted at any of the sites listed in 3.1 above as they are not consecrated ground.
- 4.4.4 Requests for Memorial Plaques and Seats will be held by the Parish Clerk and those permitted allocated a file number.

Meeting Adopted: Policy Committee / April 2023
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