



**ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MEMORIAL BENCHES AND TREES**  
**POLICY**

**Adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

## **1. Introduction**

When a loved one dies their friends and relatives may wish to commemorate them with a lasting memorial. Often this will be in the form a bench or tree which also provides a place to remember the loved one as well as an improvement to the local environment. Odiham Parish Council (OPC) is fortunate to own many open spaces in the parish which are suitable locations for memorial assets and will consider such requests.

This policy explains the rules on what is permitted and the process OPC will follow when determining requests for memorial benches and trees.

Applicants should note the different rules for memorial assets within Odiham Cemetery and refer to OPC's Cemetery Rules <https://odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cemetery-Rules-agreed-04.05.21.pdf>.

## **2. Legal framework**

- 2.1 The installation of memorial benches, planting of trees, or other, is a private arrangement between the family/friends making the application and OPC.
- 2.2 OPC can only grant permission for memorial assets on OPC owned or managed land. OPC may support applications for memorial assets on other land, such as the public highway, but permission will be required from the relevant authority such as Hampshire County Council, as the highway authority.
- 2.3 Generally speaking, benches and trees will not be subject to planning permission but other restrictions may apply, such as covenants or landowners responsibility of land adjacent to the highway or watercourse.
- 2.4 OPC has a duty to consider its activities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which may deem a location unsuitable if OPC considers it likely to attract antisocial behaviour.
- 2.6 Once a memorial bench or similar is permanently fixed or tree is planted, it becomes the property of the Council and the donor does not retain any right to determine its future management.
- 2.7 OPC reserves the right to repair, remove and write-off any memorial assets which are deemed unsafe or beyond economic repair. As a guide, this is more than half the cost of the original purchase value.
- 2.8 OPC has a responsibility to ensure memorial benches are in keeping with their surroundings and in safe condition while they remain. The initial payment covers maintenance for ten years. Once the condition deteriorates after that time they will be removed.
- 2.9 Memorial trees will require maintenance including watering in their first year and may require subsequent trimming to remain safe and healthy. Initial payment must cover these costs.

## **3. Determining requests**

- 3.1 Requests should be emailed to [clerk@odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@odihamparishcouncil.gov.uk).
- 3.2 Applications may take up to 3 months if it is deemed necessary to consult with the Amenities Areas committee.
- 3.3 OPC will respond to requests in writing and OPC's decision will be final.

## **4. Benches**

- 4.1 Applications should include details of the proposed location, size, style, materials and the proposed method of fixing.
- 4.2 Only benches in keeping with the immediate surrounds and of a robust design will be considered.
- 4.3 The exact location of the bench will be agreed with staff at a site visit.
- 4.4 For sites other than Odiham cemetery, the type of fixing will be directed by staff to ensure it is suitable for its surroundings and provides a reasonable level of protection but does not impact on the surrounding environment. Paving slabs and concrete plinths should be avoided.
- 4.5 Where an existing bench with no dedication is in a poor condition, a donor may apply to install a new bench as a replacement.
- 4.6 Details of the memorial plaque or inscription should be discussed and agreed with staff prior to installation.
- 4.7 OPC will take responsibility for ordering the bench and arranging installation.
- 4.8 Donors will take responsibility for supply and fixing any memorial plaque.
- 4.9 Applicants will pay OPC a fee which covers purchase of the bench, installation and 50% of the bench value to cover maintenance for up to 10 years.

## **5. Trees**

- 5.1 Applications should include the species, proposed location and expected size of matured tree.
- 5.2 Native species are preferred.
- 5.3 The exact location of the tree will be agreed with staff at a site visit.
- 5.4 Details of the memorial plaque or inscription should be discussed and agreed with staff prior to installation.
- 5.5 OPC will take responsibility for ordering the tree and arranging planting.
- 5.6 Donors will take responsibility for supply and fixing any memorial plaque.
- 5.7 Applicants will pay OPC a fee which covers purchasing the tree, planting and a set fee (to be determined) towards future maintenance.
- 5.8 OPC will endeavour to accommodate any reasonable requests for memorial trees or planting but careful consideration of the surrounding environment and costs of future management will be paramount.
- 5.9 OPC cannot guarantee a tree will establish and will remove a tree which is unviable or unsafe.

## **6. Memorial plaques and other remembrance items**

- 6.1 Applications should include details of the memorial item and proposed location and an explanation on how the applicant/donor plans to take responsibility for future maintenance.
- 6.2 Any request received will be determined on an individual basis and referred to the Amenities Areas Committee for decision.