

DODDINGHURST PARISH COUNCIL POLICY - MEMORIAL BENCHES

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy will take effect from 16th February 2022 and relates to all new applications since that date. Appendix A to this policy sets out how the Parish Council will manage existing benches.

Doddinghurst Parish Council's (the Council) General Purposes Committee will be responsible for the consideration of applications for installation of Memorial Benches in Doddinghurst on land owned or managed by Doddinghurst Parish Council.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO SPACES AVAILABLE AT THE BURIAL GROUND FOR MEMORIAL BENCHES.

The Council supports the needs and principles of allowing memorial benches in Doddinghurst. ~~including the Burial Ground~~. The Council is mindful that these facilities are enjoyed by a wide range of people. Therefore, the Council will ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual benefit of all.

It is the intention that the policy only covers broad common issues and is not meant to be exhaustive. The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances, fashion and trends. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Parish Council for approval.

This policy will be made available to the general public and all applicants for memorial benches will be issued with a copy.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The Council is seeking to ensure it is adopting a clear, measurable and sympathetic approach to the management of its memorial seating, which will take account of the sometimes contrasting needs of a variety of facility users.

The policy will also ensure that only memorial benches are erected which are instigated by the next of kin or Executor and that benches have a common appearance, style and size and will not cause offence to others.

The policy will establish responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement.

The Council through the policy will endeavour to always offer the highest standard of service in undertaking its management and regulatory responsibility.

3. POLICY - TERMS & CONDITIONS

- i. All applications for memorial benches must be completed on the official request form and be signed by the applicant. Only applications from the next of kin or Executor will be considered.
- ii. If the application is approved, the Council will advise the applicant of the cost of the bench and plaque, delivery and installation. There will be a further one-off fee of £200 to cover maintenance over a 10-year period. When payment has been received the Council will order and install the items.
- iii. Memorial benches will be positioned to maximise the benefit to the community but the Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the applicants. The Council will limit the number of memorial benches in particular areas.
- iv. The Council will attempt to notify the applicant in the event that the memorial bench is damaged. The applicant should ensure that the Parish Clerk is in possession of current contact details.
- v. The Council reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged and are in the view of the Parish Clerk beyond economical repair or have not been repaired within 4 weeks of the notification referred to in (iv) above.
- vi. The Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial benches from vandals, third parties or whilst the Council carries out routine maintenance in the cemetery.
- vii. The Council will not grant applications for memorial benches to pets.
- viii. The number of memorial benches shall not detract from the prime purpose of area in which they are located. Therefore, the size and location of the available Parish Land space shall limit the number of benches permitted. The Council reserves the right to refuse applications on this basis.
- ix. Benches will be of the type and colour specified by the Council to be in keeping with the intended location.
- x. The bench will be fitted by the Council to a slabbed area under and directly in front of the bench to allow for ease of use by the public.
- xi. Memorial plaques fitted to benches to be a maximum size of 175mm wide x 75mm high or shall fit in the centre of the uppermost lath of the back of the bench or whichever is the greater.

- xii. The inscription on the bench is to be restricted to "In the Memory of" the name of the person, recognition of public office (if appropriate) and the dates of birth and death.
- xiii. The Council will maintain the bench. If the bench becomes unsafe, the Council reserves the right to remove it.
- xiv. The 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.
- xv. No additional mementoes, eg vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, photos, balloons or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench.
- xvi. Any maintenance carried out by a third party will be in strict agreement with the Council and by appointment only.

APPENDIX A

Whilst the above policy deals with new applications for memorial benches, there is need to specify how the Parish Council will manage the benches already in place.

Each bench will be maintained by the Council and when it is coming to the end of its life the Council will endeavour to contact the owner to inform them of the situation. They will be asked whether they would like the bench and plaque to remain.

If so, they will be given the opportunity to purchase a new one and the Council will advise of the costs.

If not, or there is no reply within 6 weeks, the Council will remove the bench. The memorial plaque will be retained by the Council for one year and then disposed of.