Calstock Parish Council

Bench Policy and Application Form

2023

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Bench Policy: Guidance and Application for a bench to be placed in a cemetery or open space

The Council receives occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench within a public open space or cemetery. These are often places with which individuals or families have a particular connection or special relationship. There is no legislative requirement for the provision of public or memorial benches although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity.

The provision and management of all seats and benches on all public open spaces owned by the Council is the responsibility of the Amenities Committee.

Requests have been considered by the Amenities Committee and/or the Burial Committee and generally accommodated. In most circumstances, customers have purchased new benches which have been installed by the Maintenance Team.

This policy recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial benches. As resources available to parish councils are limited (and more responsibility placed on smaller councils), careful consideration is needed as to the level of maintenance that can be provided in the long term. It is necessary to avoid items which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy but opportunities to provide assets for public benefit in different and new ways should be encouraged, as should those coming from sustainable sources in line with the environmental and climate crisis.

This policy, therefore, welcomes donations of suitable benches for appropriate locations. The operating principles below will ensure that requests for memorial benches are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner. It will result in appropriate bench styles from sustainable sources to be purchased and installed in appropriate locations to ensure they are easy to maintain and not unduly prone to vandalism.

1. Only sites which do not already have a sufficient number of benches will be considered.

2. Suggested sites will be assessed to see if they currently lack appropriate seating or are at a likely stopping point such as a particular view or rest point on a path. In addition, the location should be chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism. In some instances, a consultation exercise ***may*** be required before granting permission. In the case of benches in Cemeteries, the Burial Committee will be approached and in other open spaces the Amenities Committee will receive the application.

3. The applicant should purchase a bench that can be evidenced as coming from sustainable sources and requires little or low maintenance e.g. recycled plastic.

4. Occasionally a unique rather than standard bench design may be requested as a memorial. In these circumstances, details of the bench construction, materials and specifications will need to

be submitted to the Amenities and/or Burial Committee for approval. On approval the bench would then be supplied to the Maintenance staff for installation in an agreed location. Any repairs will be the responsibility of the owner.

Purchase of a memorial bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it will be removed. The successful applicant will purchase the bench and pay a fee to include the installation. To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the memorial bench with plaque and surfacing in all cases and retain liability for it. The bench will remain the property of the applicant but the Parish Council will have the right to remove the bench should it fall into disrepair and the applicants cannot be reached.

5. Any plaques or inscriptions should be applied for to The Clerk who will administer this, the cost of which will be included in this additional fee. The cost and life expectancy of the bench will depend on the type of bench and its location. Any replacement would be treated in the same way as a new memorial bench.

6. Where there is no space for an additional memorial bench, requests for placement of a memorial plaque on an existing bench will be considered where the bench is in good condition and point 3 above has been assessed. As the bench has already been provided through public funds, a charge which includes a modest contribution towards the original purchase of the bench, plus the plaque and installation cost will be required. This will accommodate the customer's wishes and ensure a fair contribution is made towards the provision of the bench as a personal memorial. The funds raised will be used for the repair or provision of other public benches. The same conditions on life expectancy and maintenance will apply to any existing benches as apply to new benches.

7. The Council's standards of maintenance will be accepted as keeping the bench fit for purpose and clean. This will involve occasionally removing built up algae and grime, removal of graffiti and repairing minor faults within resources available. There is a move away from regular painting as in the long term this proves more costly than just replacing the bench when it has reached the end of its natural life. The range of new benches has been chosen for durability without the need for regular painting or treatment.

8. A standard written letter of agreement will be sent by the Council to the customer to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood prior to purchase. The form will be returned to the Council with payment in advance of the memorial bench being placed.

Applicants are strongly urged to seek permission for a bench prior to any fundraising or collection of money.

Application form

Name of applicant: ……..

Address: ……

Contact number and or email: ……..

Suggested location			
Is the location at a (tick all):	Viewpoint	Rest point	Area of contemplation
Evidence that the bench has come from sustainable sources:			
Please tick to say the bench should not require maintenance		Yes	

Is a plaque required? Y/N

Small plaque (25cmx15cm)	
Large plaque (25cmx30cm)	
Wording on the plaque:	Name/ Family Name Year of birth / Year of death

Please sign to indicate you understand and agree that:

- The bench has come from sustainable sources and does not require long term maintenance other than being cleaned as appropriate
- The bench will remain the property of the applicant and costly repairs should be met by the applicant
- The responsibility of the bench will lie with the parish council who will install it
- The Parish Council have the right to remove the bench should it become in a poor state of repair
- Any plaques will be applied for through the Clerk's office
- Payment of £200 will be made for the installation of the bench
- Payment of £40 will be made for a plaque if requested

Signed: …….. Date: …….

For office use:

Location of request			
Number of seats already at suggested location			
What risk is there for vandalism	Low	Medium	High
Evidence that the bench is from sustainable resources			
Plaque required		Yes	No
Consultation required		Yes	No
Approved by:	Amenities Committee Date N/A	Burial Committee Date N/A	Full Council Date N/A
Cost to be paid:	Installation:	Plaque:	Total:
Invoice Number:		Receipt Number:	
Date:			