Thame Town Council

Memorial Benches, Trees & Shrubs

1. Background

1.1 Some residents wish to remember loved ones with a memorial bench, tree, or shrub on one of the open spaces owned by the town council. The town council has assisted with many such requests in the past.

1.2 This policy seeks to be clear as to how residents may apply for a memorial bench, tree or shrub and sets down the procedure in full. Whilst seeking to accommodate the wishes of residents making such requests the policy also acknowledges that public spaces are for the mutual benefit and enjoyment of all residents of the town, and this will always be balanced against such requests.

2. Objectives

2.1 To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

2.2 To assist, where possible, those residents who wish to install a memorial bench, tree, and shrub.

2.3 To ensure that requests from residents are balanced with the needs of users of the council's open spaces. The placing of a bench, tree or shrub in a particular location should be for the benefit of the community and there should be a real need in that location. Note that any request for locations listed below should be directed to the organisation responsible for their management.

- Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve is at the discretion of the Cuttle Brook Management Team whose decision is final.
- Ham Wood is under lease conditions from Woodlands Trust.
- Stones Close Allotments Management Committee manage the Stones Close Allotment site.
- Thame Museum
- War Memorials in Thame and Moreton - Thame Town Council will consider any armed forces personnel remembrance requests.
- Hampden Gardens Allotment site - Thame Town Council will consider any requests in consultation with allotment holders.
- Thame Youth Memorial location is under the management of Thame Youth Memorial Trust.

- Organisations that lease properties from Thame Town Council will be required to provide written approval of any application for consideration.

2.4 To ensure that open space areas are not compromised, or the installation does not cause any antisocial behaviour.

2.5 To ensure any installation is of a high quality and its appearance is maintained.

2.6 To ensure that benches and plaques are of a consistent design and material approved by the town council, will not cause offence to the public and are consistent with their surroundings.

2.7 To establish the responsibility for the maintenance repair and replacement of memorial benches.

3. Application Procedure

3.1 All applications for memorial benches, trees or shrubs should be made using the official application form which can be download at https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Memorial-Application-Form.pdf. If a paper copy of the application form is required, then this can be requested by telephoning the Town Council on 01844 212833.

3.2 All memorial benches/planting must be paid for by the applicant before the installation commences.

3.3 Applications for a memorial bench/planting cannot be guaranteed or reserved prior to the subject's death.

3.4 The Town Council will try to accommodate the wishes of the applicant regarding location of the memorial bench, tree, or shrub but this will not always be possible.

3.5 To avoid disputes and ensure the memorial application reflects the wishes of the deceased's family. All applications must be submitted with the knowledge and written agreement of the next of kin.

3.6 The memorial bench and plaque will be the property of the Town Council and the Town Council will ensure that it is repaired and maintained for a 10-year period.

3.7 Applications are determined by the Operations Manager and Maintenance Team Supervisor. Should a request be refused then the Applicant has the

right to request that the matter be referred to the relevant Town Council Committee for a decision and that decision will be final.

3.8 The Town Council reserves the right to remove or relocate memorial benches/planting at any time and for whatever reason it deems necessary. Every effort will be made to contact the Applicant in either of these circumstances.

3.9 The Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial benches, trees, or shrubs from vandals, third parties or whilst the Council conducts routine maintenance.

3.10 The Council will not grant applications for memorial benches to pets.

3.11 No additional mementoes e.g., vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons, or other ornamentation etc. shall be permitted on or around the bench, tree or shrub. These shall be summarily removed without reference to the original applicant.

3.12 Please note that in some areas, additional consultation may be required from neighbours or police.

4. Memorial Benches and Plaques

4.1 The Town Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of Applicants who request a memorial bench but may have to limit the number of benches in a particular open space. Should there already be enough benches in the open space of the Applicant's choice, the Applicant may be offered an alternative choice of location for a bench installation.

4.2 Benches must be of the type, material and colour specified by the Town Council.

4.3 Benches will be purchased directly from the supplier and installed by the Town Council. If the bench is to be placed on grass it will usually be fitted to a concrete base. The Town Council will arrange for all installation work to be conducted.

4.4 Memorial plaques will be procured by the Town Council and fitted to benches. Plaques will be a maximum height of 5cm and length of 13cm and will be fitted in the upper most lath of the back of the bench. The applicant will suggest the wording which the Council will need to approve.

4.5 The Town Council, in accordance with its current maintenance programme, will maintain memorial benches on its own land. It accepts no replacement

liability for the plaque or bench at the end of its useful life, which is estimated as 10 years. If the applicant wishes to purchase a replacement bench / plaque, then they must re-apply in line with the policy in place at that time.

4.6 The total cost of the installation of a memorial bench will be dependent on the type of bench allowed and the type of fittings required. The Town Council will charge for the bench, base, material, and labour at cost (plus an administration and ongoing maintenance charge of 25%). The Town Council will procure the bench, all materials and labour.

4.7 No other types of memorials are permitted under this policy and only one memorial bench per subject will be permitted.

4.8 It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform the Town Council of any changes to their contact details once the memorial bench has been installed.

5. Planting

5.1 Trees and Shrubs will be purchased directly from the supplier and planted by the Town Council.

5.2 Memorial plaques will not be allowed to be placed by a tree or shrub.

5.3 Upon request a list of suitable locations for planting a Tree or Shrub will be provided as this will be linked to the town council tree maintenance programme.

Thame Town Council

Application for a dedicated memorial bench, tree or shrub

Date of Application: ……..

Applicant details

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Postcode: _____ Telephone No.: _____

Email: _____

Please notify us of any change of name or address so we can contact you if we need to.

*Name of person for dedication: _____

Reason for dedication: _____

_____

Preferred location: _____

Second choice location: _____

*Attached signed written consent with contact details of the next of kin for the memorial request.