

ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMORIALS (NOT ON A GRAVE) POLICY

This policy aims to give clear guidelines on how the deal with requests for memorials not located on grave, such as trees in parks or informal tributes which appear in a public place in response to the sudden death of someone with a connection to that location.

THIS POLICY INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

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- Section 5: Other forms of memorials.
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- Section 8: Informal Tributes.

Responsible Section/Team	Operations Team	Version	3
Responsible Author	Tamzin Percival	Due for review	
Date last amended	1 June 2010	Date agreed at JCC/Cabinet	N/A

Introduction and Background

The recently published revised cemetery regulations deal with the policy and procedure for headstones and memorials placed on graves. However there are many instances where people do not want this type of formal memorial but would like to remember loved ones by other means. Typically these fall in to three categories; benches, trees and informal floral tributes, but there may be other forms.

Previously, there has been no policy or procedure to govern how Rossendale Borough Council deals with these requests and as such this publication offers guidelines on ensuring customers gain a flexible service that meets their needs while still maintaining uniformity and safety on our land.

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Section 1 General Considerations and Responsibilities.

Requests for permanent memorials should be made via the Bereavement Services Officer and all requests received in other departments should be referred to this officer.

Each request for a permanent memorial from any individual of any or no faith or religion will be considered on an individual basis, taking in to account the type, design and form of memorial requested.

Any location will be considered for a memorial, however each location will need to be assessed to ensure the siting of the memorial will not cause problems regarding obstruction of sight lines, traffic or pedestrian flow and operational difficulties.

If the request concerns land not in RBC ownership then, where the owner is known, the customer will be directed to the relevant authority. Where the land owner is not known, the customer will be advised to carry out a land registry search. This would be at their own expense.

Section 2 Ashes

Whilst ashes are not a form of memorial, they are often associated with memorials or have differing requests associated with them.

There is a demand for ashes plots whereby ashes may be interred in a designated formally laid out area within a cemetery.

Previously, ashes plots have only be offered in Whitworth Cemetery but following customer requests, these plots are now being offered in the other cemeteries in the Borough, at Bacup, Rawtenstall and Haslingden. (**Subject to the approval of the ashes plots policy – also going to Policy O&S in June)

RBC will only grant permission for ashes to be buried within a cemetery; however permission is granted for the scattering of ashes outside of cemeteries on RBC land. This can mean the scattering of ashes while a tree is being planted at that location.

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Section 3 Memorial Benches

The style of bench offered will be dependent on the location to ensure corporate identity and uniformity is maintained. Benches must have an area of hard standing or surface that can be maintained to prevent erosion such as erosion matting or bark box with edgings underneath. There must be no step up to the bench plinth. The bench must be securely fixed to the hard standing or in to the ground.

Cemeteries, Parks, Memorial Gardens and other Open Spaces within the maintained estate:

A single ornamental style of bench will be offered in the above areas. This currently will be the Broxap Eastgate comprising of recycled steel frame (coated black) and recycled plastic slats (brown).

This bench is robust with minimal maintenance commitment and high resistance to vandalism but it also gives a more traditional ornamental design. The design has been approved for Pride in Rossendale sites and as such this style should be used to maintain the uniformity.



Roadside and pavement locations.

The style offered will be as above unless directed otherwise by Lancashire County Council Highways, should the location fall within their remit.

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Section 4 Memorial Trees

The species of tree offered will be dependent on the location to ensure suitability of species to site conditions and planned site designs are not compromised (for example the planned avenue of white stemmed birch on the driveway at Rawtenstall Cemetery).

Section 5 Other Forms of Memorials

These may take the form of flower tubs, troughs or planters, plaques on walls or sculptures, just to name a few. Any request will be considered but they should be in keeping with the surrounding environment.

If planting is part of the request then the species and materials used should be in concordance with existing procedures such as the use of peat free composts where possible and sustainable planting schemes.

Section 6 Plaques

A customer may request a plaque to be mounted on or alongside the memorial. These will be permitted on larger items such as trees, benches and planters but not adjacent smaller memorials such as roses and shrubs so as not to create a cluttered appearance in any one place.

Plaques can be supplied from bench manufacturers ready scribed and attached or can be purchased separately via the Operations Team. The customer must put all wording to be scribed on to plaques in writing prior to the plaque being ordered. Wording must not exceed the limits of the plaque. Separate plaques supplied will be of a size appropriate to the memorial. The wording must not be deemed to cause offence or implication of any other party in connection with the deceased person it relates to.

In some cases a bespoke independent plaque may be requested by an individual or group and this will be given specific consideration at the time of contact.

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Section 7 Quotes and Service Delivery

All of the above types of memorial must be ordered and supplied by Rossendale Borough Council. The officer dealing with the customer request must send a detailed written quote to the customer stating the following information.

- The cost of the memorial (which will include supply and delivery costs for all materials, installation costs and a further small charge to contribute to routine future maintenance of the memorial)
- The exact location for the memorial (including map where appropriate).
- How to pay and clarification that materials will only be ordered once payment has been received.
- Request for exact wording to go on the plaque (and issue of guidelines for this) stating that the customer must put his in writing to us and that the memorial will only be ordered once this information has been received.
- Timeline for completion of installation – this is dependent on what the memorial is.
- RBC maintenance commitments.

Quotes will remain valid for three months from date of issue. The materials will only be ordered once payment has been received and wording for the plaque has been confirmed, where required. Benches should be installed within three months of payment. Trees will be planted depending on availability at time of request. The customer will be kept informed of expected availability.

The memorial will be routinely maintained by RBC. Should the memorial be damaged or vandalised then RBC will repair if the costs are deemed acceptable within current maintenance budgets. In the event of damage or vandalism which would incur repair or replacement costs that are deemed unacceptable or unreasonable, the customer will be contacted to inform them of the situation. It is then up to that person to make arrangements and meet the cost of repairs or replacement. If the extent of the damage is such that it poses a health and safety risk to other people then the memorial will be removed by the Operations Team and the customer informed of this action and the reasons for it.

The customer should also be asked if they are prepared to pay an annual fee for repeated seasonal bedding if this forms part of the memorial. This annual agreement is an existing occurrence within cemeteries and can be governed by the same procedure.

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Section 8 Informal Tributes.



There are occasions when floral tributes, candles etc are placed at a location associated with the death of a person or a place connected with the deceased person. In most cases these are appropriate and cause no upset to other people. In rare cases the location or longevity of the tribute results in differences of opinion and generates quite strong emotions. The extent of the public feeling surrounding the death can affect the size of the tribute and the length of time that tribute is sustained on site. In any case each occurrence should be considered individually for appropriate action to be taken.

To manage this situation effectively the tribute should not be interfered with unless it is causing an obstruction or considered a hazard. Spent and withered flowers should be removed from the site to maintain tidiness. Should the tribute be on land owned by Rossendale Borough Council then any tidying or removal works will be carried out by street cleansing or parks staff.

Tributes on areas owned or maintained by Lancashire County Council including the highway should be notified to LCC for them to deal with appropriately. We will share this policy with them so they may signpost the bereaved persons to an alternative service.

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If the tribute is causing concern of any kind then after a reasonable period of time an alternative form of memorial will be offered, assuming contact can be made with the person who initiated the informal tribute. For example a bench, tree, plaque or flower tub.

In all cases the Communities Team will work with the Bereavement Services Officer when liaising with the person(s) connected with the tribute and issuing instruction / action to operations team for removal or organising alternative form of memorial.

It is impossible to structure the timescale for the procedure as there may be several influencing factors determining sensitivity or problems contacting someone connected with the tribute. Therefore all cases will be treated independently.

In all cases the Ward Councillor for the area in which the tribute is placed will be informed of the situation and updated of any progress or action.

End

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