



## Memorial Benches and Trees Policy

### Purpose:

When a loved one dies their friends and relatives may wish to commemorate them with a lasting memorial. This policy aims to establish guidelines and procedures for the thoughtful management, maintenance, and placement of memorial benches and trees with St Mary Bourne Parish. It explains the rules on what is permitted and the process St Mary Bourne Parish Council (SMBPC) will follow when determining requests for memorial benches and trees.

### Legal Framework:

1. The installation of memorial benches, planting of trees, or other, is a private arrangement between the family/friends making the application and SMBPC.
2. SMBPC can only grant permission for memorial assets on SMBPC owned or managed land. SBPC may support applications for memorial assets on other land, such as a public highway, but the permission will be required from the relevant authority such as Hampshire County Council, as the highway authority.
3. Generally speaking, benches and trees will not be subject to planning permission but other restrictions may apply, such as covenants or landowners responsibility land adjacent to the highway or watercourse.
4. SMBPC has a duty to consider its activities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which may deem a location unsuitable if SMBPC considers it likely to attract anti-social behaviour.
5. Once a memorial bench or similar is permanently fixed or tree is planted, it becomes the property of SMBPC and the donor does not retain any right to determine its future management.
6. SMBPC 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).
7. SMBPC has a responsibility to ensure memorial benches are in keeping with their surroundings and in safe condition while they remain.
8. The installation of memorial benches, planting of trees, or other will involve payment of a fee to SMBPC, this will also cover maintenance for up to ten years, and is at the discretion of SMBPC. Details of this are in the Fees Section of this policy.
9. Memorial trees will require maintenance including watering in their first year and may require trimming to remain safe and healthy. Details of this are in the Fees Section of this policy.

### Determining requests:

1. Requests should be emailed to [clerk@stmarybourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stmarybourne-pc.gov.uk)
2. Any application may take up to 3 months to determine, particularly if other SMBPC Committees need to be consulted. i.e. Lake Working Group or Recreation Ground Working Group.
3. SMBPC will respond to requests in writing and SMBPC's decision is final.

**Benches:**

1. Applications should include details of the proposed location, size, style, materials and the proposed method of fixing.
2. Only benches in keeping with the immediate surroundings and of robust design will be considered.
3. The exact location of the bench will be agreed with SMBPC at a site visit.
4. Where an existing bench with no dedication is in a poor condition, a donor may apply to install a new bench as a replacement.
5. Details of the memorial plaque or inscription should be discussed and agreed with SMBPC prior to installation.
6. SMBPC is able to take responsibility for ordering the bench and arranging installation if this is the donor's preference, or the donor may purchase and install the bench in line with the specification agreed with SMBPC.
7. In all cases Donors will be responsible for supply and fixing any memorial plaque.

**Trees:**

1. Applications should include the species, proposed location and expected size of matured tree.
2. Native species are preferred.
3. The exact location of the tree will be agreed with SMBPC at a site visit.
4. Details of the memorial plaque or inscription should be discussed and agreed with SMBPC prior to installation.
5. SMBPC is able to take responsibility for ordering the tree and arranging planting if this is the donor's preference, or the donor may purchase and organise planting of the tree. Any cost of ongoing maintenance of the tree will be covered by the applicant, and is payable upon planting. Details of this are in the Fees Section of this policy.
6. The applicant will be responsible for supply and fixing of any memorial plaque.
7. SMBPC 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.
8. SMBPC cannot guarantee a tree will establish and will remove a tree which is unviable or unsafe. The applicant/donor will be consulted in this circumstance.

**Memorial plaques and other remembrance items:**

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.
2. Any request received will be determined on an individual basis and referred to the full council for a final decision.
3. On removal of a bench or tree SMBPC will endeavour to return the plaque or remembrance item to the family as far as is possible.

**Fees:**

All fees are at the discretion of SMBPC, but as a guide are shown in the table below:

	Bench	Tree
Fees when SMBPC purchase	Price of Bench	Price of Tree
Installation	£45/hr	£45/hr
Maintenance	£50 per year for years 8,9 & 10 of the benches expected life. (£150 maximum) to be paid in advance.	Cost of watering during first year.
Administration per installation	£50	£50

Maintenance on benches will include any cleaning, recoating if stained, repainting if painted, and small repairs required. Tasks, for example, suitable for a handyman rather than a specialist.

By adhering to these guidelines, SMBPC honour the memory of individuals or events while enhancing the natural beauty and functionality of our community spaces.

This policy will be subject to periodic review, with the next review scheduled for April 2026.