



Melksham Town Council

Memorial Bench and Donations Policy

1. Sponsorship of Commemorative/Memorial Benches Policy

1.1 To add to the quality of Town Council parks and open spaces, seating is provided to allow visitors to enjoy the environment and the outdoor space. The Town Council believes that seating is an essential element of the out-door offer and something that all well-maintained and managed parks should accommodate. Seating encourages parents to bring children to parks and watch them play in comfort, seating also offers the less able and older people a welcome rest.

1.2 The Town Council offers opportunities which enable members of the community to sponsor benches (at approved locations) in memory of a loved one. It is envisaged that donated memorial benches will be placed in the town's parks and open spaces and other agreed (in advance) locations.

1.3 Applications for benches in locations other than on the council's approved list will be considered and if they meet the requirements of Highways and Town Council terms, approval may be granted.

2. Principles

2.1 Through this policy the Council will try to ensure that donations and sponsorship at such facilities are appropriate, regulated, and managed. This policy will be reviewed periodically and will be made available to the public and to all applicants for bench donations.

2.2 The Council will ensure a clear, measurable, and sympathetic approach to the provision and management of bench donations and will take into account the sometimes, contrasting needs of a variety of users.

2.3 The policy will also seek to ensure that donated benches have a common appearance, style and size which are appropriate for their location and will not cause offence to others.

2.4 The Town Council will not permit third parties to provide their own benches for installation.

3. Locations

3.1 Donated Benches

Suitable locations within the town where people are likely to make good use of the bench will be considered. Whilst the council will consider any reasonable requests for placing a donated bench we ask prospective donors to be mindful of requesting locations that are accessible and where it can be demonstrated that the bench will be used. Likewise, the council will have to be mindful that to maximise the lifespan of the bench, locations with high levels of vandalism and that offer poor access for maintenance may not be suitable.

Once a bench is erected in a public area, it becomes available for anyone to use.

The Town Council has a number of attractive places for memorial benches to be situated, including:

- St Michaels Closed Churchyard
- King George V Park
- All parks and open spaces (under Town Council control)

(locations to be identified)

3.2 Existing Benches

The council recognises that in some areas of the town that have a special significance for the donor/person being remembered there may already be a sufficient supply of seating. In this instance, the council may be able to offer the opportunity to replace an existing bench that is coming towards needing to be replaced OR allow the donor to adopt an existing bench for the placement of a suitable plaque with the council being able to use their donation to supply a bench in another area of the town where the council feels it would benefit the community.

(locations to be identified)

4. Conditions of Scheme

4.1 The Town Council will arrange for the choice, specification and procurement of the bench, its installation and suitable memorial plaque.

4.2 The cost of a memorial bench is £1,000 which includes installation, regular maintenance, a brass plaque (with an approved inscription) 12.5 cm x 5 cm, naming the loved one to be remembered. Purchase of a memorial/commemorative bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it will be removed.

4.3 Once a donated bench has been installed, it becomes the Town Council's property. When the bench has reached the point of needing to be replaced as it is no longer economically repairable, the council will attempt to contact the donor and offer them the opportunity to replace the memorial bench at whatever the current cost at that time is. If they choose not to replace the bench the donor accepts that any replacement bench will not continue to display their plaque and may be sponsored by someone else and have a different plaque displayed.

4.4 It will be the responsibility of the donor to notify the Council if their address or contact details change.

4.5 Memorial/commemorative benches may not be used for advertising or commercial purposes.

4.6 Benches dedicated in memory of someone will require the agreement of the next of kin, personal representative and/or executor.

4.7 The inscribed plaque will be sourced and installed by the Town Council.

4.8 Plaques may contain the name of the person and date of birth and death and must be approved by the Town Clerk. Any additional personal inscriptions/dedications must also be approved by the Town Clerk, but such requests would not usually be declined. Where the Clerk recommends a request is rejected, the donor may appeal and request that the matter is considered by the council or any committee of the council that such responsibilities have been delegated to.

4.9 Dedications and donated benches will only be available to remember deceased people (not pets).

4.10 Donated benches become the property of the Town Council and will be included in the council's standard insurance cover. However, the Town Council reserves the right to remove any bench which in its opinion is damaged or beyond economic repair, where its replacement or repair is not possible through the council's insurance. In this event, the council would follow the procedure set out in 4.3.

4.12 The Town Council's open spaces are there for the enjoyment of everyone and as such are not considered to be 'memorial' gardens. Therefore, no additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, balloons or other ornamentation etc., will be permitted on or around the bench. These will be removed by the Council without reference to the original applicant.

4.13 Notwithstanding clause 4.12 above, the council does recognise that at anniversaries or other significant dates the donor or other individuals may want to place appropriate floral tributes. Such tributes should not prevent the use of the bench and should be removed within seven days. The Town Council reserves the right to remove any floral tributes/wreaths left by a bench after ten days without further reference to the donor.

5. Contact

To arrange for a memorial/commemorative plaque to an existing bench or to donate a new bench, contact the Town Council by email townhall@melksham-tc.gov.uk or telephone the Town Council office on 01225 704187.

Approved by the Asset Management and Amenities committee on 19 April 2022.

To be reviewed April 2024.