

Policy for Provision of Memorial Benches in Public Open Spaces.



The Council will facilitate the purchase and placement of memorial benches in public open spaces owned or managed by the Council including parks, countryside sites and streets on request, where appropriate opportunities exist.

Introduction

The Council receives occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench within a public open space. 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 or managed by the Council is the responsibility of Community Greenspace. This policy covers the provision of memorial benches in public open space which includes areas such as parks, countryside sites and streets. **Memorial benches within cemeteries and the memorial garden at Perth Crematorium are also managed by Community Greenspace. These are covered by a separate policy due to the particularly sensitive management arrangements covering these areas.**

In general most requests have been accommodated but procedures followed have varied over time, with decisions often being left to the discretion of the officer who has been allocated the request. In most circumstances, customers have purchased new benches, although in some instances they have only purchased plaques to be fitted onto existing benches. This approach, although generally accommodating to the customer, has resulted in over provision and inappropriate siting of memorial benches in some areas, maintenance difficulties due to a wide range of bench styles being used, and ineffective recording of memorial bench information.

This policy recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial benches in public open spaces. As resources available to the Council to provide public services reduce, much more consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained is required. A rationalisation of the range and quality of infrastructure is also needed to avoid items which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy. In addition, opportunities to provide infrastructure for public benefit in different and new ways need to be maximised.

The policy therefore continues to welcome donations of suitable benches for appropriate locations in the public open spaces the Council manages. 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 being purchased and installed in appropriate locations to ensure they are easy to maintain and not unduly prone to vandalism.

Operating principles:

1. Only sites which do not already have a sufficient number of benches will be considered. This will be determined by any site specific management plans or the Community Greenspace Asset Management Plan.
2. Suitable locations within the site where people are likely to make good use of the bench will be considered. These will be areas which lack any seating nearby or are at a likely stopping point such as a particular view or rest point on a path. In addition, the location will be chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism. Remote locations with poor access for maintenance and users will not be considered.
3. In locations where there will be several benches in the same area, no more than 50% will be offered as a placement for a memorial bench. This is to prevent the area taking on the ambience of a dedicated memorial garden which may compromise the enjoyment of the space for general recreational activities.
4. A limited selection of suitable low maintenance standard designs for memorial benches will be available at a range of costs, the choice of bench being dependent on the location. Annex 1 shows the range of bench and plaque options with suggested prices.
5. 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 Community Greenspace for approval. On approval the bench would then be supplied to Community Greenspace for installation in an agreed location. There is no guarantee that damage could be repaired and any costly repairs would be at the discretion of the owner.
6. Purchase of a memorial bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it will be removed. The cost will include the bench, plaque, inscription, installation and surfacing and, as the benches should require minimal maintenance, there will be no additional cost for this. 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.

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.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Publicity on the Council website will provide information and an enquiry form for those interested in purchasing memorial benches. The enquiry form is shown in Annex 2.
10. 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. Annex 3 shows the standard form of agreement.

Memorial bench purchase procedure

This procedure describes the process which will be followed from the first contact with the customer enquiry to the last contact to inform them that their memorial bench is in place.

1. Customer enquiries coming to the Customer Service Centre or to Community Greenspace are directed to the website to view the policy and download a memorial bench enquiry form as shown in Annex 3. If required, an enquiry form is posted to the customer.
2. Customer completes the enquiry form specifying a requested location, bench and plaque style, and sends this by e-mail or post to Community Greenspace. It is allocated to the appropriate officer for action, please do not send in payment prior to agreement or confirmation with responsible officer.
3. The allocated officer considers the requested location for the bench and decides, by applying the operating principles, whether a memorial bench is appropriate in this location. If the requested location is not suitable, the nearest alternative location will be offered.
4. The allocated officer ensures that the requested bench and plaque style is suitable for the location and that the plaque text is clear and suitable for use on a public bench. Four bench styles only will be used in situations as shown in Annex 1 and will be at the discretion of the Council for each specific site.
5. The allocated officer contacts the customer to confirm or discuss the details by phone. If an alternative location is required, a letter with a map to illustrate the alternative site being offered will be sent.
6. On agreement, a standard agreement letter is sent to the customer to confirm arrangements and request payment.
7. When payment is received, the allocated officer orders the purchase and installation of the memorial bench, for completion within 2 months of receipt of payment.
8. The allocated officer ensures the work has been carried out as specified, photographs the bench and ensures all information is recorded in the asset management system for future reference.
9. The allocated officer ensures a letter and photograph are sent by post or e-mail to the customer to notify them that the bench is in place.

Annex 1 Council styles and current prices for installation of new memorial benches with plaques. Plaques can be fitted to some existing benches for £210.00 inc VAT. This includes the plaque, fitting and a contribution towards the ongoing maintenance of the bench.

NB All prices include VAT are valid for 2024 but may be subject to annual change



Brass plaque



Aluminium plaque



New Glen Almond bench (with plaque)
£982.00. For use in parks



New Glen Clova bench (with plaque)
£1,224.00. For use in formal areas of parks and on streets



Greenspace bench (with plaque)
£753.00. For use in countryside and some park areas



Phoenix recycled plastic bench
£896.00. For use in countryside and some park areas

Council standards for memorial benches and plaques

Memorial plaques

Plaques are either bronze or stainless steel and measure 19 x 5cms.

Text is Arial font style and can be up to 50 characters. All text must be approved by the Council.

The Glen Almond or equivalent bench is for use in parks.

In some formal areas the Glen Clova or equivalent bench is used.

These are low maintenance treated hardwood benches. They are 6 feet long.

These benches are of excellent quality but as with all timber products placed out of doors there may be some weathering by way of minor cracks which does not affect the durability of the product. There may also be wood grain and colouring variations which does not affect the quality of the product.

Greenspace bench is for use in the countryside and in some parks

This bench is produced by the Council and is treated wood on black recycled plastic legs. The recycled legs counteract rot below ground so increase the life expectancy of the bench.

The Pheonix bench or equivalent is for use in some parks.

These are very low maintenance recycled plastic benches which come in a range of colours.

Maintenance standard

Benches will be kept fit for purpose with minor faults being repaired and build-up of algae or grime being removed within available resources.

Annex 2 Memorial Bench Purchase Enquiry Form for use on the Website

Memorial Bench Purchase Enquiry Form

Please complete and return by post: Community Greenspace, Perth & Kinross Council, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth PH1 5GD or alternatively you can email your completed form to GMContracts@pkc.gov.uk. Pre-printed forms are available from the same address on request.

Section A your contact details (Please supply your contact details below)

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone E-mail:

Section B choice of memorial bench and preferred location

(Please tick the bench you want to purchase below)

Glenalmond Glenclova Greenspace Phoenix

(Please specify your preferred location for the bench below i.e. name of park and nearest settlement)

I would like my bench to be placed within.....
.....

Section C memorial plaque

All plaques will be provided by the Council and attached to your bench
(Please supply the name to be on your plaque)

Plaque to be in the name of

Please choose either a bronze or steel plaque by ticking your preference below.

Brass Aluminium (Stainless-steel effect)

Please print your memorial message for the plaque below (for Council approval). A maximum of 50 letters is normally advised, however if your message is longer, we will check with the engraver to ensure that the complete message will fit suitably onto the plaque.

.....
.....
.....

Annex 3 Form of Agreement for a Memorial Bench to be placed in a Public Area for the natural life expectancy of the bench

Memorial Agreement between Perth & Kinross Council and

(name & address).....
.....

This letter sets out the agreement regarding the purchase of (delete either 1 or 2)

1. A new (type of bench) bench to be
2. A memorial plaque to be placed on the existingbench

situated at (eg the South Inch Pond area) at the location shown by the attached map.

Your bench will carry a brass/aluminium memorial plaque in the name of

.....

Your memorial message will read

.....
.....
.....

(name) will pay the sum of £.....
(delete either 1 or 2)

1. being the full cost of the installation on site of the bench with plaque.
2. being the cost of the installation of the plaque and a contribution to the cost of the bench.

The Council will place the bench with plaque in the agreed location within two months of receiving the cheque and/or plaque. The Council will be responsible for the bench for the period of its natural life (approximately 15 years). Once the bench has reached the end of its natural life, the bench and plaque may be removed. A request to purchase a new replacement bench can be made at the appropriate time.

The Council cannot guarantee against theft or vandalism and may not be able to replace either the bench or plaque in this event.

I understand and agree to all the conditions above and agree to make full payment for £..... either by telephone payment or cheque, the method of which will be agreed first with the responsible officer.

Signed.....

Date..... Contact telephone number.....