

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9TH 2025

Item 11 - To receive and approve a Memorial Bench Policy

BACKGROUND

The Council owns and maintains a number of benches across the parish. Some of these are Memorial benches and some others have a memorial plaque affixed to them.

CURRENT POSITION

Currently, unlike many other parishes, the Council has no Memorial Bench Policy in place.

Attached is a draft of a proposed policy.

REQUIRED ACTION

Councillors are asked to consider and – if acceptable- approve the policy.

David Rigby

Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council

September 2nd 2025



DRAFT - COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL POLICY - MEMORIAL BENCHES

Introduction

Copythorne Parish Council supports the needs and principles of allowing memorial benches and is mindful that these facilities are enjoyed by a wide range of people. Therefore, the Council will ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual benefit of all. It is the intention that the policy only covers broad common issues and is not meant to be exhaustive.

The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances, fashion and trends. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

In setting this policy it is recognised that some memorial benches (or benches with memorial plaques) that are maintained by the Council already exist in locations within the parish.

This policy will be made available to the general public and all applicants for memorial benches will be issued with a copy.

Objectives of the Policy

The Council is seeking to ensure it is adopting a clear, measurable and sympathetic approach to the management of memorial benches, which will take account of the (sometimes contrasting) needs of a variety of facility users.

The policy will also ensure that only memorial benches are erected which are instigated by the next of kin or executor and that benches have an appearance, style and size and will not cause offence to others and be sympathetic with the location.

The policy will establish responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement.

The Council through the policy will endeavour to always offer the highest standard of service in undertaking its management and regulatory responsibility.

Conditions

- All applications for memorial benches should be completed on the official application form attached, and be signed by the applicant.
- Benches will be of the type and colour specified by the Council to be in keeping with the intended location. Only seats approved by Copythorne Parish Council will be acceptable.
- The location in which the bench will be placed is determined by the Council, dependant on need and availability. While the council tries to locate a bench at a requested location, this cannot be guaranteed (*Note: the Council owns no land of its own to place benches on*).

- All memorial benches should be paid for by the applicant before the completion of the installation.
- A maintenance fee of £100 is due to the Council prior to installation.
- It is expected that any memorial seat will have a serviceable life of 10 years. After a period of 10 years the Council will try to contact the donors of the seat to ascertain the future of the bench: a) Removal and the return of any plaque to the donor or their family b) Renewal of the seat with a new seat and the appropriate donation c) Retain the positioning of the seat whilst it remains in a serviceable condition and the maintenance fees are paid.
- The Council will attempt to notify the applicant if the memorial bench is damaged. The applicant should ensure that the Council is in possession of current contact details.
- The Council reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged and are in the view of the Council beyond economical repair.
- The Council cannot guarantee the long-term safety or security of the bench and is not responsible for the replacement of benches resulting from damage or deterioration with age.
- In the unlikely event the seat is stolen, the Council shall not be responsible for providing a replacement.
- The Council will not grant applications for memorial benches to pets.
- The bench will be secured to the ground in a way that is appropriate to its location. This may include a concreted area, under and directly in front of the bench, to allow for ease of use by the public. Ground works and ground fixing shall be undertaken by the Council. Applicants will be responsible for the cost of all necessary materials.
- Memorial plaques fitted to benches to be a maximum size of 175mm wide x 75mm high or shall fit in the centre of the upper most lath of the back of the bench or whichever is the greater.
- The inscription on the bench must be approved by the Council.
- The Council in line with the current maintenance regime for benches will maintain the bench. The Council accepts no replacement liability for the plaque or the bench at the end of its useful life and will dispose of any such bench. Any replacements of benches or plaques will be the responsibility of the original applicant.
- No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench.

Application for a memorial bench

Date of
application

Applicant:

Full Name

Title

Address

Email

Telephone

Mobile

(Please notify us of any change of address so we can contact if we need to).

Name of person for dedication

Inscription for the plaque:

Preferred location of the bench:

Data Protection Act:

In accordance with our responsibility under the Data Protection Act, you should be aware that the personal information you are giving will be held and may be passed to other services of the Council, so that you are provided with the best possible support.

We will not pass your personal information to external individuals or organisations unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

Declaration:
I have read and understood all of the terms and conditions regarding memorial benches and accept them in their entirety.

Name..... Signed.....

Date.....

For Office Use only

Application (including correct fee) Received	
Location Approved	
Memorial bench ordered	
Memorial bench installed	
Expiry of memorial	