



Witney Town Council

Memorial Bench Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Witney Town Council understands the wishes of anyone wishing to install a memorial bench. These benches also form part of Witney Town Council's Street furniture and benefit all the residents of Witney.
- 1.2. The policy does not cover the application for memorial benches in Tower Hill and Windrush Cemetery.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to address the below three principles.
 - 2.1.1. To be respectful of those seeking to install a memorial bench.
 - 2.1.2. To ensure benches are maintained and kept functional.
 - 2.1.3. To keep benches in keeping within the areas they have been installed and benefit the wider community.

3. Review

- 3.1. The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

4. Locations

- 4.1. Only suitable seating locations that benefit the wider community will be considered.
- 4.2. Only sites with space for additional benches will be considered. This is to avoid any site becoming overpopulated with street furniture including bike racks, bins, and picnic benches.
- 4.3. No one area can become overly populated with memorial benches to ensure that area does not become a memorial area. This is to avoid compromising the areas enjoyment for recreation purposes.

5. Bench Styles

- 5.1. Witney Town Council will only install Eastgate benches for memorial applications.
 - 5.1.1. The only exception to this is if an Eastgate Bench is not seen as in keeping within the area. In this instance, a suitable style bench will be identified by a council officer for installation.
- 5.2. All Eastgate Benches are manufactured with timber slats treated with clear or dark varnish.

- 5.2.1. The colour of the varnish selected will be based on the area of installation.
- 5.2.2. Recycled plastic slats are available for purchase but will only be supplied at an additional cost to the applicant. They will also need to be in keeping with the area of installation and other street furniture.
- 5.2.3. The council may adapt its standing on the purchase of recycled products, and this could include all-new benches to be installed with recycled plastic slats. In the case of this, the cost of recycled plastic slats will be included on all invoices and the choice of wooden slats will not be offered.
- 5.3. The cast iron ends of an Eastgate bench can be supplied in different colours and applicants are asked on the application form to identify if they want a specific colour that is not the standard Jet Black. Witney Town council will advise applicants if the colour is suitable.
- 5.4. The colour must be in keeping with the area, closely situated street furniture, play equipment and buildings.

6. Bespoke designs

- 6.1. In exceptional cases, it will be decided by the council if a bespoke design bench will be installed.
- 6.2. A case would have to be made by an applicant that an officer will take to the council for approval.
- 6.3. All other areas of this policy would still be applicable. If a location is not identified and agreed upon by an officer in line with this policy, then any application for a bespoke design will be rejected.
- 6.4. If it is agreed that a bespoke design bench is installed, then the council will not include this bench in its street furniture stock, and it will only receive basic maintenance typically limited to cleaning.
- 6.5. For all maintenance issues, the original applicant will be contacted to cover the cost of maintenance.
- 6.6. If a bespoke bench has significant health and safety risks and the applicant is unwilling to cover the cost, it will then be removed.

7. Installation

- 7.1. Benches will be installed on a concrete pad or grassed, in areas of low wear. Typically, benches will be installed by the same process as all other benches in one area.

8. Maintenance

- 8.1. Once a bench has been installed it will be included in Witney Town Council Street furniture stock and be maintained by the council.
- 8.2. Periodic maintenance will fall in line with all other benches and extra maintenance will not be supplied for memorial benches.
- 8.3. Benches are periodically refurbished which includes repairing/replacing broken slats, weather treating and re-painting the cast iron ends.
- 8.4. While a memorial bench is being refurbished, no bench will be installed in its place.
- 8.5. If a bench end has been painted in anything other than jet black, then there is no guarantee that the same colour will be re-applied. Witney town council will endeavour to colour match the original colour as best as possible.
- 8.6. Plaques will be cleaned and polished when a bench is being refurbished.
- 8.7. If the bench has graffiti or excessive bird guano over it will be sanded or jet washed down in its current location.

9. Memorial Plaque

- 9.1. Plaques can be no larger than 20cm x 4cm, this fits onto one timber slat.
- 9.2. All plaques are installed on the second from the top slat in the centre.
- 9.3. All text has to be contained within one plaque
- 9.4. Memorial plaques can be supplied in different materials, listed below. The material can be selected on the application form.
 - 9.4.1. Bronze
 - 9.4.2. Aluminium
 - 9.4.3. Stainless Steel
- 9.5. There may be the case when an applicant who purchases a bench wishes to install an additional plaque or replace the installed plaque with a new one.
 - 9.5.1. In the case of a replacement plaque, an officer would have to agree on any new wording, and it will be ordered and installed. The applicant will be invoiced accordingly including all resources required.
 - 9.5.1.1. Only the original applicant or, in the case of the applicant passing away, a first-degree relative can make such a request.
 - 9.5.1.2. The old plaque can be returned or disposed of.
 - 9.5.2. Additional plaques are not permitted to avoid a memorial bench becoming too cluttered and too personal, affecting the enjoyment of the area by other users.

10. Removal and Future Ownership

- 10.1. If the case arises that a memorial bench has to be removed it will be stored complete with plaque until a new location can be identified for its reinstallation.
 - 10.1.1. This includes the relocation based on a high level of complaints related to one bench. This could be that a bench location has brought anti-social behaviour to the area. Council officers will include this in the thought process of any bench location, but it cannot be completely avoided.
- 10.2. All efforts will be made to work with the original applicant to find a suitable new location.
- 10.3. Applicants must understand that officers will identify a new location in line with this policy so it may be the case that only one new location can be offered of which an applicant can accept or reject.
- 10.4. If rejected the bench will be installed in the new location without a memorial plaque. If a plaque is lost, stolen or damaged the council will not be liable for the cost of a replacement.
 - 10.4.1. The original applicant will be contacted to arrange the replacement of the plaque.
 - 10.4.2. If no contact can be made or no response received the bench will be returned into Witney Town Council standard street furniture stock after six months have passed since the initial contact.
 - 10.4.3. This could involve the future removal of the bench and a new memorial bench installed in the area.

11. Procedure for Application and Installation

- 11.1. Anyone wishing to make an application can source an application form online or at the Witney Town Council offices.
- 11.2. The application form must then be submitted via email to Communities@witney-tc.gov.uk or via post to Witney Town Council, 51b Market Square, Witney OX28 6AG.

- 11.3. The applicant will be advised if their application has been accepted or rejected. If rejected, this will normally be due to the location and/or the number of memorial items at the desired site.
 - 11.4. If accepted we will agree with the applicant the final position of the memorial bench, colour, and memorial plaque detail.
 - 11.5. The applicant is then invoiced for payment which includes the bench, plaque, work hours and materials required to install.
 - 11.6. Only once Witney Town Council have received payment in full will the bench and plaque be ordered and the concrete base will be prepared if needed.
 - 11.7. The applicant will be advised of the proposed install date. Please note delivery of benches from our supplier can take up to 10 weeks.
 - 11.8. The location of memorial benches along with details will be stored on Witney Town Council Mapping Software.
12. Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process, and to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The Town Council's Privacy Statement can be found here: www.witney-tc.gov.uk/privacy-policy/

Adopted by: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee

Date: 09/06/2025

Minute Number: F327

Next Review Date: June 2027