



Falmouth Town Council

Memorial Safety Policy

March 2009



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Background

1. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council has an overriding responsibility to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the safety of the cemetery that it is responsible for, this includes the identification and control of hazards from unstable memorials.
2. Through this policy and its actions the Council will seek to balance the risk of injury from unstable memorials with the sensitivities of carrying out works in the cemetery.

Pre Inspection Advice

1. The Council will inform all existing memorial owners on the Council's proposals to carry out safety inspections on memorials and advise them on any implications that may arise subsequently. This will be carried out by publicising the proposals 28 days in advance of any formal inspection.
2. Early consultation with the local media will be carried out to develop a positive publicity campaign to fully inform the public on the actions being undertaken by the Council.
3. Notices will be placed on site and on the Council's website, informing the public of works that are to be undertaken and advising on contact details for anyone seeking further advice.
4. The Council will consider arranging a public 'open morning' to demonstrate how the memorial safety tests will be carried out, which will be undertaken in advance of the formal inspection. A memorial owner can request to have their memorial inspected at the open morning while they are present.

Memorial Inspection

1. The council will risk assess and test memorials in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and taking account the Ministry of Justice Guidance Managing the Safety of Burial Ground Memorials.
2. The inspection programme will involve three elements – (a) the initial inspection and testing of memorials; (b) immediate and temporary stabilisation of any memorials identified as unsafe; and, (c) thereafter, the repair/making safe of memorials which have been stabilised temporarily.
3. All inspections must comply with the Council's 'Testing Policy' (see the Council's adopted Memorial Testing Policy).
4. The Council has a system in place for assessing the risk posed by unstable memorials and the appropriate choice of remedy to meet the category of risk. (See the Council's adopted Memorial Safety Policy).
5. Subsequent to this initial inspection, the Council will undertake further inspections of the memorials at least once every five years, as recommended by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and the Local Government Ombudsmen. A five year rolling programme for memorial inspections will be developed by the Council.
6. If it is deemed necessary following the initial inspection, more frequent inspections will be undertaken on individual memorials whose conditions require it or where other factors dictate shorter periods, as defined in the Council's adopted Memorial Safety Policy

Making Memorials Safe

1. The 'laying down' of memorials shall only be considered as a last resort where the course of action is necessary to prevent a genuine hazard to health and safety. If following the inspection it is deemed necessary to temporarily repair any unstable memorials, such works will be carried out as defined in the Council's adopted Memorial Safety Policy whilst appropriate arrangements are put in place for the repair / or otherwise of an identified unstable memorial. This approach is endorsed by both the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and the Local Government Ombudsman. The Council's duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees or contractors working on behalf of the Council and those visiting the burial ground, will remain the Council's highest priority, but any memorial stabilisation work to memorials will be carried out in a sympathetic and sensitive manner.
2. When action is necessary notices will be placed on or near to the memorial advising on the current condition of the stone and giving the appropriate Council contact details.
3. Following the identification of any unstable memorials and their subsequent temporary repair, the Council will inform the memorial owner by writing to the last known memorial owner, as identified from Burial Ground records, and by displaying a notice on/near each identified unstable memorial. A list of memorials which fail the test shall be displayed on the noticeboard/s in the Burial Ground and on the Council's website. All public notices shall give the Council's contact details and the period for making contact.

Action After Making Safe

1. The responsibility for maintaining a memorial in a safe condition is that of the grave owner. Individual owners contacted following the identification of unstable memorials will be offered the opportunity to rectify any identified problems. Owners will be required to ensure all repairs are carried out by an approved mason, in accordance with the National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Practice and as provided in British Standard, BS 8415. Owners will be offered ten weeks to respond.
2. If no response or a negative response is received from the owner of any memorials, the Council will take a decision as to how the memorial shall be made safe permanently. In doing so, the Council will consider repairing the memorial at the Council's cost subject to funds being available, re-fixing it in a safe manner (e.g. using a monolith system for headstones), laying it flat or removing it.

MEMORIAL TESTING POLICY

Any company carrying out memorials inspections will be required to comply with the guidance set out below and to comply with guidance issued by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. Companies will be required to provide their own risk assessments and method statements for approval prior to engaging in any work.

Generic Memorial Stability Test

- Initial visual inspection will be undertaken from a safe distance from the memorial while the names and details of the memorial and those interred are recorded.
- If the memorial passes the visual inspection, the memorial will be assessed and approached from the front or a direction that will not place the inspector in danger if the memorial moves.
- Memorials will receive an initial hand test inspection to establish general stability of the memorial. The physical hand test shall only take place following a visual inspection.
- If a memorial fails a physical test a full pressure test as recommended by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management will be carried out by using calibrated force measurement equipment to a test force of 350 Newtons (circa 35kg) on memorials over 500mm. Memorials over 1.5 metres in height should not be subjected to a full pressure test.
- The inspection will be carried out from the front and rear for standard memorials.
- At each stage of the inspection process records will be updated.

The following additional actions will be carried out as set out below:

Kerbs

Kerbs will be inspected, by hand, for stability and secure fitting.

Plinths/Lawn Memorials

Memorials shall be inspected to ensure they are in sound condition and for any trip hazards.

Memorials below 500 mm

A risk assessment should be carried out to assess whether there would be any real benefit in applying full pressure test of 350 Newtons (circa 35 kg).

Vases

Vases will be inspected by hand for secure fitting.

Inspection Records

Every memorial must be inspected and a record made of the inspection. Records should include information that will assist in locating memorials in future inspections, information on the visual, hand and mechanical tests, and an assessment of the priority and action to be taken in accordance with the 'Memorial Safety Policy' adopted by the Town Council.

MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

The memorial safety policy is based on a risk assessment approach. Following the inspection, as defined by the Council's adopted 'Memorial Testing Policy', each memorial will be assigned to one of four categories, as set out below:-

Cat.	Condition	Action
1.	Unstable and requires immediate attention and temporary stabilisation is considered inappropriate or unfeasible.	In extreme circumstances of immediate danger to the public or persons working in the Cemetery, the memorial will be laid down.
2.	Unstable and requires immediate attention.	The memorial will be temporarily stabilised. Care will be taken making sure that no damage is caused to the memorial and all actions will be recorded. A notice will be displayed on / near the memorial warning / advising of its unstable condition. ¹
3.	Stable and requires no immediate attention though will require re-inspection prior to next proposed inspection in five years time.	All actions to be recorded and a recommendation will be given on the time scale for re-inspection.
4.	Stable and requires no attention.	All actions recorded will be re-inspected in no more than five years time.

The categorisation of memorials will be established following an independent inspection of each memorial. Inspections will be carried out in line with the Council's adopted 'Memorial Testing Policy'.

¹Following temporary stabilisation, action will be carried out in line with 'Making Good of Unstable Memorials' as set out in the Memorial Safety Programme.