

MEMORIAL INSPECTION PROCEDURE FOR STAFF

Introduction

In July 2016 a child died as a result of an incident in a Cemetery involving a memorial, and the Health and Safety of memorials became a serious issue for Burial Authorities.

The British Standard BS8415, which set out safety regulations relating to memorials, was first introduced in 2005. The standard includes:

- Procedure for testing existing memorials
- How to deal with those found at risk
- How memorials and fixing components should be tested
- Use of tested and approved ground anchors
- Use of appropriately sized stainless steel dowels

The standard has evolved over time with reviews. It is worth noting that since the introduction of BS8415 in 2005 the approved fixing systems have become mandatory.

To help burial authorities to achieve the standard, the British register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) was set up to which the Parish Council is a member.

ICCM has its own policy of 2019 which provides useful information.

1. Height Categories

The height of the memorial determines the inspection regime:

- Below 625mm
- Between 625 and 1500mm
- Above 1500mm

2. Exclusions

Commonwealth War Grave memorials are not tested and any observable defects should be reported immediately to the Commission.

3. Initial Inspection

- a) Prior to any inspection taking place, as the land is consecrated and in accordance with the rites of the Church of England, a faculty will be requested from the church diocese asking permission to carry out inspections.
- b) Once permission is given by the Diocese notices will be placed, one month in advance, at the cemetery and advertised on the Council's Facebook page and in the monthly e-bulletin prior to inspection.
- c) All sections of the Fair Oak Cemetery to be inspected on a five year rolling cycle starting at the most recent and working back to (earliest). This will involve:-

- Photographs to be taken before the manual topple test and if the memorial is deemed unsafe, before any action is taken (see points (i) to (iii) below.
 - Trained staff to undertake a manual wobble test equivalent to 25kgs
 - If safe – no further action is required, and this to be recorded on test sheet.
 - Should a Memorial be identified as a Category 1 and fail the inspection, staff to take immediate action to make that memorial temporarily safe. These actions will be determined by several factors and the best solution to be administered based on the assessment of the memorial and the surrounding area. These actions may include:
 - (i) **Laying the memorial flat** – In most cases this will invariably be where a memorial can be safely laid down. A notice will then be placed on the memorial.
 - (ii) **Staked and Banded** – The memorial will be fastened tight to a wooden post which will act as a temporary support. The banding will also hold a warning notice.
 - (iii) **Cordoned Off** – In some cases it may be necessary to cordon off a particular memorial or an area containing several memorials due to their safety. Warning signs will be attached to any cordon placed around a memorial or group of memorials.
- d) All of the above are regarded as '**Temporary Fixes**' and should not be seen as a permanent solution to deal with an unsafe memorial and are intended to reduce or remove the risk of a memorial causing harm or damage to someone.
- e) If FO&HHPC staff are not able to make the memorial safe, arrangements will be made for a specialist contractor to undertake an inspection and provide a detailed report including costs and options to make safe.
- f) The initial stage will be to identify the deed owner, they should be contacted using the template Letter 1. A second letter will be sent recorded delivery on letter 2.
- g) Once a memorial has been repaired and the completed and signed Record of Memorial Repair form returned, the memorial to be re-inspected within one week.
- h) There is to be a 12-month window where the memorial should be made permanently safe. After this period, The Operations Manager, following a risk assessment, will determine the appropriate course of action which would include:-
- **Monolith Conversion** (preferred option if the stone is in a safe and sound condition) – This involves digging out a depth roughly one third of the overall height of the memorial from the last joint in order that it can be sunk into the ground and made safe. Due to fixing foundations it may be necessary for the memorial to be moved slightly forward into the grave space to avoid existing foundations. A notice will then be placed on the memorial for one month advising relatives of the action taken.

- **Laid Flat** (if the stone is unstable and in a state of disrepair) – the memorial will be placed on the grave in a safe position and would remain laid down permanently. A warning notice placed on the memorial advising that it must not be touched without prior notice to the Council.
- **Removal** (if the stone is unstable and in a state of disrepair) – in extreme cases, and as a last resort, memorials will be removed from the grave and placed into storage, if no other action is appropriate. These will be disposed of after twelve months.

i) FO&HHPC to manage (where the deed does not have an owner).

4. Timings

All memorials should be inspected at a minimum of five years. Re- Inspections will take place every 3 years.

5. Legislation

Responsibility for the overall safety (duty of care) within a burial ground lies with the burial authority, which has responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, their sites are maintained in a safe condition.

6. Stonemason Liability

Should a burial authority identify a memorial that has become unstable due to non-compliant installation within 6 years of installation the memorial mason must rectify the matter free of charge.