

Memorial Bench Policy and Plaque Policy

INTRODUCTION

- Great Ayton Parish Council (GAPC) provides and maintains benches throughout the parish as part of its ongoing parish management.
- Some benches have been gifted to the Parish throughout the years as enduring memorials and some of these carry personalisation e.g. a person's initials, which have been fabricated into them.
- GAPC allows a limited number of memorial benches to be placed on Parish property providing that such benches are gifted to the Parish i.e. they become Parish property and Parish in return will both insure and maintain them.
- There are a finite number of sites suitable for benches within the parish and the number of benches currently installed in some locations is at the maximum number that is viable to maintain the visual and functional characteristic of each location e.g. the greens are public open spaces rather than gardens of remembrance and cannot accommodate additional benches without changing their characteristics.
- There is the opportunity for a limited number of new memorial benches to be made and gifted to the Parish as existing wooden benches come to the end of their life and are replaced with longer lasting alternatives that are appropriate to their location e.g. metal benches materially similar to those already in place on the green and elsewhere within the conservation area, and recycled plastic benches elsewhere outside the conservation area.
- GAPC supports the needs and principles of allowing memorial plaques to be placed onto benches and is mindful that these facilities are enjoyed by a wide range of people. However, due to the limited number of benches in the Parish, the ultimate lifespan of the benches themselves and the potential for demand to be greater than viable, GAPC has to have policies that address sensitive issues such as the removal of plaques after a defined period of time.
- Therefore, GAPC will ensure that the issue is managed and regulated for the mutual benefit of all as below.
- It is the intention that this 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.

STYLES OF BENCHES

- Historic metal and wood benches are being maintained on the Greens and within the conservation area but are being phased out elsewhere due to their high cost of maintenance and/or replacement.
- Any new or replacement benches will be specified and purchased through GAPC in close consultation with giftees when being gifted.
- The range of new benches for use outside the conservation area has been chosen for durability without the need for regular painting or treatment.

PLAQUES

- Plaques will be made of brass or stainless steel.
- A maximum of three plaques may be fitted to a single bench
- Memorial plaques fitted to benches to be a maximum size of 12.5cm wide x 5cm high or fit on the upper most lath of the back of the bench. *{This needs to be checked for the different types of benches we now have}*
- The plaque shall be installed with non-return security screws.

NO ADDITIONAL MEMENTOS

- No additional mementoes e.g. vases, statues, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation etc., shall be permitted on or around the bench.

MAINTENANCE AND LIFESPAN

- 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.
- Where historic (or historic style) benches are being maintained, these will be painted and maintained as deemed necessary by GAPC.
- The typical serviceable lifespan of a bench is around 20 years before it require major refurbishment or replacement (source [Seats & Benches · David Ogilvie Engineering · Street, Park & Memorial Furniture](#))

REMOVAL OF PLAQUES TO CEMETERY MEMORIAL

- GAPC has the right to remove plaques from any benches that are at the end of their serviceable life or that are undergoing major refurbishment.
- In any event GAPC has the right to remove plaques after a period of 20 years
- When plaques are removed, they will be placed in the GAPC cemetery memorial garden

WAITING LIST

- In the event that all capacity for plaque locations becomes exhausted a waiting list will be created and serviced in due order

CHARGES

- Benches that are gifted to the Parish as lasting memorials will be charged at the cost of the bench plus the cost of installation.
- In the cases of plaques being fitted to an existing bench, as the bench has already been provided either through public funds or as a gift more than 20 year ago, a charge which includes a contribution towards its maintenance and replacement, will be made at a rate to be decided annually by GAPC
 - i. For 2023 the rate will be £500
- The cost of the plaque and its installation will be charged at cost

