

MEMORIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

Safety Testing

It is Daventry Town Councils policy to safety test all memorials that we have responsibility for. This includes Holy Cross closed churchyard and Welton Road Cemetery. We have a duty of care to ensure that we maintain a safe environment for staff and public alike within these cemeteries.

All memorials will be tested every five years as a minimum requirement.

Memorials over 500mm but under 2.5 metres must be tested by suitably trained individuals, however memorials over 2.5 meters should be tested by a structural engineer. These tests will comprise of all elements of the following testing method:

The Memorials under 500mm will be tested by elements 1,2,4 of the following testing method :

Testing Method

- 1) **Photographed.**
- 2) **Visually checked** - To establish the condition of the memorial and if there are any obvious signs of disrepair
- 3) **Hand Tested** -This method is when pressure is applied by hand and gradually increased until such time it becomes apparent that the memorial is solid or there is movement. The memorials will be graded 1 – 3 following the test. (unnecessary when memorial is below 500mm)
- 4) **Records will need to be kept of the following:**
 - Date tested
 - Grave number
 - Visual Assessment findings (damaged requiring repair, minor damage, undamaged)
 - Type of memorial
 - Height of memorial
 - Name of deceased from Headstone
 - Photograph reference number
 - For Headstones over 500mm Outcome of test (grade between 1 – 3 – see below)
 - For headstones below 500mm Outcome of test (grade between 2 – 3 – see below)
 - Action taken
 - Notice applied
 - Retest date

Following the completed test, the memorials over 500mm will be graded 1 – 3, the memorials under 500mm will be graded as 2 -3 (1 is not applicable due to the level of risk associated with the likelihood of smaller memorials falling) Action should be taken as appropriate depending on the grading given:

- **1** if the memorial is immediately dangerous (only for memorials over 500mm H)
- **2** if the memorial is stable, but has movement
- **3** if the memorial is stable with no / very small amount of movement.

Actions will be taken depending on the grading of the memorial.

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Grade 1 – Immediate action must be taken.

Where a memorial has been graded as a 1 the testing team will carry out immediate temporary remedial works using the most appropriate method for the memorial as deemed by the contractor and burial authority.

These may include staking and banding the memorial - unless the memorial is unauthorised (please see section on unauthorised memorials below) or laying the memorial flat. In doing this we should ensure the memorial is laid flat on the plot in question, and with the main inscription face up.

A notice will be applied to all Grade 1 memorials and we will make every effort to contact the family responsible for the memorial to arrange for permanent repairs to take place. A 12 month deadline will be given to the grave holder to arrange for repairs to be carried out. After the period of 12 months has passed **and if** the memorial has been staked and banded, the staking and banding will be removed and the memorial will be laid flat. (if the memorial was already laid flat, the letter should not refer to a deadline)

Contact will be attempted as follows by the Burial Officer:

Letter 1 Will go out to the grave holder within a short period of the testing taking place advising of the memorials failure and the actions taken. Advice will be given in the letter on what actions the family should take and the date by which they need to do this.

Letter 2 If nothing has been heard further from the family and no action has been taken in six months, the family will be written to again advising again of the above.

Letter 3 If nothing further has been heard of from the family past the deadline date as originally given, the family will be written to for a final time advising that action will now be taken by the council to make the memorial permanently safe by sinking the memorial into the ground.

Grade 2. Advise and retest

Where the memorial is unlikely to fall (has sufficient pinning internally) but does have some movement, a single letter should be sent advising the grave holder that the memorial is safe, but does have some movement.

If the memorial is less than 6 years old the family should be protected under the memorial masons guarantee and the families will be advised in the letter of this.

A Retest must be arranged for 12 months' time to check the condition of the memorial has not deteriorated.

Grade 3. No issues

Where a memorial has been graded as a 3, no further actions will be taken and the memorial will be scheduled for a re-test in 5 years.

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Unauthorized new memorials / kerbing post June 2020.

Following testing, once it has been established that a memorial / kerbing / edging is not authorised and has been erected after June 2020, then the items will not be allowed to remain and the following actions will be taken regardless of the safety testing outcome:

A notice should be applied to the memorial by the burials clerk, advising the family that the memorial is unauthorised and does not meet the criteria as defined by Welton Rd Cemetery. A letter will also be sent to the grave holder.

The contact will be made as follows:

Letter 1 will go out to the grave holder within a short period of the testing taking place advising of the memorials failure and advising they have a period of twelve months to have the memorial removed and put in an application to have a new memorial erected if they wish to do so.

Letter 2 If nothing has been heard further from the family and no action has been taken in six months, the family will be written to again advising again of the above.

Letter 3 If nothing further has been heard of from the family past the deadline date as originally given, the family will be written to for a final time advising that the memorial will be removed.

War Graves

War graves should be inspected as described above. However if the grave is graded as a 1 or 2 then the Commonwealth War Graves Commission should be immediately informed and they will arrange to have works completed straight away.