BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
Tel: 01892 723586 www.brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk

Policy: Memorials, Plaques, Benches and Trees **Date of adoption by PC:** 2 November 2026

Introduction/Scope of policy

Brenchley & Matfield Parish Council ("BMPC") recognises the wish for memorial plaques, benches and trees in public spaces. The Parish Council will consider requests on an individual basis.

There are many public open spaces owned or managed by BMPC that are enjoyed by a wide range of residents and visitors. The application process for memorial plaques, benches and trees is managed and regulated for the benefit of all.

This policy has been produced with the following guiding principles:

• To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to install a memorial

• To ensure the safe recreational use and biodiversity of open spaces is not compromised and to ensure the quality of their appearance is maintained

The policy only covers broad common issues and is not therefore exhaustive. The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances.

Applications for any kind of memorial must be made using the official request form and be signed by the applicant.

The Parish Council will keep a digital "Log of Memorials on PC Land" to record all memorials and to be a reference for members of the public. The record shall contain all pertinent information such as the donor's name and contact details, person's name that is being memorialised, the location of the memorial and its description.

General Principles and Basis of Council Position

Mementos and memorial tributes – With the permission of the Parish Council, mementos or memorial tributes can be placed on a temporary basis on land owned by the Parish Council at the time of installation but must be removed within seven days. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any such mementos or tributes. The poppies, wreaths and crosses at the War Memorials are exempt from this condition.

As a general rule, tributes should not be plastic or glass and written signs should be small.

Memorial Plaques –Memorial plaques, designated to trees or benches, may be considered on any land owned by the Parish Council.

1. The proposed location, size, material and inscription of any memorial plaque must be approved in advance by the Parish Council
2. The total cost for purchase and installation of the plaque must be covered by the applicant
3. BMPC will not accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of a memorial plaque whatever the circumstances.

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Trees - The Parish Council is prepared to consider the installation and adoption of memorial trees where the proposed site is on land owned by the Parish Council.

1. The species of tree will be a native variety and will be at the discretion of the Parish Council, chosen to enhance the planting scheme of the specific area
2. Trees will be planted during the autumn and winter planting season by the Council, but the applicant and family members may be present and assist if practicable and desired
3. The total cost for purchase and installation of the tree must be covered by the applicant prior to the ordering of the tree.
4. The Council require donor(s) to maintain trees including mulching, loosening of ties and regular watering until established, without endangering the safety of the public and themselves.
5. The tree will be owned solely by the Parish Council.
6. BMPC will not accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of a memorial tree whatever the circumstances, including damage caused by a third party.
7. The Parish Council will monitor the health of the tree after planting, and reserves the right to fell, or remove any diseased or damaged limbs as necessary for the health of the tree and/or public safety. Inspections by the Parish Council and its specialist advisers will determine if the tree is safe and the Parish Council or its officers shall be the final arbiters of any decision in this regard.

Benches – The Parish Council is able to consider the installation of memorial benches only where the proposed site is on land owned by the Parish Council.

1. The Parish Council will limit the number of benches allowed in any particular area, at its discretion.
2. Following agreement of the location of a bench the Council will arrange and pay for the installation of a base.
3. The Council has a preferred supplier for benches of a particular size and design and this will apply particularly to benches in conservation areas. Alternatives requested by the applicant, or deemed more appropriate by the Council, may be considered but a pictorial design must be submitted for approval in this case prior to purchase.
4. The applicant will be required to pay the ex-VAT cost of the bench, including delivery and installation, to the Council prior to the order being placed, which will be submitted by the Clerk or RFO.
5. The bench will become the property of the Parish Council.
6. The Parish Council, should they need to, will endeavour to notify the applicant in the event that the memorial bench is damaged. The applicant should ensure that the Parish Council is in possession of current contact details.
7. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged and are, in the view of the Council, beyond economical repair.
8. The Parish Council accepts no liability for damage to any memorial bench from vandals, third parties or whilst the Parish Council carries out ground works in proximity to the bench.
9. Memorial plaques fitted to benches must be approved in advance as per the conditions above. The Council reserves the right to permit additional plaques to existing memorial benches should this prove appropriate, such as in the Jack Verrall Community Garden.
10. To ensure uniformity, the Council does not treat or varnish benches. These are left to age and change colour naturally.

Burial or Scattering of Ashes

The Parish Council will consider the scattering of ashes on a case-by-case basis.

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APPLICATION FORM

Name of applicant ……..

Address……

Contact numbers …….

Email ……

Location of Memorial (e.g. Matfield Green) including specific area preferred:

Type of Memorial requested (bench/tree):

Plaque text (max 200 characters over 4 lines)

Signature of applicant (denotes acceptance of the terms of this policy)

……

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): Your signature is required to authorize Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council to hold contact details for use by the Parish Council only in its log of memorials. This authorisation can be withdrawn at any time and you are also entitled to enquire about the data held by the Council in your name.