

Frequently asked Questions about Memorials

Why are memorial inspections necessary?

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all burial authorities to ensure that memorials are safe and so reduce the potential for injury to those working in and visiting Groby Cemetery. Although reports of serious incidents involving unsafe memorials are relatively rare nationwide, there have been fatalities and the risk of incident grows with the passing of time. The Health and Safety Executive expects local authorities to have a suitable memorial inspection programme.

When will the inspections be carried out?

All memorials within the cemetery will be periodically inspected as part of a continuous safety programme. This will normally be every five years. Memorials that do not present an immediate danger but may have some defects or deterioration may be inspected more frequently.

How will the inspection be carried out?

The process will consist of:

- Visual inspection
- Manual stability test (Hand test)

All testing is carried out by trained staff using specialist equipment. Every effort will be made to contact the owners of memorials that have failed a stability test and offer advice on what to do next.

Who is responsible for repairs if the memorial fails its five-year health and safety check?

If the memorial is less than 10 years old it is possible that the memorial mason who constructed and erected the memorial will do the repairs under warranty providing it has not been vandalised or subjected to storm damage. If the memorial is out of warranty it is the responsibility of the grant owner to arrange suitable repairs or have it removed to a place of safety (not within the cemetery grounds unless it is laid down directly and safely on the relevant plot)

Why do the regulations seem so harsh?

The burial authority has a duty of care to ensure that the cemetery is properly managed and is a safe environment for anyone to visit regardless of the purpose of his or her visit.

Will memorials be laid flat?

Memorials that fail a stability test but do not represent an immediate danger will be fitted with a temporary support while the grave owner is contacted. This is a temporary measure and in the event that the owner cannot be traced it may become necessary to lay some memorials flat.

Will memorials be removed from graves?

Memorials will not be removed from graves unless the grave owner gives permission or does not take any action to repair or remove the memorial within a specified time.

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Can I make an application to erect a memorial direct to the Parish Council.

Yes you can but your chosen memorial mason normally does this for you. If the memorial mason fills out the application on your behalf you must be the rightful owner to the grant for the 'Right to Burial', or acting as the executor or administrator to the deceased if they are the rightful grant owner. The application form will not be processed without the proper signature.

Why do I have to make an application to erect a memorial when I own the plot?

Only the burial authority owns the plot, you may only own the grant that gives you the Right to Burial in that plot for the time specified on the grant itself.

Can I erect a memorial on the grave space myself?

No, memorials are extremely heavy and dangerous structures and therefore have to be mounted using industry approved fixings, this extends to kerb-sets (the only fixings allowed are type approved by the National Association of Monumental Masons).

What type of memorial can be erected in the cemetery?

There are different types of permitted memorials for each section of the cemetery, these generally are:

- Kerb set 120mm in height x 300mm wide x 330 mm depth – (cremated remains)
- Headstone (not exceeding 3ft (914mm) in width and height from the turf and 12 inches (304mm) deep)
- Commemorative Plaque – Garden of Remembrance

What can I place on or around my headstone?

Flower vases are to be securely mounted on the base of the headstone, please consider this when arranging for a new headstone or when having an additional inscription incorporated. Other personal items should not be likely to offend other visitors and must be placed on the base of the memorial stone/tablet.

Why do my fresh flowers keep getting vandalised?

If the flowers are not kept on the base of the monument or in a loose vase nearby it is possible that it has got in the way of grounds maintenance equipment although the operators are instructed to be as careful as

possible. Most fresh flowers are damaged by wildlife (i.e. Squirrels and rabbits) that find them irresistible to eat. The burial authority has found that it is impossible to keep wildlife from accessing the cemetery.

When will my memorial have a health and safety check?

All memorials will eventually be tested in compliance with current regulations on a five-year cycle. Newly erected memorials will be tested before a grant is issued to the owner, this should be done no sooner than one month following installation. There in after the memorial will be tested every five years.



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