

## **CROMER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY FOR MEMORIAL BENCHES, TREES AND SHRUBS**

This policy will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2012 and relates to all new applications accepted since that date. An appendix to the policy sets out how the Town Council will manage the existing benches and memorial trees not sited under this policy.

Cromer Town Council acknowledges that the dedication of a tree or bench to a loved one is a tradition which many wish to continue. However, the Town Council must take into account that there is a finite number of spaces for such memorials.

The Town Council has agreed that the Holt Road Cemetery has space to accommodate both trees, shrubs and benches and that this will be the site for the existence of this policy.

Memorial trees/shrubs will be purchased and planted by the Town Council and this will only take place during the autumn/winter months to facilitate growth. The tree will be of a native species and the type of tree will be at the discretion of the Town Council in keeping with the local environment. The Town Council will try to ensure that families can be present, if they so wish, for a planting ceremony. Trees may have a small plaque no larger than 10" x 5" embedded in the ground flush with the surrounding area.

The charge will be the cost of the tree and plaque plus a cost to cover the planting, maintenance and care for the first five years. (This will be calculated at the time of the request).

Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate specific requests regarding the placing of trees, this must be in line with the overall plan for the cemetery.

All requests will require the agreement of the next of kin, personal representative and/or the executors.

Memorial benches will be allowed at the cemetery while there continues to be space for them and, as above, the Town Council will try to accommodate the preferences of families as to the location but this will be as part of the cemetery plan.

Benches and the plaque will be bought by the Town Council and the plaque, maximum size of 10" x 3" engraved as requested. The cost of a bench will be as appropriate at the time of purchase plus the cost of plaque and engraving. This will cover the maintenance of the bench for seven years. After seven years the maintenance contract with the Town Council can be renewed for a further seven years at a cost to be determined at that time but to be at cost value. If the contract is not renewed, the Town Council will remove the bench at the time it is no longer safe or has become unsightly. Before doing so the Town Council will attempt to contact the individual who ordered the bench via, post, telephone and email. Alternatively the Town Council reserves the right to continue to maintain the bench and offer the opportunity to other bereaved families to add a plaque to the bench and take over the cost of maintenance. It is the responsibility of the owner of the bench to inform the Town Council of any change of address.

As indicated above, an additional option for the future may be for there to be more than one plaque on a bench if the owner of the original bench does not choose to have the bench maintained or for that plaque to be removed at the discretion of the Town Council if the bench is no longer maintained.

The Town Council does not accept any responsibility for either trees or benches damaged through vandalism and does not allow any 'momentos' to be placed by benches or trees. These will be removed immediately without notification.

## **Appendix A**

Whilst the above policy deals with new applications for benches, there is a need to specify how the Town Council will manage the large number of benches in situ which are coming to the end of their 10 year maintenance contract. In this case, the Town Council will attempt to contact the original purchaser of the bench by telephone, email and post to offer a further seven year maintenance period in line with the new policy. However should it not be possible to make contact, the bench will either be removed or the option given to someone else to 'adopt' the bench and replace the plaque. This will be entirely at the discretion of the Town Council.

All individuals who currently have a dedicated bench will be notified of the new policy following its adoption.