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**CHISELDON PARISH COUNCIL MEMORIAL TREE & BENCH POLICY**

1. **SCOPE OF POLICY**
2. When loved ones die, their friends and family often want to commemorate them with a lasting memory.
3. This policy sets out how Chiseldon Parish Council (CPC) will approve memorial trees and benches, who is responsible for their upkeep and what is expected from the donor and the council.
4. CPC will endeavour to be respectful, sympathetic and fair towards those donating, to balance the needs of our facilities users and maintain a high standard of our public spaces.
5. **WHAT & WHO IS COVERED**
6. The policy covers any tree, bench or other lasting memorial placed on CPC owned property.
7. This land includes the Butts Road Cemetery, The Sir Henry Calley Memorial Garden, Millennium Wood and allotment area and Chiseldon Recreation Ground. Separate arrangements should be made for items placed at the Washpool with the landowner, in consultation with CPC as the leaseholder.
8. **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**
9. The placement of trees or benches on CPC land is a private arrangement between those arranging the memorial and CPC. As such, CPC can only approve memorials on CPC owned land. CPC may support applications for benches to be placed on the public highway but permission for this must be granted by the local Highways Authority – Swindon Borough Council.
10. CPC may decline approval of a memorial if it would be subject to any planning permission, restrictive covenants, or other restrictions.
11. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 CPC must consider the effect of its actions on crime and disorder. If a location is deemed unsuitable as it would attract anti-social behaviour then a request may be refused.
12. When approval if given for a memorial, it will be bought by friends or family and donated to the council. This item then becomes the property of CPC and the donor does not retain any right to determine its future management. CPC will nevertheless endeavour to ensure it is properly maintained and cared for.
13. **DETERMINING REQUESTS**
14. Enquires should be made by email to [clerk@chiseldon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@chiseldon-pc.gov.uk)
15. The request will be reviewed by the Environment, General Purpose and Amenities (EGPA)Committee.
16. CPC will endeavour to accommodate reasonable requests on council owned property. Permission may not be granted due to unsuitable location due to vandalism or anti-social behaviour, over population of trees or benches, or any other material factors.
17. Only items suited to the surroundings and benches of a robust design will be considered. CPC will advise on suitable options but will endeavour to meet any specific requests.
18. The exact location of the memorial will be approved by the EGPA committee and it is the responsibility of the donor to provide a detailed site location along with a site map/sketch.
19. When an existing bench is in poor condition, the council and donor may agree to install a memorial bench in its place, the costs of which shall be met by the donor as detailed below.
20. Memorial items will only be considered from donors who can demonstrate a close tie with the person being commemorated. CPC reserves the right to refuse a request if they have any grounds to believe it would be contrary to the wishes of the commemorated persons next of kin.
21. **COSTS**
22. The cost of any item will include any plaque/inscription, delivery, planting costs, and installation costs. (e.g bench ground fixings, tree guards and supports, cement ground work) All costs are inclusive of any VAT charges as the council is unable to reclaim the VAT on these donations.
23. A one off surcharge of 20% will be added to these costs for the ongoing maintenance of these items.
24. Indicative costs are below, but are subject to change during periodic review.

New bench: £600-£1000 + plaque + paving/concrete 20% surcharge

Tree: £50-£100 + plaque + tree guard/stake + 20% surcharge.

1. **INSTALLING/PLANTING**
2. Once the specification has been approved and the appropriate donation made, CPC will arrange to order the bench/tree and arranging installation/planting.
3. Trees will be planted in-line with optimum planting times during the seasons.
4. Trees will be planted by CPC staff/contractors although donors are welcome to be present and conduct a small ceremony if they wish.
5. No scattering of any ashes is permitted at the site.
6. **PLAQUES**
7. Plaques are to be placed on a bench, or next to a tree with CPC’s permission. No plaque is to be affixed directly to a tree. The size, wording and style of plaque is to be approved by CPC.
8. A plaque may be fixed to an existing bench where there is no other visible sign that the bench is a memorial bench. The fee for this will be the cost of the plaque, and installation plus 50% cost of the estimated cost for a like-for-like bench replacement.
9. **MAINTENANCE.**
10. CPC will only source high quality/durable benches and trees and will endeavour to maintain and care for them. However, it cannot guarantee their condition.
11. Donors should be aware that benches and young trees in public areas may be subject to vandalism and CPC will not be held responsible for any costs to replace them.
12. CPC will endeavour to maintain and care for benches and trees for as long as possible. However it reserves the right to re-site or remove any tree or bench that it deems to be unsafe, unrepairable or for other reasons.
13. No placing of flowers or other objects at the memorial will be permitted, except with permission from CPC.
14. The donor is not permitted to undertake any maintenance on the tree or bench without the councils permission.

END

**Approved by EGPA committee. Date: 17.1.2022**

**Review date: Jan 2024**