



WHITLINGHAM COUNTRY PARK

POLICY ON MEMORIAL TREES AND BENCHES

Date: January 2016

Revision date: January 2019

Authorised by the Trustees at their meeting on 20th January 2016

Introduction

The Trustees of Whitlingham Country Park recognise that it is the wish of many people to remember loved ones with a memorial. A memorial tree or bench is a popular choice. The Park is a rural landscape which is enjoyed by a wide range of park users and local residents. Certain restrictions therefore apply regarding location and the variety of tree or style of bench.

This policy has the following guiding principles:

- To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to install a memorial
- To balance the contrasting needs of a variety of Park users
- To ensure that the Park's primary recreational purpose is not compromised
- To ensure that high quality of appearances is maintained
- To establish who is responsible for maintenance, repair and replacement of memorials

By having an established policy, the Trust will ensure that memorials:

- Have permission from the next of kin
- Have a common appearance, style and size
- Will not cause offence to others
- Are in keeping with the overall appearance of the Park's landscape

The Trust will attempt to accommodate the wishes of applicants at all times but it reserves the right to limit the number of memorials in the Park. The Trust will only permit memorials to individuals. Applications to commemorate any other historical event or deceased pets will not be considered.

Memorial trees

Native trees are preferred to support the Park's conservation objectives. Examples of native trees include oak, ash, beech, birch, white or weeping willow, hawthorn and black poplar (see list, annexed). The tree will need to fit into the planting scheme of the park and the planting location will be discussed and agreed with the applicant. It is the Trust's aim to ensure that a memorial tree will prosper in the long-term.

Trees will be obtained from a UK-based supplier. The applicant will be expected to pay for the total cost of the tree including delivery to the Park. Prices vary depending on the type and size. It may cost between £25 and £100 for a suitably-sized tree. In addition to the cost of the tree there is a one off payment of £180 to cover the Trust's staff costs for arranging and planting the tree, including a site visit with the applicant to agree a suitable location. The applicant must make this payment in advance of the planting.

The Trust will only plant trees during the period November to December or in spring in accordance with best practice. This will give the tree the best chance of survival. Applicants will be advised of the planting date so that they can be present when the tree is planted. After planting, the tree will be managed in line with the Park's current maintenance programme. The Trust will not be held responsible for any damage, vandalism or theft, or be held liable for the replacement of old or diseased trees. Any replacement of memorial trees by applicants remains at the discretion of the Trust. The original applicants will have to follow the same application process as set out in the policy.

Memorial plaques will not be permitted on or near trees. No additional mementoes (statues, photographs, wreaths, vases etc.) will be permitted on or around the tree. Placement of a floral tribute or single flower at the base of the tree will be allowed on one significant day per year.

Memorial benches

Memorial benches will only be permitted when a space becomes available in the park to avoid overcrowding. Benches must be of the type and colour specified by the Trust. The bench material must be hardwood from a sustainable source. The bench should have a back and arm-rests. The applicant's choice of location will be discussed and agreed. Certain areas may already have sufficient benches. If this is the case, alternative locations will be offered to the applicant. If the Trust deems that the Park overall has sufficient benches, it reserves the right to refuse future applications.

The applicant will be expected to pay for the total cost of the bench including delivery to the Park. If the bench is to be fitted onto a grass surface it will usually be fitted to a concrete base or anchor pegs. The Trust will be responsible for all installation work and the applicant will be expected to pay for labour and materials including any work planning and site visits. Estimated costs for a bench are

approximately £1000. An exact quote will be provided once the applicant's requirements have been considered and agreed.

Memorial plaques fitted to benches must be on the uppermost lath of the back of the bench. The material must be stainless steel, approximate dimensions 320 x 40mm for rectangular plaques and 90mm diameter for circular plaques. The applicant may choose a simple form of words to appear on the plaque, such as "In the Memory Of ..." with dates. The engraved plaque will be fitted to the bench by the Trust. No additional mementoes (such as statues, photographs, flowers, wreaths, vases etc.) will be permitted on or around the bench. Placement of a floral tribute or single flower at the base of the tree will be allowed on one significant day per year.

The Trust will be responsible for any reasonable repairs and maintenance within its current maintenance programme. Any maintenance by a third party after initial installation (e.g. treatment with wood-stain or preservative) will be in strict agreement with the Trust. The Trust accepts no replacement liability for the plaque or the bench if stolen or damaged. Replacements of benches or plaques will be the responsibility of the original applicant and the applicant will have to follow the same application procedure as set out in this policy. Should a bench become unsafe or unsightly, the Trust will notify the applicants of its intention to remove the bench. Personalised plaques will be returned to applicants should the bench be removed.

Ashes

Whilst the Trust respects the wishes of families to scatter ashes, the recreational purpose of the park and park users must be considered. Ashes must be scattered at an agreed time and location to avoid conflict up to other park users. This must be agreed in advance.

Other types of memorial

Applications for other types of memorial will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Review

This policy replaces any previous versions published by the Trust. The content of this policy will be reviewed by Trustees every 5 years.

What to do

If you are interested in planting a memorial tree in the Park or would like a memorial bench please email info@whitlingham.org.uk The applicant should have the permission from the next of kin.

ANNEX

Approved list of trees

Beech

English oak

Common lime

Hazel

Field maple

Birch

Holly

Hazel

Hornbeam