



TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

# Bench and Memorials Policy

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**Review date:** April 2027

Todmorden Town Council has circa 100 benches throughout Todmorden and recognises that a provision is needed for Memorial Benches. Todmorden Town Council also declared a Climate Emergency in November 2020 and wishes to support where possible these aims with all their policies and procedures

## 1. Policy Objectives

This policy has been produced with the following guiding principles:

- To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to install a memorial. The policy recognises that the provision of a seat as a memorial provides a tribute to a loved one, and is a benefit to the community in which they lived
- To be measurable, clear and easily understood by residents
- To balance the contrasting needs of a variety of users
- To ensure that the high-quality appearance of Todmorden is maintained
- To establish responsibility for the maintenance, repair and replacement of memorials.

The policy will ensure that:

- The council benches are maintained to a high standard
- That all benches owned by Todmorden Town Council are safe and fit for purpose
- Memorial Benches have permission from the next of kin to be installed.
- Memorial Benches have a common appearance, style and size and are positioned in an appropriate place
- Memorial Benches will not cause offence to others.
- Plaques are of a uniform nature, are low maintenance and installed by the Town Council

It is the intention that the policy only covers broad common issues and is not meant to be exhaustive. The content of this policy will be considered every five years, to meet changing circumstances. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval. Specific requests outside this policy may be

considered by the Resources Committee

This policy will be made available to the general public and all applicants for memorial benches and plaques will be issued with a copy.

## **2. Todmorden Town Council Benches**

Todmorden Town Council has circa 100 benches throughout Todmorden, and these benches are maintained to the best of the Council's abilities using approved contractors. If any of the benches becomes past the point of economical repair the Council will endeavor to replace the bench and recycle what parts can be saved from the bench which is being removed.

The Town Council does not guarantee to replace any Bench installed under this policy or Plaque in the event of theft and the provision of such Bench or Plaque by the applicant is entirely at their own risk.

Todmorden Town Council will endeavour to refurbish 20 benches per year within the agreed budget provided. This figure may need to be reviewed subject to budgetary constraints.

Todmorden town council will replace benches according to need these will be based on two factors the first of which is safety and the second is the condition of the bench. If a bench is deemed unsafe it will be removed as soon as possible and a replacement considered.

Where a bench is deemed to need refurbishing or replacing the council will endeavor to refurbish before replacing.

Todmorden Town Council declared a climate emergency in November 2020, as such replacement benches will be made out of recycled plastic and follow the British standard requirement of having arms to ensure support for all those using the council benches.

Any new locations for benches will be considered on a 'demand led' basis.

## **3. Memorials**

A memorial can be an important and valued way of remembering someone special.

This policy establishes opportunities for relatives and friends to arrange for a memorial bench and/or plaque to be placed in unique locations around Todmorden either on Todmorden Town Council land or other locations it manages.

In considering these arrangements the Council aims to offer the best possible service within the resources available to it. As such, it is important that any opportunities, as well as limitations, are clearly understood and expectations managed accordingly.

Memorials are only available for humans and animal memorials are not able to be accommodated.

## **4. General Information**

Memorial benches and Plaques can be arranged through Todmorden Town Council subject to the applicants meeting the full cost of this service. Costs of this service will vary depending on the type of

memorial being requested and will need to provide for the purchase of the memorial by the Council, its installation, and an agreed contribution towards its ongoing maintenance.

The Council has approved benches and plaques that may be used for this purpose. Details of the approved memorial benches are included in Appendix A.

The Town Council aims to maintain these benches and plaques for as long as they remain serviceable and fit for purpose. This can be affected by the type of memorial selected, its chosen location, the exposure to the elements and amount of general usage it is likely to receive.

Benches are maintained in accordance with the Council's annual maintenance programme. This means they are normally inspected four times per year. The benches and the base on which they stand are cleaned and may also be treated to remove any build-up of algae or grime. Wooden benches will be repainted/varnished as part of a planned maintenance programme, which may at the Town Councils discretion including replacing wooden slat with recyclable plastic slates, and minor repairs undertaken. Benches may be removed from site whilst repairs are undertaken or if they fall below an acceptable serviceable standard.

The Council does not undertake to replace benches or plaques that are damaged, stolen or that are, in the view of the Council, no longer serviceable.

When a bench or plaque is no longer serviceable, it will be removed and disposed of. Where a bench has to be removed but the plaque remains in good condition, the Council will attempt to pass them to the applicant (or a family member). Alternatively, and subject to the payment of an additional fee, the plaque may be installed on a replacement bench should the applicant so choose.

All benches and plaques supplied under this scheme remain the property of Todmorden Town Council.

## **5. Location of Memorials**

Approval can only be considered for memorials in existing Todmorden Town Council bench locations or on Todmorden Town Council land such as Patmos Gardens, Vale Land or Lobb Mill Picnic Site. If a application for a Plaque is not on a Todmorden Town Council Bench the Officers will endeavour to direct the application to the owner of the bench such as Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

The applicant should indicate where they would prefer the memorial to be placed so that the suitability of the location and the surrounding area can be assessed by the Council. Should the preferred location be for any reason unsuitable or unavailable, the Council will endeavour to suggest reasonable alternative options for the applicant to consider.

The Council reserves the right to:

- Refuse an application if:
  - a) the preferred location is deemed unsuitable, or
  - b) in the view of the Council there is insufficient capacity in the preferred location to accommodate an additional bench or plaque, and an alternative site cannot be agreed.
- Relocate a memorial bench and or plaque should it prove necessary or prudent to do so for operational reasons (e.g., for maintenance or to provide access, or due to anti-social behaviour or to avoid damage etc.). In such cases the Council will endeavour to relocate the memorial to its original location at the earliest opportunity.

## 6. Memorial Benches

The Council can provide memorial benches with or without memorial plaques depending on the applicants' preferences.

## 7. Memorial Plaques

In general, the Council recommends that memorial plaques are fitted to new benches rather than existing benches. This is because new benches are likely to have a longer serviceable life before needing to be replaced. However, where there is no space or provision for a new bench, a request for a memorial plaque to be placed on an existing bench will be considered, provided that a suitable bench is available and is in good condition.

All memorial plaques are to be fitted to the benches back rest on the upper most lath at its center point. It must not protrude above or below the edge of the lath and in any case the plaque must not exceed the maximum permitted size of 15cm wide by 7.5cm high.

The proposed inscription on the plaque can be up to a maximum of twenty words and should be in keeping with a public memorial of this nature. The copy of the proposed inscription should be included within the application for approval by the Council.

## 8. Making an application for a Memorial.

Memorial enquiries should be submitted on a Memorial Application form available from the Council Offices or downloaded from the Todmorden Town Council website.

The Council aims to respond to an application for a memorial within 28 working days. When a memorial request has been approved, a letter of agreement will be sent by the Council to the applicant to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood. This agreement should be signed by the applicant and returned to the Council with the fees due.

Once the signed agreement and payment are received, it may take up to 12 weeks for the installation to be completed, but this may also depend on landowners permission being obtained.

## 9. Summary of Charges

In undertaking the provision of this service, the Town Council has established the minimum level of charges that will apply depending on the service being requested. The level of charge will be subject to an annual review.

### A. Memorial Plaques

#### **Solid Brass**

From £35

Plaques priced individually. Brass plaques quickly tarnish when exposed to the elements and the Council has no provision for polishing plaques or recolouring the lettering.

#### **Stainless Steel**

From £50

Plaques priced individually.

## B. Installation

**Installing a standard memorial plaque on an existing Council bench**

£250

*This amount is to cover preinstallation maintenance, ongoing maintenance and installation of the plaque.*

**Installation of a standard memorial plaque on a new Ilkley Sloper bench (or equivalent) at a new bench location**

*From*  
£1000

