



Bridgwater Town Council Memorial Safety Policy

Review cycle:

Every two years, or at a committee meeting immediately following any incident involving a memorial or accident.

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Resolution Number
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past thirty years, 8 people have been killed by falling memorials.¹ Bridgwater Town Council is committed to ensuring the safety of anyone visiting or working in its cemeteries and will make certain that all reasonable practicable measures are taken to provide this.

The Council's memorial safety inspection procedure is based on the guidance developed by the Ministry of Justice and the Institute of Crematorium and Cemetery Management (ICCM).

The guidance signified good practice on the expected standard of risk management of memorials in all types of burial grounds. The guidance sets out a risk-based approach to help authorities develop a proportionate approach to managing the risk associated with memorials.

Responsibility and Liability

Primary responsibility for Health and Safety in St John's Cemetery, Bristol Road, Bridgwater and Quantock Road Cemetery, Bridgwater lies with Bridgwater Town Council.

The Council has responsibility for the overall safety within a burial ground under the Health and safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, their sites are maintained in a safe condition.

In order to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council has a systematic programme of memorial inspections ensuring that any memorials that pose a risk to Health and Safety are made safe.

The strategic aim of this policy is to ensure that all open burial grounds which are under the responsibility of the Council, are safe places for staff, visitors and all other who may visit or work in the burial grounds.

Whilst the Council has overall responsibility for the safety in the burial grounds, including risks from unstable memorials, it does not own the memorials. The owner of the memorial will be the grave owner.

The owners of memorials are responsible for maintaining the memorial in a good condition. In many cases there is no identifiable owner.

Memorial Stonemasons must now ensure memorials are erected safely and in accordance with standards available within the industry – British Standard 8415, the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) code of working practice and the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons Blue Book.

The Council has powers under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) to make safe any headstones and kerbs. The Council will use the procedures specified in Schedule 3 of LACO.

There is no listed memorial within either Cemetery.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years: or at a committee meeting immediately following any incident involving a memorial or accident that occurs.

¹ Ministry of Justice – Managing the safety of Burial Ground Memorials. 2009

PRE-INSPECTION PREPARATION

METHOD STATEMENT

Bridgwater Town Council, or its chosen contractor, will prepare a Method Statement prior to the commencement of any safety testing.

INSPECTION OPERATIVES

The Council will ensure that only authorised and competent personnel shall carry out the inspections. All such personnel will be required to read this Memorial Safety Policy and indicate their understanding and adherence to it by signing the Policy agreement (Appendix 2).

All memorial safety inspections will be carried out by a minimum of two operatives who will work as a team unless risk assessment determines that it is safe for one operative to work alone. Operatives will recognise when specialist assistance is required, for example where the memorial is complex or large (over 1.5 metres in height).

At least one member of the inspection team will be a competent person (competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely).

Personal protective equipment shall be worn by all members of the inspection team. This will include a high visibility vest, hard hat, and foot protection.

A risk assessment for the safety of those carrying out the inspections will be completed and kept on file, along with a signed agreement that the council's chosen procedure will be followed.

If the council employs a suitably qualified contractor to carry out the inspection, a copy of the company's public liability insurance will be lodged with the council.

RECORDS

All memorial inspections will be records on the inspection form (Appendix 1). Records of the inspections will be held indefinitely. It is acceptable for these records to be held electronically on the condition that the information is regularly backed up.

INSPECTION PROCESS

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION

The inspection process will be comprised of the following:

- Risk Assessment
- Communication and Notice of intent
- Visual checks
- Physical Test
- Classifying the memorial
- Actions for classified memorials

Risk Assessment

The initial risk assessment will be carried out as per the Five Step approach to risk assessments set out by the Health and Safety Executive in the UK. This will identify where there is a greater risk to those visiting or working in the cemetery and allow for prioritisation of the memorials requiring immediate examination.

Items considered in this risk assessment include:

- Location to footpaths
- Frequency of use
- Duration of use
- Types of activity adjacent

Communication and notice of intent

The Council is aware that the testing of memorials is a sensitive issue and will endeavour to ensure that adequate and regular communication is maintained with the general public.

Prior to any memorials being inspected the council will:

- Ensure notices are displayed with the cemetery grounds and within notice boards. These will give details of the forthcoming inspections, advise the public of the potential dangers of memorials, provide contact details for the public should have any queries or concerns and where necessary, fulfil any other obligations under existing health and safety legislation.
- Ensure public notices are posted on the Town Council's website. These will give details of the forthcoming inspections and provide contact details for the public should they have any queries or concerns. Notices shall be posted on the Council's noticeboards, website. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (example Appendix 7) will be posted on the website.

VISUAL CHECKS

Memorials will undergo an initial visual check to identify if there are obvious defects or signs of instability.

Operatives will look for:

- Damaged or eroding bond
- Movements of parts of a memorial from its original position
- Kerb stones breaking apart
- Undermined or unstable foundations
- Leaning memorials – particularly if there is evidence of recent movement
- Evidence of structural damage or disturbance (e.g. cracks)
- The presence of vegetation which may cause cracks to widen

If a defect or unstable memorial is observed, such memorials will then be subject to a physical test. Commonwealth War Graves will only undergo a visual check; any observable defects will be reported immediately to the War Graves Commission.

PHYSICAL TEST

If a memorial does not pass a visual check, it will be subject to a physical check. Prior to any physical test a safety assessment will take place as follows:

- An overall visual inspection of all memorials for the purpose of assessing signs of instability and as part of the overall risk assessment process. A structural engineer/Memorial Mason will inspect memorials in excess of 1500mm in height.
- A physical hand test of memorials between 625mm and 1500 mm in height to assess any lateral movement following the visual inspection.
- Memorials below 625mm in height should be assessed to establish whether there is any benefit in applying any force to the memorial.

The physical testing will only take place when there is no risk to other persons and will be done using a hand test. Force testing equipment will only be used in case of dispute.

The procedure for carrying out a hand test is as follows:

- The inspection operative will stand to one side of the memorial and apply a firm but steady pressure in different directions to determine to what degree, if any, the headstone is loose.
- A gentle pressure/force should be gradually increased until a force of approximately 25kg is applied. This force should be exerted in one direction, away from the body and should be repeated from the back of the memorial. Other physical hand tests from the sides of the memorial may also be required on certain designs. The force should be applied at the apex of the memorial or as high up the memorial as can comfortably be reached.

CLASSIFYING THE MEMORIAL

At the completion of the testing process the operative will identify memorials in one of three categories:

Category 1 (green) – stable and not dangerous in any way; to be reassessed in 5-7years

Category 2 (Amber) – requires immediate attention to make safe by stabilising with a stake and banding

Category 3 (red) – requires immediate attention to make safe by laying down the memorial within the grave space.

ACTONS FOR CLASSIFIED MEMORIALS

Category 1 Memorials

No action required. To be assessed in five to seven years.

Category 2 Memorials

The following action will be taken immediately:

- A safety notice (Appendix 4) will be placed on the memorial to warn of the unstable condition of the memorial;
- The memorial will be braced with a stake and banded;
- If possible the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial or family will be identified and a Category 2 letter (Appendix 5) sent within seven working days. The letter will request the memorial repair is carried out within twelve weeks;
- Any repair carried out to the memorial will at the cost to the EROB holder and must be carried out by a NAMM or BRAMM registered memorial mason in accordance BS8415. The holder of the EROB will inform the council when the work will be taking place and the finished work will be inspected by the council's memorial inspector; and
- Where the holder of the EROB does not contact the council within twelve-week period, and no repair is arranged for the memorial, a temporary support will remain in place until the advised re-inspection date, up to a maximum of eighteen months. At the end of the eighteen-month period, the memorial will be treated as a Category 3 memorial.

Category 3 Memorials

The following action will be taken immediately:

- A Safety Notice (Appendix 4) will be placed on the memorial to warn of the immediate hazard.
- The memorial will be carefully laid flat within the grave space with the inscription visible. Larger memorials may be dismantled to remove the danger;
- Photographs of the memorial will be taken at the time of inspection and following the memorial being laid down. All photographs will be retained with the inspection records;
- The holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial will be identified and a category 3 letter (Appendix 6) sent within seven working days. The letter will request the memorial repair is carried out within twelve weeks;

- Any repair carried out to the memorial will be at the cost to the EROB holder and must be carried out by a NAMM or BRAMM registered memorial mason in accordance with BS8415. The holder of the EROB will inform the council when the work will be taking place and the finished work will be inspected by the council's memorial inspector; and
- Where the holder of the EROB does not contact the council within the twelve-week period, and no repair is arranged for the memorial, the memorial will remain laid flat or sunk into the ground up to the last line of the inscription until such time as the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial contacts the council. If necessary, a transfer of the Exclusive Right will need to take place to enable the repair to go ahead.

It may be necessary to cordon off part of the cemetery to employees and public. In this case signage and information will be posted to give cautionary warning of the hazards will be present.

POST-INSEPCION PROCESS

Repair work

- All work to repair or place a memorial must be carried out by a NAMM or BRAMM registered monumental mason and must be installed to BS8415. A guarantee of conformity will be issued to the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial by the mason, and a copy of this must be lodged with the council.
- The council will keep a list of local, qualified and registered, monumental masons and this will be available from the Council Offices upon request. This list will be reviewed and update annually.

Inspection Schedule – Quantock Road
Cemetery
Inspection due on or before 7 April 2021

QR/A/1	NAME		
	-	1 Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MEMORIAL	1 Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Last Inspected	3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspection Due	4 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Date Inspected	5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspected by	Photo	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	NAME		
QR/A/19	-	1 Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MEMORIAL	1 Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Last Inspected	3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspection Due	4 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Date Inspected	5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspected by	Photo	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	NAME		
QR/A/21	-	1 Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MEMORIAL	1 Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Last Inspected	3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspection Due	4 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Date Inspected	5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspected by	Photo	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	NAME		
QR/A/22	-	1 Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MEMORIAL	1 Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Last Inspected	3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspection Due	4 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Date Inspected	5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspected by	Photo	<input type="checkbox"/>
A	NAME		
QR/A/23	-	1 Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MEMORIAL	1 Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Last Inspected	3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspection Due	4 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Date Inspected	5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inspected by	Photo	<input type="checkbox"/>

POLICY AGREEMENT – MEMORIAL SAFETY INSPECTION PROCEDURE

I,, working on behalf of Bridgwater Town Council, acknowledge that I have understood the Bridgwater Town Council Memorial Safety Policy, and I agree to follow the policy and procedure contained within it regarding the safety inspection and testing of memorials in the Quantock Road/Bristol Road Cemetery.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....



BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall, High Street, Bridgwater TA6 3AS
01278 427692
cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk

Appendix 3

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please note that Bridgwater Town Council's ongoing safety programme involves the inspection of all memorials at:

Quantock Road/Bristol Road Cemetery

Section _____

Week commencing _____

Any memorial that has not met the health and safety requirements will be provided with a notice and temporary support. Additionally, a letter will be posted to the registered holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave, giving details of the action required by them to make the memorial safe.

For your own safety, and that of all visitors to the cemetery, **DO NOT** attempt to test memorials yourself. Any work to repair memorials must be undertaken by a qualified monumental mason.

ALL MEMORIALS REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER TO KEEP IN GOOD SAFE ORDER.

We appreciate your assistance and co-operation in ensuring this cemetery is a safe place for everyone to visit.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a memorial, or this notice, please contact **Bridgwater Town Council** on **(01278) 427692** or cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk



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Appendix 4

IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE

This memorial has been found to be unsafe during a safety inspection and test. It requires urgent attention to prevent injury to cemetery visitors.

If you are the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial for this grave, please contact Bridgwater Town Council as a matter of urgency for further information, and to advise of your intentions to make safe.

For your own safety, and that of all visitors to the cemetery, **DO NOT** attempt to test memorials yourself.

Any work to repair memorials must be undertaken by a qualified, registered, monumental mason.

ALL MEMORIALS REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE OWNER TO KEEP IN GOOD SAFE ORDER.

We appreciate your assistance and co-operation in ensuring this cemetery is a safe place for everyone to visit.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this memorial notice, please contact **Bridgwater Town Council** on **(01278) 427692** or **cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk**



BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall, High Street, Bridgwater TA6 3AS
01278 427692
cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk

Date

Address

Dear

Memorial Safety Programme in Quantock Road/St John's Cemetery Bristol Road

Grave Space:

The Council has recently undertaken a series of memorial inspections at Quantock Road/St John's Cemetery, Bristol Road as part of its on-going Memorial Safety Programme. The programme is designed to ensure the safety of everyone who visits, or works, in the cemetery and it is not the intention of the council to cause any unnecessary distress or upset.

Whilst the council is responsible for ensuring general safety within the cemetery, the owner of a memorial is responsible for ensuring it is maintained and in good condition.

During the recent inspection it was noted that the memorial on grave space insert **grave space number**, for which you hold the Exclusive Right of Burial, is unstable and in need of immediate remedial work. A temporary support and notice have been placed on your memorial in order to protect it and ensure the safety of anyone visiting the area.

Please could I ask you to arrange for a NAMM or BRAMM-registered monumental mason to carry out the repair within **twelve** weeks of receipt of this letter? A list of local, registered masons is available at the Council Offices. May I also ask you to contact the Council Offices on 01278 427692 or cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk to advise us of your action.

Please note: all repairs must be carried out by a registered monumental mason to British Standard BS8415 and a copy of the guarantee of conformity lodged with the council on completion of the work.

We appreciate for your help in this matter. If you have any questions about the Memorial Safety Programme, or this letter, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Town Clerk.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Young

Cemeteries Administrator

(normal working week Mon – Fri 9.00am to 4.00pm)



Date;

Address

Dear

Memorial Safety Programme in Quantock Road/St John's Cemetery Bristol Road Grave Space

The Council has recently undertaken a series of memorial inspections at Quantock Road/St John's Cemetery, Bristol Road as part of its on-going Memorial Safety Programme. The programme is designed to ensure the safety of everyone who visits, or works, in the cemetery and it is not the intention of the council to cause any unnecessary distress or upset.

Whilst the council is responsible for ensuring general safety within the cemetery, the owner of a memorial is responsible for ensuring it is maintained and in good condition.

During the recent inspection it was noted that the memorial on grave space insert **grave space number**, for which you hold the Exclusive Right of Burial, is extremely unstable and in need of immediate remedial work. Due to the immediate danger posed, a notice has been placed on your memorial and it has been laid down in order to protect it and ensure the safety of anyone visiting the area.

Please could I ask you to arrange for a NAMM or BRAMM-registered monumental mason to carry out the repair within **twelve** weeks of receipt of this letter? A list of local, registered masons is available at the Council Offices. May I also ask you to contact the Council Offices on 01278 427692 or cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk to advise us of your action.

Please note: all repairs must be carried out by a registered monumental mason to British Standard BS8415 and a copy of the guarantee of conformity lodged with the council on completion of the work.

We appreciate for your help in this matter. If you have any questions about the Memorial Safety Programme, or this letter, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Town Clerk.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Young

Cemeteries Administrator

(normal working week Mon – Fri 9.00am to 4.00pm)



MEMORIAL SAFETY – Frequently Asked Questions

Why Are We Carrying Out Memorial/Headstone Safety Checks?

Safety inspections and testing are required to ensure our cemeteries are a safe place for visitors and for employees working in them. Sadly, over the past few years there have been several incidents in other cemeteries around the country where unstable memorials have fallen over onto people, including children, resulting in both fatalities and serious injuries. The Health and Safety Executive, who encourage, regulate and enforce workplace safety in the UK (HSE), are interested in Memorial Safety and have issued notifications to Local Authorities insisting that they have policies and procedures in place to ensure the stability of memorials. Bridgwater Town Council has a responsibility for the safety of all visitors to the cemeteries and those working in them.

Who is responsible for my memorial's repair and condition?

The holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave is responsible for keeping the memorial repaired and in a safe condition. However, the Council has the obligation of making the cemeteries safe and will use reasonable means to ensure the safety of those working in or visiting it. A warning notice will be attached to any memorial if it is found to be in an unsafe condition and the holder of the Exclusive Right of burial contacted to arrange a permanent repair with a qualified, registered, monumental mason.

What is done during the safety test and inspection?

Each memorial will be given a visual check to assess condition. It will then be given a push test (steady, gentle pressure applied to the top of the memorial) to check its stability. The results of the test are logged and recorded. This safety check is carried out by officers of the council or its chosen contractors.

What if the memorial fails the test?

As the cemeteries are a public space, the council has a duty of care to make sure an unstable memorial is made safe immediately. Depending on the level of danger posed by unstable memorials, it will either be temporarily made safe and a warning notice will be applied to the memorial or, in the case of an immediate, high-risk hazard, the memorial will be laid flat and a warning notice applied to the memorial. In both cases, the council will then contact the holder(s) of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave to inform them.

Why have I not been contacted regarding the temporary support/band and/or cautionary notice that has been applied to my memorial?

It is the council's priority to make safe any unstable memorial found during the inspection. We want the cemeteries to be a safe place to visit and work. As soon as possible following the inspection, we will write to the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial using the address we have on our records. If we have not contacted you it may be because we do not have current address. Please contact us on 01278 427692 or cemeteries@bridgwater-tc.gov.uk to check or update your contact details.

Will my memorial undergo tests in the future?

Yes. The council will carry out these tests at periodic, regular intervals and all memorials will be inspected at least every five years.