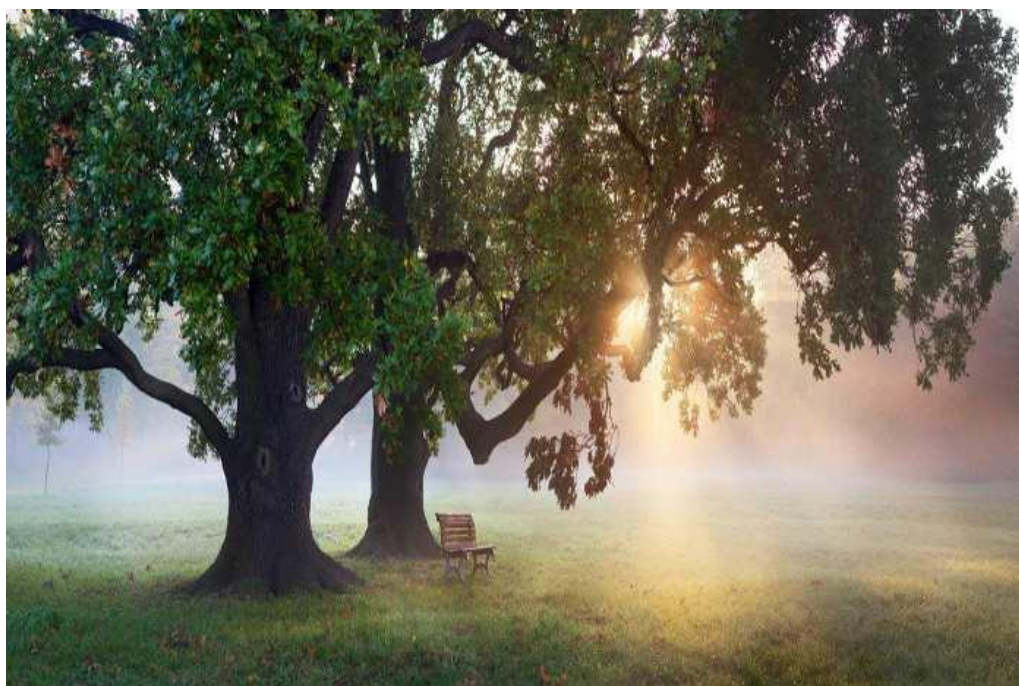




Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

## Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Memorial Benches and Trees Policy



### Version control:

Version No.	Date	Comments
01	July 2015	Dedicated Commemorative Park Seat Approval Policy and Process
02	Dec 2020	Dedicated Commemorative Park Seat Approval Policy and Process Review and Memorial Tree Planting
03	Jan 2020	Amended after the Environmental Service Committee meeting on 2 December 2020 in line with Member's feedback and ratified at the Council Meeting on 12 January 2021
04	April 2021	Addition of 'and/or plaque' to the document

Any corrections or suggestions for amendments to this plan, contact Stephen Forrest  
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## **Glossary**

FODC	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
MB	Memorial Bench

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council receives from time to time occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench or tree within a public open space.
- 1.2 These are often areas with which individuals or families have a particular connection or special relationship. There is no legislative requirement for the provision of memorial benches or trees although it is accepted that they provide a useful public amenity as well as improving and adding value to the environment.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The provision and management of all benches or trees on all public open spaces owned or managed by the Council may be the responsibility of a variety of Services and Departments.
- 2.2 This policy covers the provision of Memorial Benches and trees in public open space which includes areas such as parks, paths, trails and streets. Memorial Benches and trees within cemeteries are covered by the individual rules and regulations of each cemetery due to the particularly sensitive management arrangements covering these areas.
- 2.3 In general, all requests for Memorial Benches have been accommodated to date under the original Dedicated Commemorative Park Seat Approval Policy and Process.
- 2.4 This original policy has now been reviewed to also facilitate the planting of memorial trees to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of Memorial Benches and trees on Council owned and maintained land.
- 2.5 As resources available to the Council to provide public services reduce, much more consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained is required. The quality of Memorial Benches and the types of trees are important considerations to avoid introducing assets which are onerous to maintain or have a poor life expectancy. In addition, opportunities to provide benches and trees for public benefit in different and new ways need to be maximised.
- 2.6 The policy therefore continues to welcome contributions towards Memorial Benches and trees for appropriate locations in the public open spaces the Council owns and manages. The principles in this policy will ensure that requests for Memorial Benches and trees are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner.

### **3.0 Applications and conditions for Memorial Benches**

- 3.1 Applicants must propose a specific location for the proposed Memorial Bench in writing and include a map. This will be undertaken by completing a standard application as detailed in Appendix A: Memorial Bench and / or Plaque Application Form.
- 3.2 Sites which do not already have a sufficient number of benches will be encouraged and areas with several existing Memorial Benches will not be accepted to prevent the area taking on the ambience of a dedicated memorial garden which may compromise the enjoyment of the space for general recreational activities.
- 3.3 Suitable locations within the site where people are likely to make good use of the bench will be considered. These will be areas which lack any seating nearby or are at a likely stopping point such as a particular view or rest point on a path. In addition, the location will be chosen to minimise future maintenance and vandalism. Remote locations with poor access for maintenance and users will not be considered.
- 3.4 The Memorial Bench will be to the existing Council low maintenance standard and constructed in cast iron and sustainably sourced hard wood timber.
- 3.5 Purchase of a Memorial Bench will be for the expected life period of the bench only, after which time it will be removed. If a new replacement bench is to be installed this will require a new formal application in accordance with the current Council policy relevant at that time. The cost of the Memorial Bench will include the bench, plaque, inscription, installation and foundation slab. As the benches should require minimal maintenance, there will be no additional cost for upkeep.
- 3.6 To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the memorial bench with plaque and foundation slab in all cases.
- 3.7 Where there is an existing Council bench or where there is no space for an additional Memorial Bench, requests for placement of a memorial plaque on an existing bench will be considered where the bench is in good condition. As the bench has already been provided through public funds, a modest charge will be made in contribution towards the original purchase of the bench, plus the plaque and installation cost will be required. This will accommodate the customer's wishes and ensure a fair contribution is made towards the provision of the bench as a personal memorial. The same conditions on life expectancy and maintenance will apply to any existing benches as apply to new benches.

- 3.8 Memorial plaques will be in stainless steel and measure 19 x 8.5cms. Text will be Arial font style and can be up to 50 letters. All text must be approved by the Council. The plaque text will be clear and suitable for use on a public bench. All wording will be assessed to ensure that it is not inappropriate or offensive. Any text or statements deemed to be offensive will be referred to the Head of Service / Director and Chief Executive for consideration.
- The Council retains the right to refuse an application from any organisation or individual that it considers inappropriate e.g. could cause widespread offence, controversy or bring the reputation of the Council into disrepute.
- 3.9 The Council's standards of maintenance will be accepted as keeping the bench fit for purpose and clean. This will involve occasionally removing built up algae and grime, removal of graffiti and repairing minor faults and surface treatment within resources available. Council benches have been chosen for durability to reduce and minimise the need for regular painting or treatment.
- 3.10 The Council will not be responsible for the replacement of vandalised plaques or Memorial Benches. Any replacement Memorial Bench would be treated in the same way as a new Memorial Bench.
- 3.11 Memorial bench and / or plaque application and provision will be detailed on the Council website which will provide information and an Application form for those interested in purchasing memorial benches. (Appendix A: Memorial Bench and / or Plaque Application Form)
- 3.12 On approval, a standard written letter of agreement will be sent by the Council to the applicant to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood prior to purchase. The form will be returned to the Council with payment in advance of the Memorial bench or plaque being placed. Appendix B: Memorial Bench and / or Plaque Standard Form of Agreement.
- 3.13 The cost of supplying and installing a new Memorial Bench including plaque and foundation slab will be covered in the new bench charge. This cost will be subject to change from time to time and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Current charges will be available by contacting the Council Depots or website.

#### **4.0 Memorial bench and /or Plaque purchase procedure**

- 4.1 This procedure describes the process which will be followed from the first contact with the applicant enquiry to the final contact to inform them that their memorial bench and / or plaque is in place.
- 4.2 Applicants are directed to the website to view the policy, confirm costs and download a memorial bench and / or Plaque application form (Appendix A: Memorial Bench and / or Plaque Application Form). If required, an application form can be posted to the customer.

- 4.3 The applicant completes the application form specifying a requested location along with details and sends this by e-mail to [ephelpdesk@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:ephelpdesk@fermanaghomagh.com) or post to the Council depots:
- Killyvilly Depot: 152 Tempo Road, Killyvilly, Enniskillen BT74 5GD Telephone 0300 303 1777
  - Gortrush Depot: Unit 2, Gortrush Industrial Estate, Great Northern Road, Omagh, BT78 5EJ Telephone 0300 303 1777
- 4.4 An allocated officer considers the requested location for the bench and decides, by applying the operating principles, whether a memorial bench is appropriate in this location. If the requested location is not suitable, the nearest alternative location will be offered.
- 4.5 The allocated officer ensures that the plaque text is clear and suitable for use on a public bench. All wording shall be assessed to ensure that it is not inappropriate or offensive. Any text or statements deemed to be offensive will be referred to the Head of Service / Director and Chief Executive for consideration.
- The Council retains the right to refuse an application from any organisation or individual that it considers inappropriate e.g. could cause widespread offence, controversy or bring the reputation of the Council into disrepute.
- 4.6 The allocated officer contacts the applicant to confirm or discuss the details by phone. If an alternative location is required, a letter with a map to illustrate the alternative site being offered will be sent.
- 4.7 On approval, a standard agreement letter is sent to the applicant to confirm arrangements and request payment.
- 4.8 When payment is received, the allocated officer orders the purchase and installation of the memorial bench, for completion within 2 months of receipt of payment.
- 4.9 The allocated officer ensures the work has been carried out as specified and ensures all information is recorded in the asset management system for future maintenance and reference.
- 4.10 On confirmation of installation, the applicant is notified by the allocated officer that the Memorial Bench and /or plaque is in place.

## **5.0 Applications and conditions for Memorial Trees and plaque**

- 5.1 Applicants must propose a specific location for the proposed Memorial Tree and plaque in writing and include a map. This will be undertaken by completing a

standard application as detailed in Appendix C: Memorial Tree and Plaque Application Form.

- 5.2 Sites which do not already have a sufficient number of trees, or there is scope to plant more trees/replacement trees will be encouraged and areas that are at tree cover capacity may not be accepted, in the interest of tree health and landscaping.
- 5.3 The location of the tree will be chosen to minimise future vandalism and applicants can be advised of such sites by the relevant officer, based on evidence of previous tree vandalism.
- 5.4 The Memorial Tree species will be chosen based on the current native species range present at the site, soil and ground conditions and benefit to biodiversity. Native trees shall be selected and planted to benefit biodiversity and in keeping with the local setting.
- 5.5 To ensure the sourcing of the tree and the planting is undertaken correctly, the Council will purchase and plant the tree. The applicant or others may assist the Council in the planting of the tree on prior application and agreement. As far as possible this should take place during normal working hours, Monday to Friday. Tree planting will also only take place when trees are available and during typical tree planting months, November – March.
- 5.6 To ensure installation is undertaken safely to the required standards, the Council will provide and install the plaque in all cases.
- 5.7 Memorial plaques will be in stainless steel and measure 19 x 8.5cms. Text will be Arial font style and can be up to 50 characters. All text must be approved by the Council.  
  
The allocated officer ensures that the plaque text is clear and suitable for use on the plaque. All wording shall be assessed to ensure that it is not inappropriate or offensive. Any text or statements deemed to be offensive will be referred to the Head of Service / Director and Chief Executive for consideration.  
  
The Council retains the right to refuse an application from any organisation or individual that it considers inappropriate e.g. could cause widespread offence, controversy or bring the reputation of the Council into disrepute.
- 5.8 Memorial plaques will be mounted on wooden posts (sourced from sustainable source or FSC) and driven into the soil as close to the newly planted tree as practical.
- 5.9 The Council will not be responsible for the replacement of vandalised plaques or Memorial trees. Any replacement Memorial tree or plaque would be treated in the same way as a new Memorial tree or plaque.

Once the tree has reached the end of its natural life or the tree is damaged in a storm, the tree and plaque may be removed. A request to purchase a new replacement tree can be made at the appropriate time.

The Council cannot guarantee against disease, theft or vandalism and will not be liable not be able to replace either the tree or plaque in this event.

If a new replacement tree is to be installed this will require a new formal application in accordance with the current Council policy relevant at that time.

- 5.10 Memorial Tree and Plaque application and provision will be detailed on the Council website which will provide information and an application form for those interested in purchasing memorial trees. (Appendix C: Memorial Tree and plaque Application Form)
- 5.11 On approval, a standard written letter of agreement will be sent by the Council to the applicant to ensure all terms and conditions are clearly understood prior to purchase. The form will be returned to the Council with payment in advance of the Memorial Tree and/or plaque being placed. Appendix D: Memorial Tree and Plaque Standard Form of Agreement.
- 5.12 The cost of supplying and planting a new Memorial Tree including plaque will include the supply of the tree, administration costs, planting, provision of wooden post and plaque production. This cost may be subject to change from time to time and will be reviewed on an annual basis. The supply cost of tree species will vary and any trees selected costing greater than that allowed, the difference will be paid for by the applicant.

## **6.0 Memorial tree purchase procedure**

- 6.1 This procedure describes the process which will be followed from the first contact with the applicant enquiry to the last contact to inform them that their memorial tree is planted.
- 6.2 Applicants are directed to the website to view the policy and download a memorial tree application form (Appendix C: Memorial Tree and plaque Application Form). If required, an enquiry form can be posted to the applicant.
- 6.3 The applicant completes the application form specifying a requested location along with details and sends this by e-mail to [ephelpdesk@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:ephelpdesk@fermanaghomagh.com) or post to the Council depots:
  - Killyvilly Depot: 152 Tempo Road, Killyvilly, Enniskillen BT74 5GD Telephone 0300 303 1777;
  - Gortrush Depot: Unit 2, Gortrush Industrial Estate, Great Northern Road, Omagh, BT78 5EJ Telephone 0300 303 1777.



- 6.4 An allocated officer considers the requested location for the tree and decides, by applying the operating principles, whether a memorial tree is appropriate in this location. If the requested location is not suitable, the nearest alternative location will be offered.
- 6.5 The allocated officer ensures that the text is clear and appropriate for use on the plaque. All wording shall be assessed to ensure that it is not inappropriate or offensive. Any text or statements deemed to be offensive will be referred to the Head of Service / Director and Chief Executive for consideration.
- 6.6 If an alternative location is required, the allocated officer will contact the applicant to confirm or discuss the details by phone. A letter with a map to illustrate the alternative site being offered will be sent.
- 6.7 On approval, a standard agreement letter is sent to the applicant confirming arrangements and requesting payment.
- 6.8 When payment is received, the allocated officer orders the purchase of the tree and plans the planting of the memorial tree either with or without the applicant, for completion within 2 months of receipt of payment or within the planting season November – March.
- 6.9 The allocated officer ensures the work has been carried out as specified and ensures all information is recorded in the asset management system for future maintenance and reference.
- 6.10 On confirmation of planting and installation, the customer is notified by the allocated officer that the Memorial tree and/or plaque is in place.