

Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council

MEMORIAL SAFETY POLICY

RISK

- Falling memorials may cause injury or death.
- Memorials may become loose from their bases, or bases could become loose in the ground. Jointed memorials are “inherently unstable” and could break, or lose cohesiveness at any point, over a period of time.

1. Inspection

- Inspections are carried out every 5 years and recorded on the Memorial Inspection sheet.
- Inspections are carried out by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or the Chairman of the Environment Committee.
- First inspection - visual
Second test - by hand
- Any problems that arise between inspections are dealt with immediately.
- 4 weeks' notice is given of the inspection by placing a sign at the cemetery and advertising in local publications.

2. Training of 'Inspection Team'

- Onsite training is carried out prior to every inspection taking place.
- Training includes:-
 - Awareness of whereabouts of other team members beforehand force is applied to any memorial.
 - Force must be applied in the direction in which an unstable memorial may fall.
 - Awareness of what a falling memorial may dislodge.
 - Awareness that using too great a force may lead to personal injury, e.g. strains.
 - Awareness that a memorial may topple with a slight force, causing the inspector to lose balance.
 - How to make unstable memorials safe.

3. Warning Signs

- Angle of lean from vertical,
- Disintegrating mortar,
- Undue spalling/flaking,
- Missing parts,
- Ground settlement,
- Waterlogged ground,
- Dried out, cracking ground.

4. Requirements: Monumental Masons.

- Fixing of all memorials must comply with BS8415.
- Working Method Statement and Public Liability Insurance is required of all Monumental Masons.

5. Handling of Unstable Memorials

- Each individual situation is assessed.
- Headstones considered to be dangerous will be laid flat immediately.

- Headstones which are insecure but not dangerous will have notices tied to them. Photos will be taken to confirm this action. Steps will be taken to identify and inform the owner of the memorial so that they may be re-fixed.
- If an unstable memorial is not re-fixed by the owner, or if the owner cannot be traced, its condition will be monitored. If the condition deteriorates, the memorial will be laid flat.

6. Record Keeping

Detailed records are kept of all inspections, actions and attempts to contact the owners of unstable/potentially unsafe memorials.

7. Protective Clothing

Inspectors must wear suitable clothing, including protective footwear when approaching memorials with the intention of applying force.

8. Miscellaneous

The Council will keep up to date with initiatives in this field, including training carried out by professional bodies.

Adopted at meeting of Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council held on 6th November 2007.

Last Reviewed 5th May 2026

Signed.....

Miss J Bowd

Parish Clerk