

Therfield Parish Council

Memorial Plaques on Council Benches Policy

DRAFT

1. Purpose & Principles

1.1 The Parish Council recognizes that memorial plaques provide a valued way for residents to remember loved ones who have lived in or contributed to the village.

1.2 The Council seeks to provide a fair, transparent, and empathetic process for managing memorial requests while preserving the visual character and shared nature of the Village Green.

2. Location & Capacity

2.1 To ensure fair access and prevent overcrowding, all public benches managed by the Parish Council are treated as shared community assets.

2.2 A single bench may host a maximum of [Capacity - e.g., 3] memorial plaques.

2.3 Plaque locations on a bench will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis as spaces become available.

2.4 The Parish Council reserves the right to determine the exact positioning of each plaque on the bench to ensure a tidy and uniform appearance.

3. Specifications & Inscriptions

3.1 To maintain visual consistency across the Village Green, all plaques must meet the following standard specifications:

Dimensions: Maximum [Dimensions - e.g., 100mm x 50mm / 4" x 2"].

Material: [Material - e.g., Engraved Brass / Cast Bronze]. Fixings: Tamper-proof, flush-mounted screws (installed by or under the supervision of the Parish Council).

3.2 Inscriptions must be brief, respectful, and submitted to the Parish Clerk for approval prior to ordering. (Standard format: "In loving memory of [Name], [Years/Brief phrase]").

4. Costs & Ownership

4.1 The cost of purchasing and engraving the plaque shall be met entirely by the applicant.

4.2 A standard administration and maintenance fee of [Fee - e.g., £0 / £50] will be payable to the Parish Council upon approval of the application.

4.3 The plaque remains the property of the applicant, but the bench itself remains the sole property of the Parish Council.

5. Tenure, Maintenance & Removal

5.1 Plaques will be permitted to remain on the bench for the natural lifespan of the bench, or a maximum period of [Tenure - e.g., 10 years / 15 years], whichever is shorter.

5.2 The Parish Council will maintain the bench structure through routine maintenance. However, the Council is not responsible for repairing, polishing, or replacing vandalised, stolen, or weathered plaques.

5.3 At the end of the agreed tenure period, or if a bench reaches the end of its useful lifespan and requires replacement, the Parish Council will make reasonable efforts to contact the applicant to return the plaque or offer an option to renew under the policy in force at that time.

Date Adopted: 8th September 2026

Minute Reference: XX

Review Date and Minute:	
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To discuss:

- Maximum Plaques per Bench: Should we set the limit at 2 or 3 plaques per bench?
- Plaque Material & Size: Do you prefer polished Brass (bright gold appearance) or Bronze (darker, ages naturally outdoors)? Is 100mm x 50mm (4" x 2") acceptable for the size?
- Tenure Period: How long should a plaque remain guaranteed on the bench? (Standard practice is typically 10 years or 15 years).
- Administration Fee: Do we want to charge an admin/maintenance fee (e.g., £25–£50 to cover clerk time and fitting) or charge £0 (where the family only pays for their own plaque directly to the engraver)?
- Eligibility: Should applicants be restricted strictly to former residents of the parish, or open to anyone with a "strong connection" to the village?
- Do we need to include that only benches owned by parish council can be placed on council land?
- Do applicants have a choice which bench the plaque is placed on