

ROLLESTON ON DOVE PARISH COUNCIL MEMORIAL BENCHES AND PLAQUES POLICY

1. Introduction

Rolleston on Dove Parish Council (the Parish Council) understands and respects the wishes of its residents to remember loved ones through memorial benches and plaques. The Parish Council supports the wishes of families to commemorate their loved ones in this way but is mindful that these areas are enjoyed by a wide variety of people and they remain, first and foremost, open spaces.

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles and process for managing and administering dedicated benches. The aim is to achieve a balance between the demand for commemorative benches and/or plaques and ensuring open spaces are welcoming and managed for the benefit of all.
- 1.2 The term dedicated bench covers all benches with plaques including sponsored, memorial and commemorative benches.
- 1.3 The content of this policy is not exhaustive and is subject to change. It will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances and proposed amendments will be considered by the Parish Council.
- 1.4 Memorial benches and/or plaques in existence at the time of the policy commencement date will not be covered by the policy.
- 1.5 The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse any application which it deems unsuitable. **The decision of the Parish Council will be final.**

2. Objectives of the policy

This policy has been produced with the following guiding principles:

- To be respectful, sympathetic and easily understood by residents.
- To balance the sometimes contrasting needs of a variety of facility users.
- To maintain and enhance the high quality appearance of sites and not detract from their prime recreational purpose.
- To clearly establish the responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement.
- To achieve full cost recovery by the Parish Council for any memorial benches and/or plaques provided.

3. Locations

- 3.1 Given the existing number in management the Parish Council is not seeking to increase the number of dedicated benches during the period 01 March 2026 – 31 March 2027 inclusive and will only consider requests for benches in new locations in exceptional circumstances.

4. Application process

- 4.1 All applications for memorial benches or plaques should be completed on the official request form (available on the Parish Council's website or on request from the Parish Clerk) and be signed by the applicant. Installation is not permitted without prior Parish Council authorisation.
- 4.2 The Parish Clerk will add the application to the next Parish Council meeting for consideration.
- 4.3 If the application is accepted, the applicant will be formally notified and given details of the approved location, plaque inscription and costs.

If the bench site location has been refused but another location is offered in its place the applicant will be informed and asked if they wish to proceed with the new location. This could include the replacement or restoration of an existing bench that has fallen into disrepair and which it has not been possible to get restored by the original donor.

- 4.4 If the application is not approved the applicant will be informed of the reason for the decision.
- 4.5 The applicant will check and sign an acceptance form. Any mistakes not highlighted will not be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

5. Memorial benches

- 5.1 It will be the responsibility of the applicant and his/her successors to meet the cost of purchase and installation of the bench. The bench will be installed by the Parish Council's contractor.
- 5.2 Benches will be purchased by the Parish Council (recharged to the applicant) from its approved supplier in consultation with the applicant. All benches should be paid for by the applicant before the completion of the installation.
- 5.3 All maintenance will be undertaken by the Parish Council's contractor. A maintenance service charge of £250 will be required to be paid by the applicant before installation to ensure the upkeep of the bench that will include periodic removal of algae and the application of wood preservative by the Parish Council for 10 years.
- 5.4 No additional mementoes, e.g. vases, statues,, flowers, wreaths, balloons or other ornamentation, etc shall be permitted on or around the bench.
- 5.5 The Parish Council's insurance policy will only meet the cost of Public Liability. For this risk to be covered, the bench must be **donated to the Parish Council** and be listed on its Asset Register. Loss or damage caused by events such as fire, theft,

vandalism, accidental damage or wear and tear are not insured, and the Parish Council will accept no liability for the cost of repair or replacement.

- 5.6 The Parish Council will not accept liability for damage caused by ground works in the vicinity of the bench.
- 5.7 The Parish Council will notify the donor in the event that the memorial bench is damaged. The donor should ensure that the Parish Council is in possession of current contact details.
- 5.8 The Parish Council reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged beyond economical repair or arrangements have not been made within four weeks of notification for repairs to be done.
- 5.9 At the end of 10 years the bench can be renewed or the plaque will be removed and returned to the donor. The original donor and/or their successors will need to contact the Parish Council if they wish to purchase a replacement bench. If no contact is received, the Parish Council reserves the right to dispose of the bench.

6. Memorial plaques

6.1 Commemorative plaques can be added to existing benches with the following guidance:

- The bench concerned will be nominated by the applicant as a relative or friend of the deceased person.
- The Parish Council will allow up to four plaques per bench from the start date of this policy.
- Stainless steel plaques should be a maximum of 175mm wide x 75mm high or shall fit in the centre of the upper most lath of the back of the bench, or whichever is the greater.
- The plaque shall be secured with non-return security screws.
- The plaque will be ordered by the Parish Council (the Parish Council will recharge the applicant).
- The plaque will be fitted by the Parish Council's contractor (the Parish Council will recharge the applicant).
- The Parish Council will undertake to keep the plaque in place for 10 years. At the end of that period the original applicant or another family member can approach the Parish Council to assess the onward arrangements.

7. The end of the dedication period

7.1 After a period of 10 years the Parish Council will make reasonable endeavours to contact the donor to ascertain whether they require the removal and the return of any plaque. The bench, if still in good repair, can then be made available for rededication by another applicant.

- 7.2 Up to one year prior to the end of the 10 year period the donor is encouraged to contact the Parish Council to confirm their wishes, either to extend the dedication period (a bench maintenance fee of £50 per annum will be payable by the donor) or request that the plaque be removed.
- 7.3 The donor can opt for a rededication of a plaque with a new bench in the same location.
- 7.4 It is essential that donors ensure that the Parish Council holds up to date records of their contact details. These will be kept in accordance with data protection legislation in force at the time. Should contact details not be available, or the Parish Council is unable to make contact, after having made reasonable attempts, the Parish Council will remove the plaque. The bench will either then be replaced or if it is still in an acceptable condition rededicated with a new memorial plaque.
- 7.5 Any plaque removed from benches will be retained by the Parish Council for one year for the donor to collect.
- 8. Historic agreements**
- 8.1 For those benches or plaques that were installed prior to March 2026 and without an active agreement in place, the Parish Council reserves the right to replace benches or plaques that have been in situ for more than 10 years. The donor, should the Parish Council be in possession of current contact details, will be contacted and offered first refusal to enter into a further 10 years agreement.

Adopted by the Council: 09 March 2026

Review date: March annually

ROLLESTON ON DOVE PARISH COUNCIL

MEMORIAL BENCH AND/OR PLAQUE ENQUIRY FORM

Please complete and return to:

The Clerk, Rolleston on Dove Parish Council, 32 Hillcrest Rise, Burntwood WS7 4SH
(Email: clerk@rollestonondove-pc.gov.uk)

Your contact details

Name

Address

Telephone/Mobile

Email

Proposed location of bench

Name on Memorial plaque

What is your memorial message that will be on the plaque (to be approved by the Council)?

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Agreement for a memorial bench or plaque

In making this application, I agree to the terms and conditions of the 'Rolleston on Dove Parish Council Memorial Benches and Plaques Policy', as published on Rolleston on Dove Parish Council's website: <https://rollestonondove-pc.gov.uk>.

Once the Council has approved the application the Parish Clerk will return the signed form together with the terms of the agreement to the donor.

Donor's signature

Rolleston on Dove Parish Council signature

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Print name

Print name

Date

Date