Approved October 2026 FC2610/14

Kirton in Lindsey Town Council

Memorial Management Policy

Any memorial purchased and erected on a grave space is owned by the registered grave owner and it is that person or persons who are ultimately responsible for its upkeep and maintenance.

Historically, there have been several accidents in cemeteries and churchyards around the UK, some of which have resulted in fatalities, due to memorials being unsafe. Whilst the memorials are the responsibility of the registered grave owner, Kirton in Lindsey Town Council have a responsibility for ensuring that Grove Street Cemetery is safe for both for the public to visit and people to work in.

This Policy sets out the actions the Council will take to ensure the site remain safe. The order of works to be carried out will be determined by a site-based risk assessment with higher priority areas being undertaken first.

Memorial fixing

All memorials over 24.5 inches (625 mm) in height must be fixed to, and fully compliant, with the current British Standard (BS8415). This also extends to ANY memorial over 24.5" (625mm) that is being re-fixed following an interment or removal for any other reason.

The key requirements are that memorials must be fixed to an approved and suitable foundation and must be further secured using an approved locking or anchoring system.

Full details of the sizes permitted for memorials are contained in our Cemetery Regulations and Scale of Charges documents available on our website. Further details on the materials and methods used for fixing and re-fixing of memorials can be found at www.bramm-uk.org

Where the Town Council is aware that a memorial is unstable and presents a foreseeable risk of injury, it is required to take reasonable steps to manage that risk.

Note that any refixing or repair works to memorials must be completed by a BRAMM (or other equivalent scheme) registered memorial mason. Temporary works to make memorials safe and remove the risk of danger will be undertaken by independent qualified contractors or trained staff, as required.

Publicity and communication

The Town Council undertakes to keep all interested parties and the public informed of any inspections or works programmed for memorials in Grove Street Cemetery where it has a direct or other responsibility.

The Town Council will make clear in its relevant agreements the primary responsibility of owners of memorials and the terms and conditions it requires to be entered into when granting a right to erect a memorial.

The Town Council has no responsibilities for St Andrew's Churchyard, and only has responsibilities for Grove Street Cemetery.

Before undertaking any memorial inspection programme, the council will:

- Place prominent notices on the site, prior to commencement.
- Place notices in local newspapers.
- Provide further information on the Council website and online places.

Memorial inspections

All memorials in the cemetery will be inspected by independent qualified contractors or trained staff, as required, at least once during a rolling five year period to assess their safety. This will be done through both a visual assessment and a basic hand test to determine if there is movement in the memorial and to what extent.

Only enough pressure should be exerted to assess the point of failure and not to topple the monument if at all avoidable.

Please note, that we also undertake 'dynamic risk assessments' of memorials within proximity of upcoming burials, to ensure the safety of cemetery visitors.

The individual undertaking the assessment will make the decision on the memorial's overall safety based on a risk assessment for which they have been trained.

Memorials will be inspected in accordance with the following categories:

- Memorials up to 18 inches: full visual inspection and hand stress test.
- Memorials 18 to 36 inches: full visual inspection and hand stress test.

Once inspected each memorial will fall into one of three categories, detailed as follows:

Category 1 – Memorial is unsafe and poses a risk and will require immediate attention to make it safe and/or to protect the public.

Category 2 – Memorial is safe but there are minor concerns, and it should be reassessed in 12 months' time to ensure it has not deteriorated further.

Category 3 – Memorial is safe and should be re-inspected in five years as part of the next round of inspections or as part of any other check that may occur, for example when checking memorials around a planned burial ahead of excavation of the grave.

Those undertaking the inspections will record the details of every memorial and an assessment of its safety using the categories above. These details will be recorded into a report detailing the full results of the inspection. The details will include:

- Date of inspection
- Name of inspector
- Grave identification (section and number)
- Category of memorial (1, 2 or 3)
- Details of any actions taken and actions required.

Actions post inspection

Should a memorial be identified as a Category 1 and fail the inspector will need to take immediate action to make that memorial temporarily safe until permanent repairs can be made by the grave owner. These actions will be based on several factors, and the best solution will be administered by the memorial inspection team based on their assessment of the memorial and the surrounding area. These actions may include:

- Laying the **memorial flat** –A warning sign will be placed near the memorial.
- Temporarily staked **and banded** – The memorial will be fastened tight to a wooden post which will act as a temporary support. The banding will also hold a warning notice. The stake and band will need re-inspecting in six months to ensure neither have deteriorated and will be laid flat if repairs have not been suitably undertaken.
- **Removal** – In extreme cases it may be necessary to remove a memorial from the grave and place it into storage if none of the above options are suitable.

All the above are regarded as 'temporary fixes' and should not be seen as a permanent solution to deal with an unsafe memorial and are intended to reduce or remove the risk of a memorial causing harm or damage to someone.

Prior to taking any of the actions above the memorial will be photographed and details recorded.

Informing grave owners

Kirton in Lindsey Town Council will endeavour to contact the grave owner where any action has been taken due to a memorial failing a safe inspection.

Correspondence will only be sent providing that the grave owner is not recorded as being in the grave or if it is apparent that the registered address no longer exists. For any memorials over 50 years of age no correspondence will be sent but a notice will be left in the grave space for a period of not less than 12 months.

Grave owners responsibilities

The registered grave owner has a responsibility to ensure the memorial is made safe through being properly re-fixed to the current BS8415 standard and works must be undertaken by a qualified BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) registered memorial mason. Do it yourself repairs by families will not be permitted.

All costs associated with organising a memorial to be repaired, including the reversal of any works undertaken by inspectors, remain the responsibility of the grave owner.

Should grave owners fail to take any action within a reasonable time then Kirton in Lindsey Town Council will look to apply a semi-permanent solution to the memorial, this could include laying the memorial flat.

Kirton in Lindsey Town Council,
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Non-compliance process

The actions post inspection are carried out to both ensure safety to inform grave owners of the problem identified and the next steps. Kirton in Lindsey Town Council will always encourage communication and conversation to best remedy any issues.

If memorials are repeatedly made unsafe through owner intervention, the Town Council will adopt a documented enforcement procedure:

1. First failure – temporarily lay down or stake the memorial (where appropriate) and notify the owner where possible. Where contact details are out of date notices will be placed near the memorial.

2. Following the appropriate notice period – lay the memorial flat if no repairs have been completed.

3. If the memorial is re-erected without evidence of compliant repairs – immediately make it safe again and issue a formal warning.

4. Where repeated unauthorised re-erection occurs – consider temporary removal to secure storage until compliant repairs have been undertaken and certified.

Adopting and consistently applying this documented procedure demonstrates that the Town Council has acted reasonably, proportionately and in accordance with its duty of care to manage a known risk, whilst balancing the property rights of grave owners.

Kirton in Lindsey Town Council works for the best interests of the town and has to consider the safety of its public spaces. The Town Council has an open access approach and welcomes conversation and discussion on any matter. Please get in touch with any queries.