

OWSTON FERRY PARISH COUNCIL

Memorial Safety Inspections

As part of the Council's on going commitment to providing a safe environment for the public, safety inspections are scheduled to take place at Owston Ferry Cemetery.

The Council as a Burial Authority for the Parish Cemetery will be carrying out a Memorial Safety Inspection at the Cemetery on Epworth Road during June 2022. The following information in the form of frequently asked questions is being provided to help understand why, when and how this will take place. The Council understands that this is a sensitive issue and that early consultation and liaison with memorial "owners", visitors to the Cemetery and the general public will enable the inspection to be carried out efficiently and in a sympathetic nature.

Frequently asked questions

Who will carry out the inspection?

The inspections will be carried out on behalf of the Council by Samuel Jacob Memorials, who is fully qualified to carry out these tests and is registered with the National Association of Monumental Masons (NAMM).

What will the Council do to inform people of the inspection?

The notice is being posted on the Council's website, social media and an article will be placed in a local publication delivered to all residents. Advisory information will be displayed on site at the Cemetery on Epworth Road, on all the Parish Council's noticeboards and on other prominent public places in the village.

How will memorials be tested?

Memorials will undergo a visual inspection and a hand test. In areas of doubt they may be tested by use of calibrated testing equipment. This equipment will allow a force of 35kg to be placed on a memorial to assess movement and stability in the ground. The test will be carried out in accordance with BS8415.

What will happen if a memorial is found to be unstable?

If a memorial is found to be unsafe the Council has a health and safety obligation to temporarily make it safe in line with the **Memorial Safety Policy**. The Council will aim to carry out the inspections and any subsequent temporary stabilisation work, in the most sensitive way and does not wish to routinely lay down memorials. The Council will only lay down a memorial if it is found to be unsafe and it is inappropriate or unfeasible to temporarily stabilise it.

What should I do if my memorial is found to be unstable?

A notice will be placed on any unsafe memorial advising the expertise of a memorial mason be sought and that the memorial must be re-erected in accordance with the NAMM Code of Working Practice. A NAMM registered Memorial Mason should be contacted to re-erect the memorial. Please contact the Clerk for advice.

Will more inspections take place in the future?

Yes, this is part of an on going programme and further inspections will be taking place in the future. Following recommendations from the Local Government Ombudsman and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) inspections are now to be carried out at no longer than 5 year intervals. Following the inspection of memorials, further inspections will be carried out on a phased programme.

Useful Contacts:

National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM)	01788 542264
Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)	020 8989 4661

In Summary

Making good unstable Memorials

The laying down of memorials will only be considered as a last resort and carried out while arrangements are made for the repair and reinstatement of these memorials. This approach is identified in the Memorial Safety Policy endorsed by the ICCM and the Ombudsman. It is essential that immediate work is carried out to ensure the safety of the public and to comply with good practice, it is also important that this is carried out in a sympathetic and sensitive way. Notices will be displayed on or near memorials advising of their current condition and providing Council contact details.

Once identified, the Council will attempt to contact known relatives (memorial owners) by letter, to the last listed contact address.

Memorial owners will be offered the opportunity to rectify identified problems ensuring that repairs are carried out by an approved memorial mason to NAMM standards. Owners will have 6 months to respond.

If owners are not found the Council must then take the decision in how memorials will be made safe. The Council will adopt an "in principle" policy to make good all remaining memorials requiring re-instatement following the 6 month period. This is recognised as best practice by the Ombudsman. This will necessitate funds being made available as the estimated costs for repair work cannot be established until the inspection programme is completed.