

## Commemorative Donations Policy

The Parks and Open Spaces Business Unit frequently is approached with requests for commemorative benches, trees and memorials. The Parks and Open Spaces Business Unit is responsible for 130 Parks and Open Spaces including three Cemeteries and a Crematorium which offer a number of options for memorials.

Southwark's Parks and Open Spaces should be open and accessible for the residents of the borough to use and enjoy. This is why memorials to individuals have to be considered carefully and may be refused. This refusal is not intended to cause further distress or compound grief.

Policy for each type of commemorative item is detailed below:

### Commemorative Trees/Plants/Shrubs

#### **Tree Locations**

The Council will accept donations for trees/shrubs/plants (only when in accordance with the relevant park's management plans and tree management strategy) and a 'memorial book/board' will be placed in each park and will be publicly displayed as a record of donations. Memorial plaques will not be accepted. The book/board will document what the person donating wants, e.g. "A donation has been made in fond memory of [NAME] towards [PURPOSE]"

The Council will also accept memorial trees within Honor Oak Crematorium grounds with plaques and will only agree to proposals to replace trees that have been removed on this site or through renewal of a memorial dedication should the species have died. The Council will also honour existing agreements for memorial trees in parks.

#### **Dedication Plaques**

Memorial Rose Bush with plaque	5 year dedication	Honor Oak Crematorium
Memorial Standard Rose with plaque	5 year dedication	Honor Oak Crematorium
Memorial Tree with plaque	5 year dedication	Honor Oak Crematorium

#### **Costs**

Rose Bush	£210.00
Rose Standard	£250.00
Memorial Trees	£600.00

#### **Tree/Shrub/Plant Species**

Upon agreeing the category and location for your commemorative tree, the Council will provide you with a range of tree/shrub/plant species. Species are carefully selected so your tree/shrub/plant is in keeping with the desirable species for the park and are in accordance with the park's management plan and tree strategy.

#### **Other Items to consider**

#### **Planting**

We will contact you when the tree/shrub/plant is delivered to notify you of the planting date. We will do our utmost to arrange this, but due to the shortness of the planting season and

storage we do need to plant the tree quite quickly. We are unable to organise for you to be present at the time of planting but will inform you when the tree/shrub/plant has been planted.

### **Maintenance and Replacement**

We will care for your tree/shrub/plant by watering, staking and protecting from vandalism by whatever means we can, but you should be aware that it can be distressing if your tree/shrub/plant is vandalised particularly if it is the memory of someone close to you. The Council will replace any tree/shrub/plant that perishes through natural causes in the first year but cannot, unfortunately, guarantee to replace those that are vandalised or fail at a later date.

### **Scattering Ashes & Memorial Items**

In order to Scatter Cremated Remains an appointment should be arranged with the Cemeteries and Crematorium Office. The crematorium grounds have a choice of three dedicated scattering lawns.

The placing of memorial items by your tree/shrub/plant is not allowed to prevent the tree/plant/shrub from becoming a shrine. Any items such as flowers, toys, lanterns etc will be removed.

For any further information or to order a commemorative tree/shrub/plant, please contact:

PH - 020 7525 5600  
E – parks@southwark.gov.uk

### **Commemorative Benches**

#### **Bench Locations**

At present we do not allow customers to specify any new locations for benches in Southwark. We will allow a commemorative bench to replace an existing bench where benches are reaching the end of their useful life.

#### **Dedication Plaques**

Southwark Council will accept acrylic plastic plaques to be placed on commemorative benches. The plaque will be 5cm x 10cm in black with white text. The plaque will be placed on the front of the back rest towards the top and in the centre. This will be provided as part of the cost of the bench.

#### **Wording of Dedication Plaques**

The wording of a dedication needs to be considered carefully as some inscriptions may be upsetting to other park visitors. Therefore wording more fitting in a cemetery such 'in loving memory' or 'may they rest in peace' should be avoided. Alternative phrases such as '..... loved this park' or '..... watched the seasons change' should be considered. Before deciding on the final wording, please contact the relevant Area Contract and Service Manager for wording approval.

#### **Costs and Bench Type**

The design of benches varies throughout the borough as many parks maintain their own individual character through their furniture. Parks that do not have unique furniture will be generally use the Southwark Standard Bench. Advice on the design to be used will be provided upon request. The cost for memorial benches is £1,000 and includes supply, installation and plaque.

Benches are dedicated for a period of 10 years from the date of installation. At the end of the 10 year period you will be informed in writing that the period is about to expire. If you wish to dedicate for a further 10 years, this will be at a cost of £200. This price is subject to change. All existing benches that were dedicated prior to the implementation of this policy will be maintained.

Only benches that need replacement will be considered for commemorative purposes.

### **Maintenance and Replacement**

We will care for your bench by cleaning and protecting from vandalism by whatever means we can, but you should be aware that we cannot prevent vandalism at all times and it can be distressing if your bench is vandalised particularly if it is in the memory of someone close to you.

Unfortunately, if the bench is damaged or vandalised beyond what the Council considers to be economical to repair, we reserve the right to remove the bench and not replace it. Fortunately this is a rare occurrence.

### **Memorial Items**

The placing of memorial items by or on your bench is not allowed to prevent the bench from becoming a shrine. Any items such as flowers, toys, lanterns etc will be removed.

For any further information or to order a commemorative bench, please contact:

Simon Short  
Parks Technical support Officer  
Southwark Council  
Parks & Open Spaces  
Environment & Housing  
PO BOX 64529  
London  
SE1 5LX  
PH – 0207 525 1598  
E – [parks@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:parks@southwark.gov.uk)

## **Memorials Policy**

Proposals for memorials for groups and/or individuals who have contributed significantly to the nation or the wider Southwark community may be considered for location in Southwark's Park and Open Spaces. This policy is to ensure that parks and open spaces within Southwark are accessible to everyone and to protect the value of open space for the community.

### **Public Support**

The Parks and Open Spaces department will only consider proposals for memorials that have wide community support. This must include support from the 'Friends of' group relevant to the park, surrounding Tenants and Resident's associations and Community Council. Without this support, the memorial will not be considered.

### **Suitability**

When planning a memorial it is important to understand the context of the park environment. Parks and Open Spaces are accessible to everyone and it is important not to exclude anyone from using the park because of the type of memorial being proposed.

The location within the park is also of utmost importance. The memorial must fit seamlessly into the landscape surrounding it. It must also be robust to withstand vandalism in which it may be subject to.

In addition the following questions will be asked of the memorial proposal:

- Sense of place – does the proposed memorial have strong links with the specific park or open space?
- Is the memorial appropriate in scale and aesthetically?
- Is the memorial maintainable?
- Is the proposed memorial for a group or individuals who have contributed significantly to the nation or the wider community?

### **Process**

In planning a memorial, it is important to inform the Parks & Open Spaces business unit of your intentions as we can provide advice and assistance throughout the process. We can also provide preliminary approval for memorials or advice on where a memorial is best located.

### **Funding**

Memorials are unable to be funded by the Parks & Open Spaces department. All costs must be funded by other sources whether within the Council or external funders.

### **Memorials at Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park**

As the Imperial War Museum sits within Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, the park contains a number of memorials to war and peace. The Imperial War Museum have made their position clear in regards to memorials:

a) The IWM does not commission or collect memorials to individuals or groups. This is not part of their remit and they do not offer support to appeals for new ones.

b) The IWM is constantly approached to take on 'orphan' and new memorials concerning individuals from around the country and they will not support one over another for fear of setting a precedent.

In addition due to the amount of memorials currently located in the park we no longer accept any proposals for new installations to ensure that the park still maintains a number of open areas for passive recreation.

For any further information on memorials in parks and open spaces, please contact:

Service Development Manager  
Southwark Council  
Parks & Open Spaces  
Environment & Housing  
PO BOX 64529  
London  
SE1 5LX  
PH – 0207 525 0890  
E – [parks@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:parks@southwark.gov.uk)