



Weymouth Town Council Bench Policy

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Introduction:

Weymouth Town Council (“the Council”) manage a large number of benches across the different wards, these fall into three categories Highways, Parks and Seafront.

The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances and trends. The policy will be reviewed at least every four years and proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

The process for each type of bench is different and these are detailed further in this policy.

Objectives of the Policy:

The Council will consider requests from residents and members of the public for highway benches to be removed/relocated. The Council will also consider requests from community groups who wish to take over responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of any highway benches (the ownership will remain with the Council.)

The Council will consider requests for new benches on highways to serve public need.

The Council will consider requests for memorialised benches in our open spaces, parks and beaches. The Council supports the needs and principles of allowing the memorialisation of benches in our open spaces, parks and beach. The Council is mindful that public facilities are accessed and enjoyed by a wide range of people.

Highway Benches

In 2022 Dorset Council transferred responsibility for all their highway benches to the Council, this has resulted in the need for a policy to provide guidance on the responsibility of the Council in maintaining the benches and to review any requests for removal/relocation or new benches on any highway bench.

The Council will review the condition of the benches on an annual basis, unless a request has been made or information has been provided that a bench is not in a safe condition. This will result in the council removing the bench, with no obligation to replace it with a new one, however in most circumstances we will endeavour to replace.

The procedure to request to either remove/relocate or request a new bench will be;

- A request is made in writing (or email) to [Weymouth Town Council](#) for either a removal/relocation or installation of new bench.
- The Council will then consult with the appropriate ward members to get their views.
- A Report will be presented to the Services Committee for consideration.
- For any new bench request the Council will inform Dorset Council and can either request a quote for installing new footings or seek quotations from qualified contactors.

Memorialised Benches

With a number of existing memorialised benches throughout Weymouth Town Council's remit, it has become necessary for the Council to put in place this policy as a guideline for new applicants to understand locations available for memorialised benches.

The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Town Clerk and proposed amendments will be submitted to the Services Committees, and then Full Council for approval.

This policy is intended to provide a guideline for applications for memorialised benches in Weymouth Town Council owned locations. It is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

This policy will be made available to the general public and all applicants for memorialised benches will be issued with a copy.

There is no legislative requirement for the provision of public memorialised benches, although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity as well as a place to sit and reflect on those loved ones who have been lost.

All applications for memorialised benches should be completed on an official application form in the format attached as Appendix 2. They must be signed by the applicant, giving extended family details where possible, as an additional means of contacting the donor or their family, should this be necessary at a future date. It is important to note that the lifespan of a memorisation of a bench is 10 year.

Requests will be accommodated where possible, but it may be necessary to offer alternative locations, if space is not available at the preferred site. Alternatively, if a request is for a specific area and there are no available spaces the request will be added to a waiting list where first come first serve basis will be in place. We are unable to indicate how long a person will be on a waiting list as each area will have a varying number of applications and this will affect the waiting time.

Once installed, basic maintenance of the bench will become the responsibility of the Council, i.e. painting as required and minor repairs. If major repairs are required, the applicant will be contacted and notified of costs and asked to meet/contribute towards the cost, if repairs are viable.

Whilst the Council will endeavour to maintain and repair wherever possible to prolong the life of each bench if, in the view of the Council's maintenance officer, repairs are not viable and a bench is no longer safe for use, then the applicant (and, if unavailable, other family members detailed on the application form) will be contacted and asked whether they would like to fund a replacement bench. Any replacement benches will be subject to the same terms as if applying for a new bench.

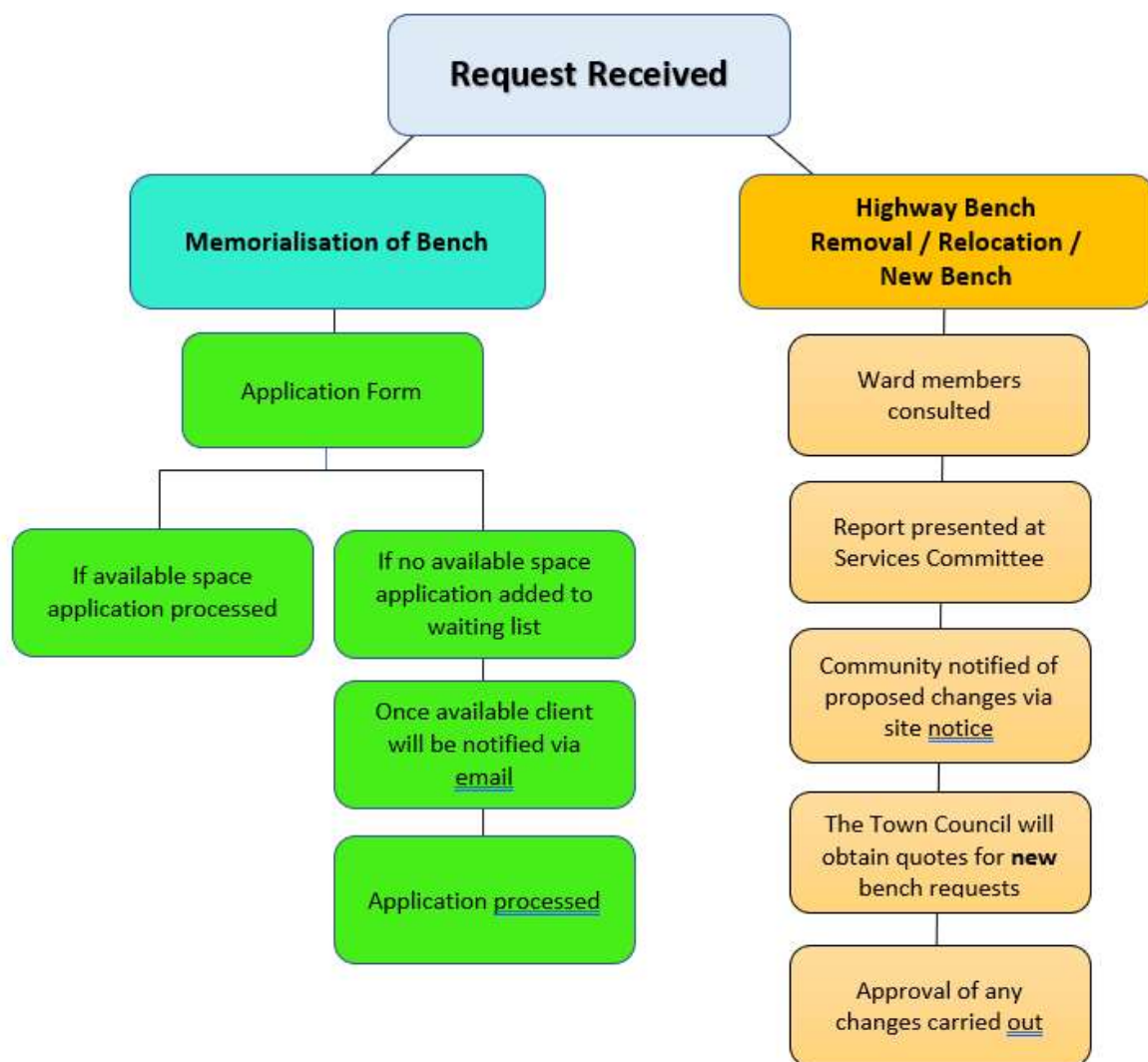
When a bench is no longer capable of repair, whilst the Council will use reasonable endeavours to contact the applicant in the first instance and thereafter alternative contacts provided on the application form, if this is not possible, then the Council, in its absolute discretion, may remove and dispose of the bench as it sees fit.

The Council cannot guarantee the long-term safety or security of benches and is not responsible for any replacement bench resulting from damage and vandalism or deterioration with age. In the unlikely event that a memorialised bench is stolen, the Council shall not be responsible for providing a replacement.

Additional mementoes such as flowers and wreaths, shall be permitted as long as they do not obstruct the use of the bench. The council will remove and dispose of these items if they are placed in such a manner as to obstruct the bench, where they have become weathered/wilted and generally unappealing.

The Council will work with local groups and residents where appropriate to restore benches. However, the Council will need to agree and sign off any work to ensure Health and Safety standards are met.

Flowchart



Draft of Webpage Information

Weymouth Town Council have responsibility for a large number of benches across the town, applications for memorialisation/sponsoring benches can be submitted to the Council. The Council also have responsibility for benches previously under the control of Dorset Council on their highways.

Highway Benches

The Council is responsible for maintenance of the highway benches which will have an annual inspection to ensure that they are fit for purpose. If a highway bench becomes unsafe then it will be removed. An application can also be made to have one removed/relocated, this will involve the Council liaising with Dorset Council before any action can be taken.

The process for either a removal/relocation or request for a new highway bench is as follows:-

- A request is made in writing (or email) to the [Weymouth Town Council](#) for either a **removal/relocation** or **new** bench.
- The Council will seek permission from Dorset Council (Highways) and this may involve us paying them to install on a new site to their specification.
- The council will consult with the relevant ward members on the proposed removal/relocation.
- A removal notice will be placed on the bench for a period of 21 days to enable residents to lodge any objections to the removal of the bench.
- The **removal/relocation/new** bench proposal will be presented to the Council's Services Committee for approval.
- If the removal/relocation/**new** bench is approved the Council will then remove/relocate or install.

Memorialised Benches

You can apply for a memorialised/sponsored bench on a selection of sites – provided there is availability. Please note that there might be limited availability in your preferred area so please bear this in mind on your application.

Ownership:

The bench shall remain the property of the Council in the name of the donor. Benches are not transferable between donors. The council will hold responsibility for basic maintenance of the bench.

Lifespan:

The lease period is 10 years, once the initial 10 year period has expired you will be offered an opportunity to extend the sponsorship. If you do not extend your sponsorship the bench will become available for sponsorship by someone else.

Maintenance:

The Council will be responsible for basic maintenance of the bench only. The Council will reserve the right to remove any bench badly damaged as a result of accident, vandalism or the elements and/or if it becomes a danger to the public. The Council will not be liable to replace any bench that has been removed due to being considered unsafe within the sponsor period. Should the donor wish to replace the bench it will be at their cost at full price.

The Council will work with local groups and residents where appropriate to restore benches. However the Council will need to agree and sign off any work to ensure Health and Safety standards are met.

General:

Benches will likely to be in a public space, so we ask that the following guidelines are observed:

- Any tributes must not hinder the access for public use of the bench i.e. not to be placed on the seat or backrest.
- Glass or fragile vases or tributes are prohibited.
- All tributes will be removed by Council staff if they are prohibited as above or when they begin to disintegrate, or after two weeks (whichever comes first). It is preferred that they are removed by the donor themselves.
- The council reserves the right to move to a new location or remove completely any seat and plaque if it is deemed to be in the council's best interest. Notification of such action will be made to the applicant at his or her last known address.

Plaques:

The plaques are provided by the Council, on behalf of the donor. Donors are required to submit their wording in advance, as the costs of plaque is dependent on the wording and will require approval that appropriate wording is being used. Plaques cannot be altered once ordered; alterations will require purchase of a new plaque.

Contact Details:

It is the responsibility of the donor to inform the Council of any changes in their contact details and as such the Council will not be responsible for any correspondence not being received by the donor if we have not been informed of changes to their details.

Costings:

All memorialisation of benches cost £1,800.00 but this is dependent on inflation and rising cost of materials.

APPLICATION FORM – MEMORIALISED BENCH

Responsibilities & Indemnities:

- The Council is responsible for the basic maintenance of the bench.
- The donor indemnifies the Council against liabilities, costs, expenses, damage and losses suffered or incurred by the donor arising out of or in connection with the provision of a memorialised bench.

Name of Applicant *:	
Contact Number of Applicant *:	
Address of Applicant *:	
Email Address of Applicant *:	
Signature of Applicant:	
Name of Alternative Contact *:	
Contact details of Alternative Contact *:	
Preferred Location *:	
2nd Preferred Location: *:	
Wording for Plaque:	
Date of Application *:	
Signed on behalf of Weymouth Town Council:	
Officers Name:	

PLEASE NOTE: All information marked with a * needs to be completed otherwise request will be returned.

GDPR and Data Protection

Weymouth Town Council is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected by adhering to the principles of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Should we ask you to provide certain personal information by which you can be identified for the purpose of a contract with us, signing up to our mailing list, newsletter or use of our website, then you can be assured that it will only be used for the purpose it was collected.

It will never be used by any third party for any other form of processing or marketing purposes.

Weymouth Town Council does not pass on any of its data to third parties other than those specified to undertake the contract entered into.

Weymouth Town Council may change this policy from time to time by updating this statement. Statement can be found at: - <https://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/?s=data+protection>

APPLICATION FORM – REMOVAL/RELOCATION/INSTALLATION

Any request for the removal, relocation or installation of a bench will be subject to approval by the Services Committee, following a 21 day period of notification to the residents/public of such a request.

Name of Applicant *:		
Contact Number of Applicant *:		
Address of Applicant *:		
Email Address of Applicant *:		
Signature of Applicant:		
Request Type *:	Removal <input type="checkbox"/> / Relocation <input type="checkbox"/>	Installation <input type="checkbox"/>
Location of bench*:		
Reason for Request *:		
Date of Application *:		
Signed on behalf of Weymouth Town Council:		
Officers Name:		

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