



# Bethersden Parish Council

email: parish.clerk@bethersden-pc.gov.uk tel: 07706 611676

## Memorial Tree Policy

### 1. Introduction

Bethersden Parish Council recognises that memorial trees can provide a meaningful way for individuals to commemorate loved ones while contributing to the natural environment and public spaces. This policy sets out the conditions under which memorial trees may be requested, planted, maintained, and, where necessary, removed.

### 2. Applications

- 2.1. All requests for memorial trees must be submitted in writing to the Parish Clerk.
- 2.2. Applications must include proposed tree species, preferred location (subject to Council approval), details of any plaque (if applicable), and full contact details of the requestor.
- 2.3. The application will be considered at the next suitable Council Meeting. Requestors will be advised of the date of the next suitable Council meeting and will have the opportunity to attend the meeting to speak if they so wish.
- 2.4.

### 3. Costs

- 3.1. All costs associated with the provision of a memorial tree are to be met in full by the requestor. This includes:
  - Purchase of the tree
  - Supply of stakes, guards or supports
  - Planting of the tree
  - Installation of any plaque (if approved)
- 3.2. All planting and installation must be carried out by:
  - the Council, or
  - an approved contractor
- 3.3. Payment must be arranged and made by the requestor but only once full agreement has been reached with Bethersden Parish Council.

### 4. Tree Specification and Planting

- 4.1. Bethersden Parish Council will provide a list of approved tree species to ensure suitability, consistency, and longevity.
- 4.2. Only trees meeting the Council's specification will be permitted.
- 4.3. The Parish Council reserves the right to determine the final location of the tree to ensure it is appropriate and does not conflict with services, infrastructure, or future plans.

### 5. Maintenance Responsibilities

- 2.5. Maintenance for the first 3 to 5 years (requestors will be advised of the required maintenance period relating to the tree type chosen) will be the responsibility of the requestor to ensure the tree establishes itself.
- 2.6. Ongoing maintenance of the memorial tree will then be the responsibility of the Parish Council.



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- 2.7. Maintenance includes watering during establishment, pruning, inspection, and general care as required.
- 2.8. If, in the judgement of the Parish Council, a tree becomes unsafe, diseased, damaged, or unsuitable, the Council will advise you in the first instance, and thereafter if the matter(s) are unresolved, may:
  - Undertake necessary works and charge you the relevant cost (if applicable); or
  - Arrange removal of the tree if required
- 5.1. The Council is not obliged to replace a tree if it dies or is removed, but a replacement may be offered at the requestors cost.

## **6. Insurance**

- 6.1. The memorial tree will be covered under the Parish Council's public liability insurance policy for risks relating to injury or damage to third parties.
- 6.2. This insurance does not cover replacement of the tree itself.
- 6.3. The Council is not liable for:
  - vandalism
  - theft of plaques
  - accidental damage
  - replacement of plaques/tree is at requestor's cost

## **7. Removal of Trees**

- 7.1. The Parish Council reserves the right to remove a memorial tree if:
  - The tree becomes unsafe or unviable;
  - The tree is diseased or dying;
  - The location becomes unsuitable due to operational, safety, or environmental reasons.
- 7.2. Where possible, the requestor will be contacted before removal (please note 10.2); however, the Council retains the right to remove a tree immediately if it poses a risk to public safety.

## **8. Duration of Placement**

- 8.1. Memorial trees and associated plaques are living and natural features and may be affected by factors outside the control of Bethersden Parish Council, including disease, weather conditions, vandalism, theft, or accidental damage.
- 8.2. The Parish Council does not accept responsibility for any loss of, or damage to, a memorial tree or plaque, regardless of cause.
- 8.3. The Parish Council is not obliged to replace a memorial tree or plaque if it becomes damaged, diseased, or is removed for any reason.
- 8.4. The Parish Council will not provide financial compensation or reimbursement in respect of the loss, damage, or removal of a memorial tree or plaque.

## **9. Plaques**

- 9.1. Memorial plaques must be approved by the Parish Council before installation.
- 9.2. Plaques should be modest in size and wording appropriate for a public space.
- 9.3. The Parish Council may refuse or limit plaques in certain circumstances or locations.



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## **10. Ownership and Rights**

- 10.1 The tree remains the property of Bethersden Parish Council at all times.
- 10.2 The requestor does not acquire rights over the land or tree.
- 10.3 The Council has full discretion over maintenance, relocation, or removal.

## **11. Acceptance of Policy**

- 11.1. Requestors must agree acceptance of this policy in writing before the matter can be processed.
- 11.2. It remains the responsibility of the requestor to keep the Clerk informed of any change in family contact details. If contact is lost, the Council may proceed without consultation.

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