



## **Memorials in cemeteries – ideas from different local authorities**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales

### **Key Issues:**

This briefing showcases many of the different offerings that local authorities across the UK have for memorials and tributes in cemeteries. Officers and elected members are encouraged to consider whether it would be appropriate to introduce any of these ideas into your own service.

## **1.0 Background**

With the [increasing popularity](#) of cremations and the [lack of available space](#) for burials in many places, offering a wide range of choice for memorials in cemetery grounds can be an effective way of helping residents deal with death, loss and grief. The many different options at many different price points shown in this briefing makes memorials accessible to all, and gives residents a great deal of personal choice in the type of memorial that would be most appropriate and comforting.

With decreasing local authority budgets, introducing a range of memorial options can also assist with the maintenance and running costs of cemeteries. Below are a number of different types of memorials that are currently available in different local authorities across the UK.

## **2.0 Memorials**

**Seats, benches and picnic tables**

[Medway Council](#) offer a choice of memorials in their country parks, urban parks, woodlands and play areas. They offer seats, benches, picnic tables and wheelchair accessible picnic tables which feature memorial plaques. Some local authorities will offer choices of benches, and some also offer the option to have a memorial plaque attached to an existing bench. [Wigan Council](#) offer around 10 plaques across two bench slats on certain public benches to reduce the cost of an individual memorial bench.

### Miniature Book of Remembrance



[Newcastle City Council](#) offer a miniature book of remembrance or memorial card with a copy of the inscription as it appears in the book.

### Jewellery and keepsakes



[Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council](#) offer two different ranges of memorial jewellery through two different providers that turn cremation ashes into lasting tributes. Their range includes rings, pendants, earrings, cufflinks, charms, brooches, memorial paperweights and other tributes.



[St Helens Borough Council](#) also offer this service with a wide range of memorial keepsakes and jewellery available. This includes keepsake hearts and urns, and jewellery in sterling silver, silver with gold accent and rose gold.



[Adur & Worthing Councils](#) also offer cremation glass art as well as a collection of memorial jewellery.

## 3.0 Engraved memorials

### Wildlife nest boxes

[Birmingham City Council](#) offer a range of different wildlife nest boxes which encourage birds, mammals and insects to visit the area. They send out a certificate of sponsorship and

the person is named in their quarterly newsletter. They offer:

- Bat boxes
- Bird boxes
- Bug boxes
- Butterfly havens
- Little owl boxes

### Outdoor memorials with black granite plaques



[Kirklees Council](#) allow residents to have a black granite engraved plaque added to the base of a shared memorial bird bath in their Garden of Remembrance. They also offer a range of other tributes such as garden blocks, granite vase blocks, kerb stones, Yorkshire stone blocks, an outdoor memorial book made out of granite with dedicated black granite plaques.



[Southend on Sea Borough Council](#) offer a range of memorial schemes including secure granite vaults which is made to hold two sets of cremated remains and includes a granite

plaque displayed for 10 years. Engraved black plaques can also be attached to various different pillars, rose posts and structures within the Crematorium's Garden of Remembrance.

### Boulder memorials



[Dorset Council](#) offer boulder memorials that are individually hewn so that no two boulders are the same. They are set in small gravel beds, and cremated remains can be scattered on the lawn around them. Boulders have a space for an engraved inscription and can be purchased in a range of sizes (4 line, 6 line, 8 line inscriptions) and can be either plain or with a flower vase inserted into the top.

### Tree of Life memorials



[Craven District Council](#) offer a Tree of Life memorial on the wall within the Book of Remembrance room. It is a cast iron tree with bronze leaves which can be inscribed. Each leaf can accommodate one or two inscriptions with a 15-year lease. They also offer the option to reserve the leaf next to this one for a future inscription. After the 15-year lease is up, the leaf will be removed for the family to collect and keep.

## 4.0 Floral tributes

### Rose bushes and shrubs



[Kirklees Council](#) also allow residents to have planted rose bushes in their Gardens of Remembrance. The memorial includes a plaque which will fit two names placed in front of the rose bush, and a choice of rose colour is available. [Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council](#) offer a similar service with shrub planting which can be

leased for five years with a memorial plaque.

### Floral fund

[Harrogate Council](#) have a floral fund where donations can be made to enhance the memorial gardens. The proceeds are then used to improve the grounds for all visitors. [Bracknell Forest Council](#) also offer a similar bulb and flower donation scheme. Many other councils such as [West Northamptonshire](#) also accept donations for the betterment of a particular country park and would discuss how this money could be used.

### Floristry service

[Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council](#) offer a floristry service for people who are unable to visit a loved-one's grave on a special anniversary. The professional floristry service can be ordered online, and on the day a digital photograph will be sent of the floral display at the gravesite. The order form can be viewed [here](#).

### Seed planter cards

[Birmingham City Council](#) offer 3 different types of meadow seed planter cards with mixes of wildflower seeds and wild grasses. The cards have a space to write your message on, and can then be planted. The mix of seeds provides food plants for bees, butterflies and caterpillars.

### Terracotta vases



[Lambeth Council](#) offer hanging terracotta vases on the walls of the crematorium, providing families with a personalised vase for fresh flowers. The vases include a granite plaque which will be engraved with the inscription of your choice.

### Bespoke memorials

Steven R Wesson Memorials is owned and operated by [Barnsley Metropolitan Borough](#)

[Council](#). They offer an extensive range of personalised memorials with a wide range of colours and the ability to put photographic images on a ceramic plate. Their catalogue can be viewed [here](#).

## 5.0 Baby and child memorials

### Mushroom memorials



[Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council](#) have a wide range of memorial options including mushroom memorials within their Baby Garden. Between 4 and 6 granite discs can be engraved on each mushroom.

### Picture book memorials



[Bracknell Forest Council](#) have a picture book memorial in their Babies' Garden of Remembrance with plaques in the shapes of rabbits, elephants, balloons, trucks, hearts and others.

### Animal pedestals

[Somerset West and Taunton Council](#) have several different options for plaques on pedestals featuring a teddy bear character on top of the pedestal.



### Owl post box

[Leeds City Council](#) have a range of memorials that are specifically for children and baby gardens of remembrance. They have a special owl post box that allows children to post letters to people

they've lost and helps provide an outlet for their feelings. While this is not an individual paid for memorial like other options, it shows that there are many things local authorities can introduce to cemeteries to help with the grieving process.

## **6.0 Things to consider**

### **Vandalism**

Councils cannot guarantee that memorials will remain undisturbed. It is important to note whether your local authority would accept responsibility or liability for the damage of memorials and whether you have a policy in place to help with the replacement of the memorial. It is important to retain up-to-date contact details for the holders of memorials in the event of damage.

### **Removal or relocation of memorials**

There may be instances where memorials may need to be relocated. As above, it is important to retain up-to-date contact details to ensure that the holder of the memorial is informed and aware of this development.

### **Tree replacement**

There are issues that can affect memorial trees that need to be managed. [Rochford District Council](#) have a good example of tree policy in place. They include a guard and stake to protect the tree from rabbits and deer which will be removed once the tree has outgrown the risk. Trees that fail within the first year of planting will be replaced at the Council's expense, with any further replacements at the expense of the customer. This is something to consider when offering memorials involving trees.

## **7.0 APSE Comment**

APSE encourages our members with a limited range of memorials to consider the range offered by different councils above, and to think about whether they would be appropriate to introduce into your own cemeteries.

For more information on local authority best practice in cemeteries, our [Cemeteries and Crematorium advisory group](#) is free to attend for APSE members. APSE also holds an annual event on [Cemeteries and Crematoria](#), the presentations from this year's event are accessible online. As well as this [APSE Performance Networks](#) offers performance benchmarking in cemetery and crematorium services and [APSE Training](#) offers a Legal and Practical Management of Cemeteries (ICCM) Masterclass which can be delivered online.

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