

Memorial Bench Policy 2025

This policy supersedes all previous arrangements, policies and agreements and applies to all memorial benches on land owned by British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

1. Introduction

1.1 BTO recognises that when loved ones die, their friends and relatives will often want to commemorate them with a memorial in an open green space. Often this will be in the form of a bench, which not only honours their memory, but provides a functional improvement to the local environment.

2. Objectives

2.1 This policy has been produced for all BTO-owned open green spaces with the following principles:

- BTO will consider all requests for memorial benches.
- BTO will always endeavour to be respectful, sympathetic and fair towards those requesting benches; to balance the needs of facility users, and to maintain the high quality of its open spaces for the use and enjoyment of all users. BTO cannot always guarantee the final location of a bench but will endeavour to fulfil requests for specific locations if practicable.
- To be clear and easily understood by open green space users.
- It is the intention that the policy only covers broad common issues and is not meant to be exhaustive. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years.
- The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet the changing circumstances, fashion and trends in respect of memorial benches.
- To ensure that memorial benches are erected which have a common appearance, style and size and will not cause offence to others.
- To establish responsibility for the maintenance, repair and eventual replacement of memorials is clearly set out.

- This policy will be made available to the public on BTO's website and all applicants for memorial benches will be issued with a copy.
- In the event of limited space for benches, priority will be given to BTO members.

3. Terms and Conditions

3.1 Only applications from the next of kin or executor will be considered.

3.2 BTO will not accept applications for memorial benches for pets.

3.3 BTO reserves the right to refuse any application which it deems unsuitable.

3.4 All applications for memorial benches must be completed on the official request form and signed by the applicant.

3.5 Benches will be of the type and colour specified by BTO to be in keeping with the intended location and will be constructed in a type of wood acceptable under our sustainability policy.

3.6 The inscription on the plaque must be approved by BTO and will normally refer to the name of the person, dates of birth and death and short tribute (if appropriate).

3.7 The dedication is restricted to one plaque alone and no other features, materials, planting, or decoration should be added to the bench or surrounding area. Any additions of this nature will be removed by BTO.

3.8 Following approval, there are two options for the requestor:

3.8.1 BTO supplies the bench so donation would cover the bench and a donation (£800). All memorial benches, including the cost of the plaque, installation and maintenance, must be paid in full before the bench is ordered from our supplier.

3.8.2 The requestor supplies the bench (with BTO approval) and then gives a donation of £500 on top to house the bench in BTO grounds.

3.9 The installation will be carried out by BTO in line with its risk assessments.

3.10 Under no circumstances will any installation of a bench by a third-party be permitted. If it is found that a bench has been installed by anyone other than BTO the bench will be removed without notice and without guarantee of safe return.

3.11 BTO does not accept liability for damage caused to any memorial bench or security of those items.

3.12 BTO is not responsible for any replacement bench resulting from damage, vandalism, or deterioration with age. In the unlikely event that a memorialised item is stolen, BTO shall not be responsible for providing a replacement.

3.13 It is expected that any memorial bench will have a minimum serviceable life of five years. This five-year period is calculated from the date of installation. The bench will not be replaced at the end of its useful life, unless the original donor (or relative) wishes to do so at their own expense.

3.14 BTO reserves the right to remove any memorial benches that have been damaged and deemed to be beyond economic repair. If this happens the donor will be contacted and given the opportunity to replace the bench; or if this is not desired, given the opportunity to collect the memorial plaque.

3.15 No scattering of ashes of humans or pets shall be permitted at any site where a memorial bench is installed.

3.16 All visitors have the right to sit on a memorial bench.

3.17 Although the location of a bench would normally be permanent for the bench's serviceable life, the bench may need to be moved for operational reasons. Should this happen, the bench would be returned to its permanent location as soon as possible.

Policy approved by SLT October 2025
Review by October 2028