

**MANAGEMENT OF MEMORIALS
POLICY AND PROCEDURE
(February 2011)**

Ledbury Town Council
Town Council Office
Church Street
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 1DL

Background

Safety in burial grounds is becoming ~~an on going major~~ issue. The Health and Safety Executive wrote to every local authority requesting that the management of memorials is taken seriously. As a burial authority Ledbury Town Council has a responsibility to ensure that its cemeteries are safe and although the memorials are not in the ownership of the Council this includes ensuring that these memorials are also safe. There is no mechanism for requiring grave owners to make memorials safe, nor is there a method to recover costs if work is undertaken.

Revised guidance was issued by the Ministry of Justice in 2009 and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. In light of this guidance and its recommendations, Ledbury Town Council has prepared a policy which is laid out in this document and related procedures.

Methodology for establishing stability has been established following the national guidelines and standards and implemented in such a way as not to cause further damage. Effective inspection and recording regimes are in place and need to be implemented to limit future liability.

Ledbury Town Council ~~is to engage a professional body has engaged Memsafe Memorial Safety safety Technicians~~ to carry out the initial and subsequent Memorial Safety Testing at New Street Cemetery.

Memorial stability and safety issues fall into two distinct categories.

- New memorials including additional inscription and renovations
- Existing memorials

New Memorials Including Additional Inscription And Renovations

Plan of action / methodology

All Memorial Masons wishing to work in the Council's cemeteries will be issued with a document called 'Memorial Mason Registration Rules' and they are required to sign an agreement of compliance and show proof of their certificate of Public Liability (currently to the value of five million pounds) prior to permission being granted. Memorial Masons who apply to the Town Council Office to carry out such memorial works will, in future, be declined permission unless a signed agreement is submitted and has been agreed. Reference 'Memorial Mason Registration Rules'.

A file will be maintained at the Town Council Office of all Memorial Masons signed up to this agreement.

Once permission has been granted to a Memorial Mason for works to commence, the Town Council Office will notify the grave owner/s, issuing them with a 'Grant of Rights to Erect and Maintain a Memorial'. The covering letter will explain the terms and conditions of the Grant of Rights and of their responsibility as grave owner/s.

Existing Memorials

Plan of action / methodology

Stages

- Public Consultation
- Inspection, survey and risk assessment
- Documentation and recording
- Make safe / repair
- Ongoing inspections

Public consultation

It is proposed that Ledbury Town Council publishes its intentions regarding memorial stability and inspections as follows:

- Local newspapers
- ~~Local radio~~
- Council's website
- Cemetery gates
- Sections within the cemetery
- On memorials found to be unstable

Inspection, survey and risk assessment

An initial risk assessment 'sweep' of the cemeteries was completed in 2010. The details from this assessment will be used again along with the recommendations in the latest guidance to re-establish which memorials and or sections carry the most risk. This information will be used to help prioritise memorials/sections requiring the most urgent attention, these will be categorised as follows: S1 requiring immediate attention, S2 to be monitored and re assessed within 6 months of the initial assessment, S3 to be monitored and re assessed within 12 months of the initial assessment and S3 to be monitored and re assessed within 18 months. An action plan will then be drawn up for implementing the inspection programme.

All inspections will be fully documented at all stages, as it is necessary to have documented and dated evidence of compliance. In some instances photographic evidence could be useful. In a perfect world, all memorials found to be unsafe should be made safe immediately, all at the same time, but in practise this cannot happen. A working compromise is to identify the risk and take the necessary steps to make safe as soon as is practicable and in line with current procedure.

Documentation and recording

All inspections are to be recorded and entered onto a spreadsheet ~~and at the cemetery on returning to~~ the retained at Town Council Offices the information will ~~subsequently~~ be logged against each grave. Letters to grave owners will then be issued, as required.

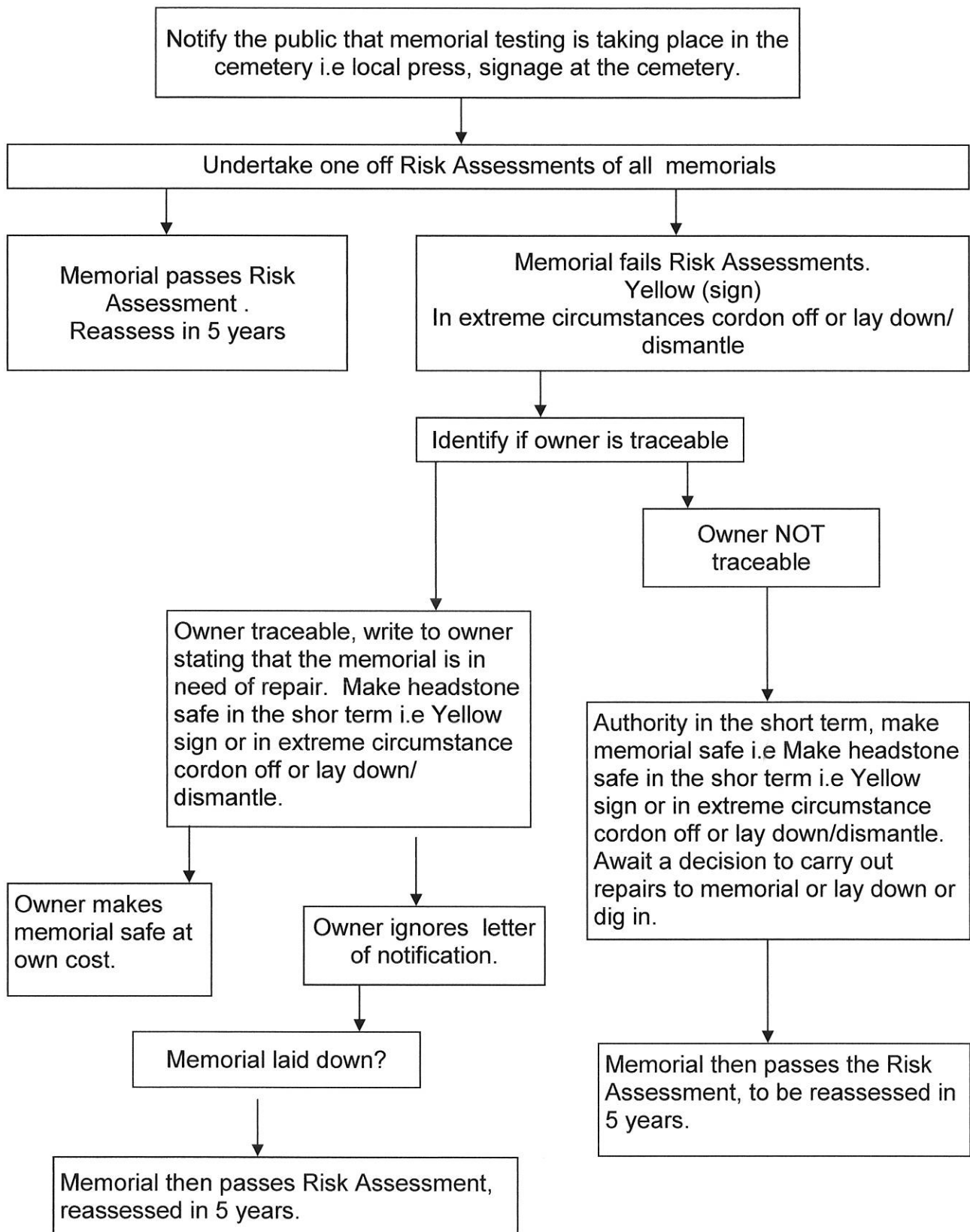
Make safe / repair

Where a memorial has failed testing and the deed-holder cannot be traced, the Town Council will consider making the memorial safe by either partially sinking it into the ground (dug in to the start of the inscription) this applies to older memorials, laying it down (laid down flat so as not to cause a trip hazard) or repairing it (if of historical importance). Care will be taken to ensure, where possible, that inscriptions are not affected.

Ongoing inspections

Memorial inspections will be carried out over a five year rolling programme, with various stages of inspection in between being determined by the risk assessment carried out at the time of inspection. Once again all inspections will be recorded.

FLOW CHART OF POSSIBLE ACTION REQUIRED FOR UNSAFE MEMORIALS IN NEW STREET CEMETERY



Agenda item for E&L 14.01.15

Councillor Bettington request that the subject of recycling is discussed at the next meeting.