



SOP 44 - Memorial Management: Memorial Application and Alteration Policy

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for the application, installation, maintenance, and alteration of memorials at the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens. The policy ensures that all memorials align with the Gardens values, uphold national significance, maintain aesthetic harmony, and provide a dignified space for remembrance

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals, organisations and stakeholders proposing to:

- Install new memorials within the grounds of the National Remembrance Gardens
- Modify, alter, or relocate existing memorials
- Undertake restoration works on existing memorials

3. Definitions

Memorials:	Any permanent or semi-permanent feature dedicated to the memory of individuals, groups, events, or organisations, located within the National Remembrance Gardens
Applicant:	The individual or organisation requesting permission to install or alter a memorial
Alteration:	Any proposed change to an existing memorial's structure, wording, design, or location
Committee:	The appointed body responsible for reviewing and approving memorial applications and alteration requests
National Significance:	A criterion requiring that all memorials commemorate groups whose contributions have had a significant impact on the nation or its history

Statement

4.0 Charitable Objective

The Royal British Legions (RBL) charitable objectives are:

- To relieve need, suffering and distress of Beneficiaries and their Dependants and to further the education of Beneficiaries and their Dependants;
- To relieve need and protect the mental and emotional health of the Dependants of Beneficiaries who have died or been severely injured
- To relieve suffering, hardship and distress to Dependants caused by the absence of those serving in the Armed Forces.
- To promote and support schemes for the resettlement, rehabilitation, retraining and sheltered employment of Beneficiaries and their Dependants.
- To promote the commemoration for the public benefit of those who have died whilst serving in the Armed Forces.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) cannot provide funding towards memorials. The RBL is governed by its Royal Charter, which sets out the specific charitable purposes it is permitted to pursue. These focus on the welfare of serving and ex Service personnel and their families, the promotion of Remembrance, and support for the Armed Forces community.

The Charity Commission's guidance is clear that the construction, repair, restoration, or preservation of war memorials is classified as "heritage conservation", rather than welfare or remembrance activity. As heritage conservation is not one of the RBL charitable purposes contained in its Royal Charter, the RBL are not legally permitted to use its funds for this type of work.

4.1 New Memorials

All new memorials must share the ethos of the charitable objectives, which honour the fallen, recognise service and sacrifice and foster pride in our country.

Organisations seeking to erect a memorial will need to comply with the following eligibility criteria:

4.1.1 A properly constituted national organisation which represents the following:

- HM Armed Forces
- Commonwealth Armed Forces or foreign services under British command
- Civilian Services
- Charitable Emergency services
- Reserved Occupations and civilian organisations set up to support a war effort.

- 4.1.2 The detailed design and execution of the memorial may be formally delegated to either a subordinate branch of a national organisation or an appropriately supported organisation.
- 4.1.3 The memorials will honour organisations and causes but not individuals either specifically or named on the memorial.
- 4.1.4 Memorials to animals will not be approved; memorials to an Armed Forces or civilian services operational unit where the animal is an integral part of the support will be eligible.
- 4.1.5 The applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with the development, dedication, insurance and maintenance of the memorial.
- 4.1.6 Applicants/stakeholders, users and all other associated organisations that use or refer to this document, or any other Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens document or publication, should be aware that the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens branding is protected. Therefore, prior approval must be given by the Gardens for the use of any Gardens printed or electronic materials, logo, branding, etc. in any news release, newsletters, flyers, website, social media account or promotional or printed materials. All enquiries and applications for use should be referred to the Gardens Marketing Manager who will consider the details and respond as quickly as possible. Such approval will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 4.1.7 As a registered charity the Gardens cannot permit onsite the use of any fundraising activity (by any party, group or individual) other than for the provision of the Royal British Legion charity.

4.2 Applications

- 4.2.1 All decisions on the eligibility and design sit with the Landscape and Memorials Advisory Committee. This Committee is made up of an external independent chairman, the Royal British Legion – Director of Remembrance, the General Manager, the Head of Estates, the Grounds and Landscape Manager, and up to four other independent advisors who have appropriate experience and knowledge e.g. landscape architect, town and country planner, heritage specialists. The committee must have a minimum attendance of four or more members to form a quorum, if the committee meets with four members there must be an equal balance of two independent advisers and two members of Gardens staff.
- 4.2.2 If an application is not approved or an organisation is unhappy with a committee decision, the committee will accept appeals if new information is made available, but they have the final say and there is no higher appeal body.

- 4.2.3 All applications or amendment requests must be submitted on the current appropriate application form which will be provided following initial advisory consultations with the appropriate Gardens staff. The fee payable for a full application is £1,000+VAT (£1200 incl VAT) and the fee for consideration of an amendment is £200+VAT (£240 incl VAT).
- 4.2.4 Approved memorials must be fully installed to the agreed drawings and completed to the satisfaction of the Gardens Head of Estates within 2 years of the approval of the application. After that date, the memorial application will need to be resubmitted. This is because space for memorials is in demand and an allocated space cannot be held aside indefinitely for a proposed memorial. Extensions may be granted by the committee only in extenuating circumstances E.g., The Gardens delay installation due to a site constraint, the memorial is of a significant cost, and fundraising targets have substantially been achieved but a short extension is required, or due to Force Majeure. Extensions must be requested in writing to The Head of Estates and will be responded to formally.
- 4.2.5 Memorial construction must be completed within two months of commencement unless the installation is complex and a programme in excess of two months is formally agreed in writing with the Head of Estates prior to commencement of the installation. Memorials must be installed a minimum of two months prior to any dedication ceremony, service, or event, if this is not achieved the Gardens reserves the right to postpone the event at no cost to the Gardens. Covering or sheeting of memorials from completion to dedication will not be permitted. Covering the memorial on the day of dedication with a flag or suitable unveiling cloth is permitted.
- 4.2.6 The Royal British National Legion Remembrance Gardens has ethical and sustainable procurement policies. Organisations installing memorials on site must follow and evidence if required ethical and sustainable sourcing and procurement processes. Organisations must support, adhere to and ensure their suppliers support and adhere to all guidance and legislation in relation to slavery, human trafficking, child labour, human rights, equality, diversity, inclusion, freedom of association and collective bargaining, working environment, real living wages and remuneration, and anti-bribery and corruption. Organisations and their suppliers are expected to actively demonstrate a commitment to comply with relevant guidance and industry best practices. Whilst there is a general presumption against the use of timber and materials that will degrade over time. If forest-derived materials are to be considered, evidence of a demonstrable chain of custody will be required, such as certification to FSC or an equivalent recognised standard, particularly where materials may be sourced from regions at higher risk of deforestation. Where stone or other raw materials are used, organisations must undertake appropriate due diligence to ensure that sourcing does not present risks related to modern slavery or human rights abuses. This may include ethical audits or equivalent supplier assurance mechanisms, recognising the complexity of such supply chains beyond tier one suppliers. Organisations should reduce the environmental impact of the memorial and its installation as far as possible, and all environmental legislation must be complied with. Energy, carbon, plastics and packaging use relating to the memorial

and its installation should be reduced as far as possible. Waste must be minimised and recycled to prevent landfill. All finishes, coatings, treatments, adhesives or other chemical substances used in the memorial must comply with applicable UK legislation (including UK REACH), ensuring that substances are appropriately controlled and safe for both the environment and public interaction. Our [Modern Slavery Act transparency statement | Royal British Legion](#) can be accessed with this link for guidance and our sustainable procurement policy is available on request.

- 4.2.7 It is vital that the Gardens continues to protect and further build on its reputation and to attract increased footfall to the site and its memorials. Consequently, all proposals for public relations activities around memorials, or invitations to bring journalists and other media representatives on site, must be shared and approved by the Gardens Head of Marketing and/or communications lead.

For all memorials and events, the Gardens and its public relations suppliers will work closely with applicants and any relevant external stakeholders that may be involved to ensure the success of public relations activities. For instance, this may include ground-breaking, build progress milestones, dedication and any subsequent annual services of remembrance. Applicants will generally lead discussions about public relations, however the Gardens will at times, and at its discretion, manage key aspects of public relations activity.

The Gardens reserves the right to film, photograph and report on the memorial and any associated events. The Gardens does not allow any drones to be operated over the grounds during opening hours. The use of any drone must be arranged and agreed with the Gardens Head of Marketing and/or communications lead in advance of the operation. Permission will not be granted unless sufficient documentation relating to pilots' licence, risk assessment and insurance is provided.

4.3 Design considerations

Memorials can take the form of built memorials, works of art, natural landscape features or infrastructure projects. There are no hard and fast rules for the design or materials but there is an expectation that all memorials will be of high quality, creativity and longevity. All designs must be aesthetically and operationally sympathetic to the landscape in which they are sited. Artifacts or historical objects are unlikely to be accepted unless they are an integral part of the design of the memorial and longevity can be assured.

4.3.1 Signage and interpretation

The interpretation on the memorial is an extremely important part of any design and has to be approved by the Landscape and Memorials Committee at the earliest stage, it is not something that can just be added at the end of the process.

The preferred method of providing interpretation is to include it in the actual design of the memorial.

If it is felt necessary to have standalone interpretation, then the longevity of the interpretation should ideally match that of the memorial itself.

Any interpretation wording should be kept to a minimum, the maximum permitted will be three to four small groups of text – reading age no greater than 11 in an accessible location, style and font size.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances all engraving should be the normal combination of upper and lower case.

The applicant must provide detailed background and information about the memorial and the stories it represents that will be held and displayed on the Gardens publicly accessible data base. A template will be provided for this upon approval of the application. The introduction must be no more than 300 words and may be used, in full or part, by the Gardens for marketing purposes and on our media channels.

4.3.2 Addition of QR Codes

QR codes are permitted on memorials subject to design approval.

The requirements are as follows:

- Must be added to the memorial with minimal additional material or inscription, it may only be a portal to target website.
- Must be in-keeping with the current memorial design and material.
- Must be in a prominent accessible position.
- The information on the target website must be maintained at all times and state clearly a contact at the host organisation that the user can contact if they have any queries.
- The QR code target website must be active and up to date at all times. Should the Gardens become aware that the QR code target website has become inactive, or that the website contains inaccurate or inappropriate content, the Gardens reserves the right to remove the QR code from the memorial with immediate effect. The Gardens will endeavour to contact the memorial owner prior to taking any such action, but this cannot be guaranteed.

4.3.3 Benches

In order to control the amount of hard landscape, benches will not be approved unless they were an integral part of the original design or there are exceptional circumstances.

4.3.4 Flag Poles

In order to control the amount of hard landscape and protect panorama views of the Gardens. Flag Poles would not be approved unless they were an integral part of the original design and only if there are exceptional circumstances.

4.3.5 Sponsors, Artists and Constructors

The memorial cannot include bricks, pavements or similar with names on that have been sold to finance the memorial. It is permissible to have bricks, pavements or similar to dedicate relevant units or parts of an organisation. The names of sponsors, artists or constructors cannot be included on the memorial or any associated interpretation boards.

4.3.6 Names

Memorials with individual names will not be approved. The exceptions will be HM government department sponsored memorials that have the infrastructure and capacity to exercise due diligence in connection with the names.

4.3.7 Accessibility

As the site is a combination of Gardens, woodland and memorials there is an acceptance that all areas cannot be made fully accessible. The Gardens is committed to ensuring that any visitor is able to access a significant part of the site and that will include the nationally significant memorials such as the Armed Forces Memorial. Individual organisations will have their own accessibility requirements, and the Gardens will work with them to ensure they can be delivered. We are however not able to commit to approving new paths, even if funded by the sponsoring organisation, to every part of the site.

4.3.8 Light, sound and power

Designs and artists submissions must be sympathetic to the quiet reflective general nature of the Gardens and understanding of its interface with natural surroundings and biodiversity. In general, there is no power to areas where memorials are placed. Power is not available to be supplied to memorials. The presumption will be against the use of light or sound unless using completely natural resources or elements.

4.4 Maintenance and Repairs

As a charity without public funding, it is a condition of all memorial installations that there is an appropriate maintenance scheme put in place. The memorial owner or plot holder is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the entire plot area. This is defined as the area within the boundary of the plot or where there is no defined boundary the entire installation(s), any related areas such as interpretation features, hard landscaped areas and horticultural features including the grass area that interfaces the memorial and all its features.

The Gardens will take on this responsibility on receipt of an endowment or by annual payments. Alternatively, the memorial organisation can employ a third-party contractor to carry out the work. If the memorial organisation should decide to engage third party contractor to carry out any work, the contractor must comply with all good industry practice, legislation and the Gardens site and safety rules. In addition, the Contractor must hold the appropriate employers, public and products liability insurance. A minimum of £5,000,000 cover is required in relation to Public Liability. It is a condition of application

approval; the memorial organisation must prove its longevity for the life of the memorial to ensure maintenance will be continuous. If the memorial organisation cannot prove it will last for the life of the memorial an in-perpetuity maintenance agreement must be agreed with the Gardens to preserve the condition of the memorial for its life. All maintenance arrangements must be agreed before installation commences, in perpetuity agreements or the first year's annual costs must be paid to the Gardens prior to commencement of installation.

In the case of third-party arrangements, the Gardens retains the right to remove memorials if the third-party maintenance is not undertaken and the memorial becomes dilapidated or unsafe. The sponsor organisation will be given a year's notice to arrange remedial action prior to a final decision to remove the memorial.

It is also a condition of all memorial installations that there are suitable arrangements in place to repair the memorial in the event that material/accidental damage, flood damage and terrorism damage occurs in place in relation to the memorial and plot.

4.5 Memorial Amendments/Changes

Amendments to memorials, plots, gardens or features will be considered by the Landscape and Memorials Advisory Committee in the same manner as a new memorial.

Additional stones and features will be considered on the following basis:

- Proof that an additional inscription on the existing memorial cannot be satisfactorily accommodated.
- Any additional stone, wood or metal feature to accommodate the wording is sympathetic in materials, design and scale to the existing memorial.
- Any additional feature must enhance the area and not spoil or detract from the aesthetics and symbolism of the original memorial.
- The applicant's plot being of an appropriate size and form to satisfactorily accommodate any additional item without detriment to the existing site layout.

4.6 Alternative Methods of Recognition on Site

There is an understanding that individuals and organisations that do not meet our memorial criteria do want to support the Gardens and be represented on site. This can happen in three ways:

4.6.1 Art Installations

The work must be of high quality, and in sympathy with both the subject and surrounding landscape. The concept and design should also consider the typical Gardens visitor and be sensitive to his or her needs. Regardless of design, the artwork should be durable and as far

as possible be maintenance-free. The responsibility for the maintenance of this sort of feature remains with the sponsor.

The term “memorial” should not be used in any interpretation

The decision on whether an artistic feature can be installed on site lies solely with the Landscape and Memorials Advisory Committee

4.6.2 Site Infrastructure and landscape Improvements/enhancements

The landscape master plan supports the enhancement of the landscape with wildflower planting, shrubs and specimen trees; organisations may be able to contribute to the enrichment of the natural environment by supporting these woodland initiatives.

In certain circumstances it may be possible for organisations to sponsor part of the site infrastructure e.g. a road, a new bridge.

The name of the organisation can be incorporated in agreed signage, but it will not be referred to as a memorial.

4.6.3 Gardens fundraising schemes

The Tree of Cherished Memories which sits in a pleasant remembrance space at the Gardens, is the only option for people to commission a dedication to an individual or loved one. Dedications are available to be engraved and attached to the Tree of Cherished Memories for different time periods and varying donation levels.

Alternative fundraising schemes may be developed – when in place this will enable people to support the ongoing development of the site but will not impact the ongoing operations of the site – the terms and conditions will make it clear that the individual has no ownership of any individual tree or object.

5.0 Suspended Schemes

As of January 2019, the following four schemes are suspended – they will be reviewed periodically and these or similar schemes may be restarted. In the interim we are not opening a waiting list.

- **New Tree plaques** – It is permissible to add one or more plaques to a tree already owned by the applicant that already has a plaque, and it is permissible to upgrade an old plastic plaque with a new one. No more than 3 plaques will be permitted on any one tree.
- **Replacement Wooden Benches** – Replacement wooden benches are generally allowed but must be sourced by the Gardens and the individual must agree and fund a cleaning and maintenance arrangement prior to installation. One or more plaques may be affixed to a bench already owned by the applicant that already has a plaque. It is

permissible to upgrade an existing plastic plaque with a new one. No more than 3 plaques in total will be permitted.

- **Paviours**
- **Tribute Tiles**

6.0 Responsibilities

The implementation of this policy is delegated to the Head of Estates, who is responsible for ensuring:

- This policy is communicated clearly to all applicants and stakeholders
- Maintain oversight of all memorial installations and alterations
- Provide guidance on appropriate design standards, location suitability, and historical accuracy
- Ensure that all memorials are maintained in accordance with Health and Safety, and conservation standards

The Landscapes and Memorial Advisory Committee are responsible for ensuring:

- Review and assess all memorial applications and alteration requests
- Ensure all proposals meet the criteria of national significance, sensitivity and appropriateness
- Consult with relevant heritage bodies, veterans' groups, and other stakeholders as needed

Applicants (Individuals or Organisations) are responsible for ensuring:

- Submitting complete and accurate applications, including supporting documentation and design details
- Ensure that any funding for the installation and long-term maintenance of the memorial is secured
- Comply with all conditions set by the National Remembrance Gardens regarding design, location, and maintenance.
- Report and damage, deterioration, or proposed changes to the National Remembrance Gardens before acting.

The Landscape and Memorial Team are responsible for:

- Carrying out routine inspections and maintenance of all memorials in coordination with Gardens management
- Ensure that memorials are safe, accessible, and presentable to the public
- Notify Gardens management of any memorials requiring repair, conservation, or attention.

7. Policy Review

As the site develops, we have the opportunity to learn from our experiences and the Landscape and Memorials Advisory Committee will have to consider whether those learnings should be used to change the Memorial Policy. There may be occasions where the Committee has developed a view on a particular aspect of design or implementation that

are not reflected in this document. These will be advised to the applicant at the earliest opportunity by the Gardens operational team.
The policy will be reviewed at the discretion of the Landscape and Memorials Advisory Committee.

Appendices

Appendix A: Eligibility of causes

Category 1 – Would be approved

Cause	Examples	Comment
British Armed Forces	Regiments, Squadrons, Individual Ships, Support Divisions etc.	Existing and antecedent
Conscripted Occupations	Bevin Boys	
Civilian Emergency Services	Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance	
Charitable Emergency Services	RNLI	
Military Campaigns that British forces were involved in	Gulf War, Palestinian Conflict	
Armed Forces of Commonwealth Countries	Royal Canadian Airforce	
Civilian Emergency Services of Commonwealth Countries	Nigerian Police, British South Africa Police	

Category 2 – Consideration would be given

Cause	Examples	Comment
Reserved Occupations	Quarrying, Mining,	
Civilian Organisations set up to support the war effort	Land Army, Munitions Workers	
Armed forces of foreign countries that were British Protectorates	Sultan of Oman	
Foreign Countries that supported UK during conflict	Polish Memorial, Royal Norwegian Navy	
Military or Civilian Service Animal support including handlers	Army Dog Unit (NI), RAF Police Dogs	
Organisations that had Pals battalions	Leyton Orient	
Companies that had supported the war effort		

through their employees		
Schools with connection to military service	Cheltenham College, Duke of York's Military	
Victims of War	Pity of War	
Victims of Terrorism	British Victims of Overseas Terrorism	
Military Charities	SSAFA, Sapper Support	
Existing national organisations that supported the war effort	Post Office, Railway Workers	

Category 3 – Would not be approved

Cause	Examples	Comment
Individuals		
Animals		
Victims of Medical Conditions	SANDS, Edwards Trust	
Victims of natural disasters		
Overseas Military conflicts that do not involve UK		
Victims of oppression in countries outside UK	Ukrainian Holodomor	
Victims of individual acts of terrorism	Sousse	
Fraternity and sorority organisations	Freemasons, Women's Institute	

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Section updated	Description of changes
16	1 August 2026	AA	1, 3, 4 All	Charitable objectives, Titles, addition of light, sound and power constraints, addition of modern slavery and sustainability. Name change

