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# Memorial Testing Policy

March 2023

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# Introduction

In accordance with current government guidance periodic assessment/ inspections of memorials should be undertaken. The Council's Memorial Safety Policy requires inspections to be undertaken at Tonbridge Cemetery and the Closed Churchyards in Tonbridge every five years. Inspections will be undertaken in accordance with the following approach. Visual and hand tests should be carried out by a person with a working knowledge of memorials and their defects and/or good knowledge of the memorials at Tonbridge Cemetery and the Closed Churchyards in Tonbridge.

The Council wishes to operate a proportionate approach to managing the risks associated with memorials, based on good practice. It has, therefore, carried out a risk assessment of its memorial stock and has implemented testing/repairs to establish a baseline. This testing policy is to ensure that any further deterioration in memorials is identified and dealt with in an appropriate timescale.

## Step 1 – A visual check for obvious signs that the memorial is likely to be unstable.

An initial visual inspection of all memorials will be undertaken in accordance with an approved Risk Assessment. Risk Assessments will be sought from contractors undertaking inspections and be approved by the Council prior to the commencement of work. Visual inspections will include assessing signs of:

- Damage or eroded bonding
- Movement of parts of a memorial from its original position
- Kerb stones breaking apart
- Undermined or unstable foundations
- Leaning memorials – particularly if there is evidence of recent movement
- Evidence of structural damage or disturbance (e.g. cracks)
- The presence of vegetation, which may cause cracks to widen

## Step 2 – A hand test to confirm no stability defects or identify stability problems.

Subject to a satisfactory visual test, hand tests will be undertaken to all memorials. Risk Assessments will be sought from contractors undertaking hand tests and be approved by the Council prior to the commencement of work.

Generally a hand test will be undertaken by standing to one side of the memorial and applying a firm but steady pressure in different directions to determine to what degree, if any, the headstone is loose.

## Step 3 – Recording data

Details of the name of the interned and location will be recorded alongside the observations/recommendations from the visual and/or hand test.

## Step 4 – Stabilisation of memorials

Any memorials deemed unsafe will be stabilised in accordance with the Council's Memorial Safety Policy.

### Additional information

**Plinths/Lawn Memorials** – These will be inspected for stability within the ground, for good sound condition and trip points.

**Tombs** – Tombs will be inspected from all sides visually, to ensure all components are correctly installed. Pressure will be applied both along and across the tomb to ensure stability.

**Larger Heavier Memorials** – If deemed unsafe larger heavier memorials may require further assessment by a suitable qualified structural engineer.

**Vases** – Vases will be inspected by hand for secure fitting.

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