

BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Marie Snell

Bradfield Village Hall, The Street, Bradfield, Essex CO11 2UU Tel: 07851 760264

E-mail: clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk

MEMORIAL MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY POLICY



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INTRODUCTION

This policy has been produced to set out Bradfield Parish Council's position with regards to memorial safety, the responsibilities of the Council, its contractors, memorial masons and deed holders. The policy provides an overview of the actions that will be taken to minimise risk to users of the cemeteries and churchyard within Bradfield and under their remit.

Since Victorian times memorials have been erected at the head of a grave as a permanent reminder of those buried within. It is often wrongly assumed that memorials are permanent structures, installed to the highest standards and will last forever without need for repair.

Unfortunately this assumption has cost the lives of several people nationally in recent years, most of all who have been children and there have been countless accidents ranging from bruising to severe crush injuries and bone breakages. Local authorities now have to tackle years of neglect and in some cases poor workmanship.

The memorials do not belong to the Council, they remain the property and the responsibility of the Deed Holder to the Exclusive Rights of Burial.

RESPONSIBILITIES REQUIRED

The following parties have responsibility for memorial safety in Council cemeteries:

The Council has health and safety responsibilities to its employees, contractors and visitors to cemeteries. The Council has a responsibility to staff (Section 2 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) and a responsibility to visitors (Section 3 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a legal duty on the Council to assess the risks from cemetery structures and work activities and ensure that the risks are controlled.

The Deed Holder, or successor in title, of a memorial has the ultimate responsibility to maintain it so as not to present a hazard to themselves, members of the public or cemetery staff, and as such are therefore responsible and liable for all expenditure incurred to make safe their memorial in the event that their memorial is found to be unsafe or dangerous condition. This is not the responsibility of the Council.

NOTICE OF INTENT

Prior to any memorials being inspected, reasonable steps will be taken by the Council to inform grave owners, Deed Holders or successors in title, and members of the public, of the intention to inspect memorials and reducing the risk posed by unsafe memorials.



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This will involve:

- Giving advance formal notice in a local newspaper/magazine of any inspection regime commencing.
- Publishing details of the assessment and methodology on the council's website.
- Placing public notices in the cemetery.
- Where practicable, to notify the owner, Deed Holder or successor in title.

MEMORIAL FIXING

All masons are required to fix to NAMM standards (National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Safe Practise) in line with British Standard BS8415. No memorial can be fixed without permission first being granted by the Parish Council.

FORMAL INSPECTION PROGRAMME

All individuals carrying out memorial safety inspections shall be trained by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and obtain certificates of competence which shall be held on their personnel file.

Information notices regarding all inspections shall be placed on the noticeboard within the cemetery grounds.

Memorials will first be inspected visually and then hand tested as per the training received by the ICCM – photographs of all memorials will be taken and kept on the in-house computerised burial system. Photographic evidence of failed memorials will be taken in addition to the original memorial photograph.

Three categories will be used to measure the memorials tested :-

Priority 1 - **Immediate action** to be taken to make the memorial safe and stop anyone from accessing it until problem is resolved (hand pressure causes memorial to fall over)

Priority 2 – Memorial is not an immediate danger but is not fully stable and in need of temporary support. (hand pressure causes movement but does not fall over). Monitor every **12 months** to assess further deterioration

Priority 3 – Memorial is stable and safe. Re-inspect in **3 years**

Make safe

- **Priority 1** - Memorials found to have failed this inspection and of larger size within our Cemetery will be made safe by:
 - Cordoning off, for larger memorials that fail the visual test. The cordon will need to cover the fall radius of the highest point of the



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memorial and not just the memorial itself

- Notify grave deed holder where possible

- **Priority 2 –**

- Temporary strapping to a post with notice (for 18 months)
- Notify grave deed holder where possible
- Laying flat when no other viable option is available (but not creating a trip hazard)
- The Council needs to ascertain what memorials are of social,

architectural

and historic value and the impact on the character of the cemeteries making safe will have.

Rolling programme of inspections

Memorials which fail the test and are temporarily made safe will be inspected again one year from the make safe date to ascertain whether they have been repaired and/or stonemason instructed by the grave deed owner. Informal visual inspections will also be carried out by Council staff during their normal working days i.e. locally to where graves are being dug and grass cutting operations are taking place; should any memorials fail these random visual tests the employee will report their findings to the Council office.

COMMUNICATION

The Council is aware that memorial testing is a sensitive issue for those involved. Regular communication will be maintained so that the general public, staff and Councillors are aware and understand each stage of the testing process. Communication will take place through:

- Local newspapers / local magazine
- The Council's website
- The Council's Facebook page
- Cemetery noticeboard
- Other Council owned noticeboards

MEMORIAL TYPES AND SIZES

Lawn Graves

- Headstone only; maximum height: **3 feet (90 cm)** from ground level
- Maximum width: **2 feet 6 inches (75 cm)**
- Base not to exceed **1 foot (30 cm)** front to back
- No kerbs, fencing, or chippings allowed

Traditional Graves

- Headstone with optional full kerb set
- Maximum headstone height: **3 feet 6 inches (107 cm)**
- Full length kerb: maximum **6 feet 6 inches (198 cm)** long by **2 feet 6 inches (75 cm)** wide



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- Low-level planting permitted within kerbs

Cremated Remains Plots

- Flat tablet only, flush with ground level
- Maximum size: **600mm x 600mm (2ft x 2ft)**
- No vertical headstones or planting

Materials and Design

- Memorials must be constructed from durable stone.
- Artificial materials (plastic, resin, glass, etc.) are not permitted.
- Designs must be respectful; religious or cultural symbols must be appropriate.
- Bradfield Parish Council reserves the right to refuse memorials deemed unsuitable.

Inscriptions

- Inscriptions must be approved in advance.
- Language must be respectful and not contain offensive or controversial content.
- Additions to inscriptions require written approval and may incur a fee.

Installation and Maintenance

- Memorials must be installed by an approved, registered memorial mason (BRAMM or NAMM).
- All installations must comply with BS8415 (British Standard for memorial safety).
- Grave owners are responsible for the upkeep and safety of memorials.
- Bradfield Parish Council conducts periodic safety inspections and may lay down or remove unsafe memorials after notice.

Flowers and Ornaments

- Fresh or artificial flowers are permitted in vases attached to or integrated with the memorial.
- No glass containers, breakable ornaments, solar lights, or wind chimes.
- Temporary tributes (e.g., wreaths) may remain for up to **30 days**.
- Bradfield Parish Council may remove items without notice if they are considered hazardous, offensive, or deteriorated.

Policy adopted by Full Council on the 10th January 2023 – Minute Ref: 160/22a
Last reviewed: 2nd September 2025



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BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF MEMORIALS IN COUNCIL CEMETERY/CHURCHYARD

LOCAL AUTHORITIES CEMETERIES ORDER 1977 HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that inspections of memorials, in
MILL LANE CEMETERY, controlled by Bradfield Parish Council, are to be
carried out to assess the safety of memorials.

The inspections will be carried out on a rolling programme to identify
memorials that are an immediate hazard or unstable.

This inspection programme will take place on

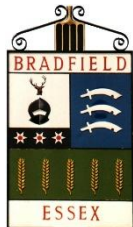
Where memorials are considered to be an immediate hazard the Council
will place a notice at the grave and take action to remove the hazard by
laying the memorial down.

Where memorials are considered to be unstable the Council will place a
notice on the memorial and temporarily support with wood/metal stakes or
bonding which meets the standards of the National Association of
Memorial Masons and write to the memorial owner to carry out repairs to
ensure the memorial is safe.

The Council will make every effort to recover the cost of making
memorials safe when carrying out work in default, from the memorial
owner.

Full details can be obtained by contacting the Clerk on 07851 760264 or
emailing clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk

Signed: *Mrs ML Snell*
Clerk to Bradfield Parish Council



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APPENDIX B

BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COUNCIL'S ONGOING SAFETY PROGRAMME
NOW INVOLVES THE INSPECTION OF ALL MEMORIALS AT**

MILL LANE CEMETERY

WORKS WILL COMMENCE :

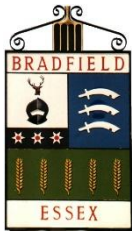
- **A NOTICE AND TEMPORARY SUPPORT WILL BE PLACED ON ANY MEMORIAL THAT HAS NOT MET THE HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**
- **A LETTER WILL BE POSTED TO THE REGISTERED GRAVE RIGHTS OWNER WHERE POSSIBLE**
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TEST MEMORIALS YOURSELF AND CONTACT A QUALIFIED MEMORIAL MASON TO UNDERTAKE ANY WORK ON YOUR BEHALF**
- **ALL MEMORIALS REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER TO KEEP IN GOOD SAFE ORDER**

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION TO ENSURE OUR CEMETERY IS A SAFE PLACE FOR RESIDENTS, VISITORS AND STAFF

**SHOULD YOU HAVE AN QUERIES OR CONCERNS REGARDING A MEMORIAL
PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK ON 07851 760264 or E-MAIL**

clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk

SIGNED AND DATED:



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APPENDIX C

BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COUNCIL'S ONGOING SAFETY PROGRAMME NOW INVOLVES THE INSPECTION OF ALL MEMORIALS TO CHECK THEY HAVE BEEN FIXED TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD BS8415

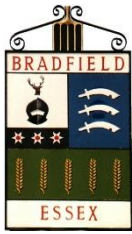
A NOTICE AND TEMPORARY SUPPORT WILL BE PLACED ON ANY MEMORIAL THAT DOES NOT MEET THE REQUIRED SAFETY STANDARDS

ALL MEMORIALS REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OWNER TO KEEP IN GOOD SAFE REPAIR

WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION TO ENSURE OUR CEMETERY IS A SAFE PLACE FOR RESIDENTS, VISITORS AND STAFF

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING A MEMORIAL

**PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK ON 07851 760264 OR E-MAIL
clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk**



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APPENDIX D

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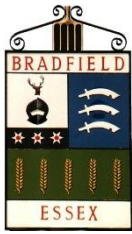
IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE

THIS MEMORIAL HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE UNSAFE AND IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE ATTENTION TO PREVENT INJURY TO YOURSELVES AND MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHILST VISITING THE CEMETERY

PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK AT THE COUNCIL OFFICE AS A MATTER OF URGENCY TO ADVISE OF YOUR INTENTIONS TO MAKE SAFE

WE CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE REGARDING THIS MATTER INCLUDING DETAILS OF REGISTERED STONE MASONS TO ENSURE THE MEMORIAL IS FIXED TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEMORIAL MASON REGULATIONS

PLEASE CONTACT THE CLERK ON 07851 760264 OR E-MAIL clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk



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APPENDIX E

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Memorial Safety Programme within Mill Lane Cemetery

Grave reference :

The Council are continuing the memorial safety programme and have recently inspected the above cemetery highlighting the memorials which are unsafe.

Our aim is to ensure the safety of all residents, visitors and staff while within the cemetery and the Council does not wish to cause any unnecessary distress.

Please note as owner/next of kin to the rights of burial of the above grave it is your responsibility to ensure the continued safe maintenance of any memorial thereon.

Your memorial in this instance has been identified as being unsafe and in need of immediate remedial work. We would be grateful, if you have not already done so, if you would contact a memorial mason to arrange repair. You should also contact the clerk on 07851 760264 or e-mail clerk@bradfieldparishcouncil.org.uk to advise your action.

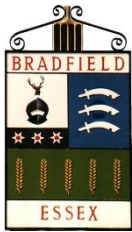
We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter. Should you require any further information or assistance regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact the Council offices.

Yours sincerely

For and on behalf of Bradfield Parish Council

Mrs M Snell

Clerk to Bradfield Parish Council



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APPENDIX F

BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL INFO AND ADVICE ON MEMORIAL SAFETY - YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Why are we carrying out headstone safety checks ?

This work is required to ensure our cemeteries are safe places for visitors and for employees working in them. Tragically, there has been a number of incidents in other cemeteries around the country where unstable memorials have toppled onto people, including children, resulting in fatalities and serious injuries. The Health and Safety Executive are taking an active interest in Memorial Safety and have issued warnings to Local Authorities to insist they have policies and procedures in place to ensure the stability of the memorials. The Council has a responsibility for the safety of visitors to the cemetery. (The Health and Safety Executive is a Central Government Enforcement Agency responsible for the general health and safety in public places).

Who is responsible for keeping my memorial repaired and in safe condition ?

The grave owner or their next of kin is responsible for keeping the headstone/memorial repaired and in a good safe condition. However, the Council has the obligation of making our cemetery safe, and can use reasonable means to make safe any unsafe memorials. A warning notice will be attached if it is found to be in an unsafe condition and supported if feasible.

What does the safety test involve and who carries out the test ?

Each headstone will be given a visual check to assess the condition of the memorial. Each headstone will then be given a gentle hands on push test to check the memorials stability. The results of the test is logged and recorded initially on paper and then added to a computerised system at a later date along with a photograph. The checks are carried out by qualified council employees who have attended the I.C.C.M registered training courses.

What will you do with headstones that fail the test ?

Once a headstone is found unsafe the Council has a duty of care to make sure it is safe immediately because the cemetery is a public place. Headstones which fail the test will be temporarily made safe or warning notices applied to the memorial. We will contact grave owners as soon as possible to inform them where possible.

My headstone has been temporarily supported/banded and/or warning notice applied to the headstone and I wasn't contacted. Why ?

Our immediate priority is to make safe any unstable memorials found during inspection to ensure our cemeteries are safe places for the public to enter. We write to grave owners of unstable memorials at the last known address taken from our records as soon as possible following the inspection. If we have not contacted you it may be because we do not have on record your current address.

Will my headstone be subject to further tests in the future ?

Yes, we will be carrying out these tests at regular intervals in the future. All memorials should be inspected at least once every five years.