

Alvington Parish Council

Churchyard Memorial Safety policy and procedure

Date adopted: 6th May 2020

This document aims to be a proportionate, sensible and risk-based approach to safety. It will be reviewed by Alvington Parish Council every two years. **Next review: May 2022.**

Frequency

Whole site to be done every: year

Higher-risk memorials to be done every: 6 months

Higher-risk memorials are:

1. Memorials next to the pathway: to be identified and listed as part of the first survey
2. Memorials attracting higher footfall due to design/fame of the person they commemorate: to be identified and listed as part of the first survey

In addition, there should be permanent signage at all entrances to the churchyard advising visitors that if any damage is done to memorials or if they spot any damage, please contact the parish clerk.

Method for assessing memorials:

- A visual check for obvious signs that a memorial is likely to be unstable.
- Where a visual check suggests no stability defects, use a simply hand test to confirm the memorial's stability or identify stability problems
- If the memorial presents a risk, report this to the Clerk, who can arrange any actions

Survey procedure

Give notice via signs on entrances to churchyard 2 months in advance of testing, and also give notice on website and on Facebook.

Survey is best done in a pair where possible – one doing the manual checks and the other recording any notes for action.

Work methodically to ensure all memorials are inspected.

Method for assessing memorials:

- A visual check for obvious signs that a memorial is likely to be unstable.
- Where a visual check suggests no stability defects, use a simply hand test to confirm the memorial's stability or identify stability problems

Two outcomes - either

SAFE: no further action than recording that outcome, OR

UNSAFE (see below)

Unsafe memorials – do the following:

- **Immediately:** staking and banding to make it safe temporarily (contact Clerk for assistance as needed)
- **As soon as possible:** A notice affixed to the band advising that the memorial was found to be unsafe and that action is being taken to rectify this (N.B.: notice should not be affixed to the memorial itself as this can be distressing to families of the deceased).
- **As soon as possible:** Notify the Clerk, who will make all attempts to notify the family responsible for the memorial.
- **Within two weeks:** Clerk will contact the owner of the memorial contacted in order to resolve the safety issue in the longer term.

The owner of the memorial and so it is their responsibility to repair it. They must use a registered repair company. Find local BRAMM-registered masons at <http://www.bramm-uk.org/find-masons/>

No one but a qualified mason should make the repair.

Letters to relatives – suggested actions with timescale

1. First letter within 2 weeks
2. Follow-up letter 1 month after first letter
3. Final letter 2 months after follow-up

When relative do not respond within six months it will be assumed that they will not make the repair.

- Monument may be staked and banded (wooden stakes from builders' merchants plus poly strapping / extra-long cable ties /weather-durable rope, or similar strong banding material) for the length of the contact period
- Elements of the monument may be laid flat to mitigate risk in the future
- Monument may be removed if no other solution is acceptable, though this would be a last resort and proportionate to risk, so only in extreme circumstances.
- The council may also wish, at their discretion, to fund the repair themselves, particularly if the memorial is of significant heritage/other value.