

Memorial Safety Inspections in St Helens & Newton-le-Willows Cemeteries



Memorial Safety Inspections

St Helens Bereavement Services staff are continually undertaking safety inspections of headstones within the cemetery. This work is required in compliance with Health & Safety requirements. The inspections are being carried out by trained officers who will make sure any work is carried out professionally and with due respect. Every headstone will be carefully examined and tested for stability to ensure that it is not in danger of toppling over and causing injury to visitors or employees working in the cemetery. Headstones that fail the test and are deemed to be unsafe will either be marked with a yellow warning sticker or laid flat. Grave owners will be notified by letter advising of the action taken and of the need to arrange the necessary repair work.

Visitors

Visitors to cemeteries should keep to footpaths, avoid touching any memorials and ensure their children are supervised at all times. Areas may be cordoned off where testing or repair work is under way. If this is the case, please contact a member of staff before entering the area.

Responsibilities

All headstones are owned by and are the responsibility of the grave owner or their next of kin. However, the Council has an obligation to inspect memorials and make safe any that are found to be in an unsafe condition. It is essential that our cemeteries are safe

places for people to come and pay their respects. There have been a number of fatalities in the past 20 years in other cemeteries in this country, most of whom have been children, and there have also been a number of accidents ranging from bruising to severe crush injuries and bone breakages when unsafe memorials have toppled onto people. We appreciate that people may be unhappy about what we have to do and we sincerely apologise if our actions cause distress. We understand how difficult it can be for families to see a memorial of a loved one laid flat and we want to help people deal with their unsafe memorials as quickly as possible. Anyone who wants to discuss this process or who needs information, please contact us.

Memorial Masons' Registration Scheme

It is essential that families do not attempt to move headstones that have been laid down or made temporarily safe. St Helens Council operate a Memorial Masons' Registration Scheme. This means that only registered stonemasons are allowed to work on memorials in St Helens and Newton-le-Willows cemeteries. A list of registered stonemasons is available upon request.

The Council ensure that all stone masons are BRAMM Registered Masons (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) and that All new memorials must be erected to BS 8415. British Standard 8415 applies to the fixing of safe memorials in our cemeteries and by using a BRAMM registered fixer they must work to this standard.

Insurance

Each stonemason on our approved list is required to advise you to purchase an appropriate insurance to protect your memorial. Should you require further information about insurance, please contact us.

Frequency of Inspections

Inspections of memorials are ongoing and each memorial will be inspected at least once every 5 years to ensure continued safety for visitors and employees working in the cemetery. Members of the public are asked for their understanding and co-operation in this process.

**If you need to contact us: The Cemetery & Crematorium Office is situated at:
St Helens Crematorium, Rainford Road, St Helens, WA10 6DF
Telephone: 01744 675490
Email: sthelenscemetery@sthelens.gov.uk**