



Policy

Placing Memorial Plaques on Council Owned Benches

Adopted: 08-07-2026

Chairman: Cllr. R. Walker

Minute Ref.: 260708/7

Full Council

This version of the Policy is based on that agreed at the 19 May 2026 Estates Committee, and approved by the Estates Committee on 24 June after considering the changes requested by the Full Council on 10 June.

It also includes resolutions agreed at the 08-07-2026 Full Council Meeting.

Administered by Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Longridge Town Council. To be reviewed every three years or sooner if circumstance's chance.

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Mission Statement

Endeavour through foresight and leadership, to enhance quality of life for residents and visitors. Working to enrich and nurture opportunity to protect and improve the built and natural environment and improve community pride.

1. Introduction and Purpose

Longridge Town Council recognises that memorial bench plaques provide a meaningful and lasting tribute to loved ones, and at the same time contribute to the character and amenity of the town's public spaces. This Policy establishes a clear, consistent and compassionate framework for the consideration of requests to install commemorative plaques on benches owned or maintained by the Town Council.

This Policy was developed following a resolution of Full Council on 10 December 2025, which directed the Town Clerk to prepare a written policy on memorial bench plaques. The resolution arose from a sympathetic request received from the family of a former Mayor of Longridge Town Council. The Council determined that, given the likelihood of further such requests in future, a written policy should be in place to ensure consistency of decision-making and fairness as between applicants.

This Policy applies to all applications received on or after the date of its adoption by Full Council. Any application that was received before the date of adoption and was awaiting determination will be considered under this Policy.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all benches owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council within the parish of Longridge. It does not apply to:

- Benches owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, or any other public or private body;
- Benches located on private land or land that is not under the ownership or control of the Town Council;
- Memorials other than plaques on benches (for example, dedicated benches in their entirety, memorial trees, or memorial inscriptions on other Council assets), which fall outside the scope of this Policy.

Where the Town Council receives an application that relates to a bench not under its ownership or control, the Town Clerk will write to the applicant within 10 working days to advise them and, where possible, to signpost them to the responsible authority.

3. Policy Objectives

The Council aims to:

- Provide a dignified and accessible process for families and others wishing to commemorate a loved one;
- Maintain the visual amenity and structural integrity of public benches and open spaces in Longridge;
- Ensure equitable and transparent administration of all applications, irrespective of the applicant's circumstances;
- Recover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, installation, and ongoing maintenance through the fees set out in this Policy;
- Manage the finite capacity of the Council's bench stock responsibly and fairly over time.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Who may apply

Applications may be submitted by:

- An immediate family member or legal next of kin of the deceased;
- A close friend or associate where no surviving family members exist, provided reasonable evidence of the connection is supplied;
- An organisation, community group, or charitable body wishing to commemorate a person of local significance.

The Council reserves the right to request supporting information to verify the applicant's relationship to the person being commemorated.

4.2 Persons who may be commemorated

Memorial plaques may be installed to commemorate:

- A deceased individual who had a connection to Longridge (for example, resided, worked, or had a strong community association with the town);
- A deceased individual where a Longridge location holds special meaning to the deceased or to the applicant.

Applications will not be considered in respect of living individuals.

5. Bench Availability and Location

Memorial plaques may only be affixed to benches that are owned or maintained by Longridge Town Council and that have capacity for a plaque. The Council will maintain a register of bench locations and their plaque availability (the "Bench Register"), which will form part of the Council's wider Asset Register and be reviewed periodically.

Applicants may express a preference for a particular bench location. The Council will endeavour to accommodate reasonable requests, but cannot guarantee a specific location. Bench availability will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to application approval.

Where a preferred bench is unavailable, the applicant will be offered an alternative of comparable character. The applicant may accept the alternative or withdraw their application, in which case any application fee paid will be refunded.

The Council, may from time to time review the need to install new benches to accommodate plaques, this will always be at the Council's discretion and will be subject to available funding.

Where capacity in a given area is limited, the Council may offer applicants the option of adding a further plaque to a bench that already carries a memorial plaque, up to a maximum of three plaques on any one bench.

Where no suitable bench is available, whether because demand in the applicant's preferred area is high or because no bench in that area has spare capacity, the Town Clerk will place the application on a waiting list. Applicants on the waiting list will be offered the next available bench, or capacity on an existing bench already carrying a plaque, in order of application date, and will be kept informed of their position on request.

A bench on which a memorial plaque is displayed remains, at all times, a public asset owned by Longridge Town Council and available for use by any member of the public. The presence of a plaque does not reserve the bench for the exclusive or preferential use of the applicant, their family, or any other person.

6. Application Process

6.1 How to apply

Applicants should complete the Council's Memorial Bench Plaque Application Form (Appendix A), available from the Town Council office and the Council's website, and submit it to the Town Clerk together with:

- The non-refundable application fee of £20 (see Section 9);
- The proposed plaque inscription for approval (see Section 7);
- Any additional information requested by the Town Clerk.

6.2 Consideration of applications

Applications will be considered by the Town Clerk under delegated authority. The Town Clerk may refer any application to the Estates Committee or to Full Council where the circumstances are unusual, where a decision of principle is required, or where the applicant or the person commemorated has a connection to the Town Council such that a decision by an officer alone might give rise to a perception of conflict.

The Council will acknowledge receipt of applications within five working days, and will aim to communicate a decision within 28 days of receipt of a complete application.

6.3 Right of review

Where an application is refused in whole or in part, the applicant may request a review by writing to the Town Clerk within 21 days of the decision. The review will be conducted by a panel of at least two councillors who were not involved in the original decision. The outcome of the review panel is final, save for any matter that may properly be the subject of complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

7. Plaque Inscription and Design

7.1 Permitted content

Inscriptions must be respectful, dignified, and appropriate for display in a public place. All inscriptions are subject to approval by the Town Clerk. Inscriptions should typically include:

- The full name (or commonly used name) of the person commemorated;
- The year of birth and year of death (e.g. 1945–2026), or dates in another clear format;
- A short tribute, dedication, or phrase (see character limit below).

7.2 Character limits and format

The standard plaque size is 100mm × 50mm, or such standard size 200mm x 50mm or 152 x 75mm as the Council adopts from time to time. The total inscription, including name, dates, and tribute, must not exceed three lines of text. The Town Clerk will advise on character limits based on the standard plaque template.

7.3 Restrictions

Inscriptions must not include:

- Promotional or commercial content, including business names or website addresses;
- Political statements, or religious statements likely to cause offence to members of the public;
- Content that is defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or otherwise contrary to law;
- Content that conflicts with the Council's equality and inclusion obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council reserves the right to decline or require amendment of any inscription that does not meet these requirements.

7.4 Plaque specification

Plaques will be supplied and installed by the Council, or its appointed contractor, to a consistent specification. Privately sourced plaques will not normally be accepted, in order to maintain a consistent visual appearance across the bench stock. Plaques will generally be manufactured from cast aluminium or brushed stainless steel, or such other durable material as the Council determines from time to time.

8. Duration and Renewal

Plaque agreements will run for a period of ten years from the date of installation. The Council does not enter into agreements in perpetuity.

The Council will write to the applicant (using the contact details supplied at the time of the most recent renewal or application) approximately six months before the expiry of the agreement to invite renewal.

If the applicant wishes to renew, a single renewal of five years may be granted on payment of the renewal fee set out in Section 9. Only one such renewal is available per agreement, giving a maximum total term of fifteen years; on expiry of the renewal period the bench will be made available for a new application. This renewal option does not apply retrospectively to plaques already installed under existing agreements.

If no renewal is requested within three months of the expiry of the agreement, the plaque may be removed by the Council and the bench made available for a new application. The Council will retain the removed plaque for a period of six months, during which time the applicant may collect it. After that time, the Council may dispose of the plaque at its discretion.

9. Fees and Charges

A fee is payable to cover the reasonable costs of plaque supply, inscription, installation, and administration. The current fee schedule is set out below. Fees are reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process.

Item	Description	Fee
Application fee	Payable on submission of the application; non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.	£20
Plaque supply and installation	Plaque supply to the Council's standard specification, inscription, and installation on the agreed bench.	£250
Transfer of agreement	Transfer of an existing agreement to a different family member or applicant.	£50
Renewal of agreement (5 years)	One-off renewal of the agreement for a further five years on expiry of the original ten-year term, available once per agreement (maximum total term of fifteen years). Not available retrospectively to agreements already in existence.	£50

The fees set out above are payable to Longridge Town Council and are inclusive of VAT where applicable. Fees may be reviewed by Full Council from time to time, and the version in force at the date of application or renewal will apply.

10. Maintenance, Replacement and Removal

10.1 Maintenance of benches

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and structural integrity of all Council-owned benches. The Council does not warrant that any particular bench will remain in any particular location, condition, or configuration for the duration of an agreement.

10.2 Decorative items and continued public use

- A bench carrying a memorial plaque remains in full public use at all times.
- No adornments of any kind are to be permitted on or around benches; the plaque is the only permitted addition.
- The Council reserves the right to remove any unauthorised item left on or around a bench without notice.

10.3 Responsibility of the applicant

The applicant is responsible for:

- Keeping the Town Clerk informed of any change to their contact details;
- Considering the renewal invitation issued at the six-month point before expiry of the agreement, and confirming whether or not they wish to renew;
- Notifying the Town Clerk of any visible damage to the plaque that they observe.

10.4 Replacement of plaques

Where a plaque is damaged or unreadable during the agreement period, the Council will:

- Replace the plaque at its own cost where the damage is attributable to the Council, its contractors, or due to normal weathering of the plaque material;
- Offer replacement to the applicant on payment of the replacement fee set out in Section 9, where the damage is attributable to vandalism, accident, or other cause not within the Council's responsibility.

10.5 Removal of plaques

A plaque may be removed by the Council in any of the following circumstances:

- On expiry of the agreement without renewal, in accordance with Section 8;
- Where the bench is to be replaced, relocated, or removed from the Council's estate, in which case the Council will work with the applicant to identify an alternative bench wherever practicable;
- Where the plaque has become damaged beyond reasonable repair and the applicant has declined to fund replacement;
- Where, exceptionally, the Council determines that the plaque is no longer appropriate (for example, on grounds of legal change, public sensitivity, or breach of this Policy).

The Council will give the applicant at least 28 days' written notice of any intended removal under the second, third, or fourth bullet above wherever practicable, using the contact details last supplied by the applicant.

11. Equality and Inclusion

Longridge Town Council is committed to providing a fair and accessible service to all members of the community. In administering this Policy, the Council will have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the public sector equality duty under section 149 of that Act. The Council will make reasonable adjustments to its processes to assist applicants who may have difficulty in using the standard application form (for example, by providing the form in an alternative format, or by accepting an application by telephone or in person).

12. Data Protection

Personal data submitted as part of an application will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Council's lawful basis for processing is the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR). The Council's Privacy Notice applies to all data collected under this Policy.

Application records, including the applicant's contact details and the inscription approved, will be retained for the duration of the agreement and for a period of six years following its expiry, in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

13. Complaints

Where an applicant or member of the public is dissatisfied with the way in which the Council has administered this Policy, they may use the Council's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the Council's website and on request from the Town Clerk.

14. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if there is a material change in the Council's circumstances, in relevant legislation, or in best practice. The first review will be due three years after the date of adoption shown in the document information table at the front of this Policy.

15. Adoption

This Policy was recommended for adoption by the Estates Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2026, incorporating amendments suggested by Full Council on 10 June 2026, and was further amended by the Estates Committee on 24 June 2026, prior to adoption by Full Council on 8 July 2026.

APPENDIX A

Memorial Bench Plaque — Application Form

Please complete all sections of this form. Continuation sheets may be attached if required.

Section 1 — Applicant

Full name of applicant:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Relationship to the person to be commemorated:

Section 2 — Person to be Commemorated

Full name:

Year of birth:

Year of death:

Connection to Longridge:

Section 3 — Proposed Inscription

Please provide the exact wording you would like on the plaque. The total inscription must not exceed three lines.

Line 1:

Line 2:

Line 3:

Section 4 — Preferred Location

Preferred bench location (if any):

Reason for preferred location (if any):

Section 5 — Declaration

I confirm that the information given on this form is true and complete, and that I have read and accept the terms of the Longridge Town Council Memorial Bench Plaque Policy. I understand that the application fee is non-refundable except where the Council is unable to offer a bench of comparable character.

Signed:

Date:

Please return the completed form, together with the application fee, to: Town Clerk,
Longridge Town Council, The Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3JP.

APPENDIX B

Bench Register

The Bench Register is maintained by the Town Clerk as part of the Council's wider Asset Register. The Register records, for each bench owned or maintained by the Town Council:

- A unique bench identifier (e.g. LTC-B-001);
- Its location, with a brief description;
- Its material and condition;
- Whether a memorial plaque is currently fitted, and if so, the inscription, the applicant's name, and the date the agreement expires;
- The date the bench was installed or last inspected.

The Register is available for inspection by Members of the Council at any reasonable time, and is reported to the Estates Committee periodically. Personal data is held in accordance with Section 12 of this Policy and is not published on the Council's website.