

# **Memorial safety inspection information**

## **Introduction**

- Please take a few moments to read this information document, it is aimed to help families understand why it is necessary for the Council to carry out safety inspections on all memorials to ensure a safe environment for members of public and staff
- Do you have, or do you know anyone who has a memorial on a grave in any of Dover District Council's Cemeteries or in Closed Churchyards within the district?

## **Why does the District Council need to carry out this work?**

- To ensure the health and safety of the public and contractors alike, Dover District Council has a duty to undertake safety inspections of memorial headstones in cemeteries and Churchyards that the Council is responsible for.
- As part of this process, the Council will arrange for any memorial headstones that pose a safety risk to be identified.
- We appreciate that testing and the making safe of memorials may cause upset to bereaved families, but our priority has be the safety of those people visiting and working in our cemeteries.

## **Will I be notified before the testing is carried out?**

- Notifications will be placed in the local newspapers, notice boards at the entrances, at various other areas of the cemeteries and in area offices.
- It is not possible for the Council to notify every grave owner direct, and we would encourage families to notify us on any changes of name and address. Please contact the Burials Officer via e-mail [burials@dover.gov.uk](mailto:burials@dover.gov.uk) to update your details.

## **When will the inspections be taking place?**

- During the months of January-March 2022

## **Who will be carrying out the inspections?**

- Safety inspections are carried out by our contract staff who have received training in how to check the safety of memorials. Training has been provided by qualified instructors.

### **How will a headstone be tested?**

- The inspector will make a visual assessment followed by a hand test in accordance with current recommended procedures from the Ministry of Justice.

### **Will I be notified if my headstone is unstable?**

- Dover District Council staff will attempt to notify owners of the headstones involved. This is often dependent upon the Council being notified of any changes of address for owners.
- A memorial will only be laid flat if it discovered so unstable as to cause an injury.

### **What should I do if my headstone is found to be unstable?**

- As the owner of a memorial you have a duty to ensure it is safe. All work must be carried out by a qualified Memorial Mason. Please contact the Parks & Open Spaces department of Dover District Council at [GMenquiries@dover.gov.uk](mailto:GMenquiries@dover.gov.uk) to advise of the action being taken

### **Can I repair the memorial myself?**

- For your own safety and that of other members of the public please do not attempt to repair or remove memorials yourself. Only NAMM approved memorial masons are permitted to carry out work in our cemeteries ensuring that safety standards are complied with at all times.