



GREAT DUNMOW TOWN COUNCIL

MEMORIAL STABILITY SAFETY TESTING POLICY

(Health & Safety)

Version	Date Adopted	Minute Reference	Date For Review
1	19.05.2026	FC12iv	May 2029

1. Policy Statement

Great Dunmow Town Council is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment within the Great Dunmow Town Council Cemetery, Church Street, Great Dunmow. The Council recognises its duty to ensure that all memorials within the cemetery remain safe for visitors, staff, contractors, and the public.

This policy outlines the Council's approach to the inspection, testing, and management of memorial safety, carried out with dignity and sensitivity at all times.

2. Legal Framework

This policy supports the Council's responsibilities under:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984
- The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 1977)
- Relevant industry standards including guidance from the *British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM)*

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All memorials, headstones, monuments, and structures within the Great Dunmow Town Council Cemetery
- All Council staff, contractors, or representatives involved in cemetery inspections or management
- All grave owners with Exclusive Rights of Burial

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Great Dunmow Town Council

The Council is responsible for:

- Implementing and reviewing this policy
- Carrying out regular memorial stability inspections and tests
- Ensuring inspections are conducted by trained, competent personnel
- Communicating with grave owners regarding unsafe memorials
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date inspection records

4.2 Grave Owners

Memorials remain the responsibility of the grave owner, who must:

- Maintain the memorial in a safe condition
- Arrange repairs through a qualified monumental mason registered with BRAMM
- Obtain a Council-issued permit before work is undertaken
- Provide proof of Exclusive Right of Burial when requested

5. Frequency of Testing

- Memorial inspections will be completed as part of a rolling programme, typically every 5 years or as otherwise determined by the Council.
- Additional inspections may occur following extreme weather, ground movement, vandalism, or reports from the public.

6. Inspection and Testing Method

- Testing will follow current industry best practice.
- A visual inspection will be carried out first, followed by a gentle hand test or an approved mechanical force test where necessary.
- No method will be used that risks damaging the memorial.
- Larger or complex structures may require specialist assessment.

7. Actions Where Memorials Are Unsafe

If a memorial is found to be unsafe or unstable:

- It will be **temporarily made safe** through staking, banding, or laying flat if required.
- A **yellow warning notice** will be placed on or near the memorial identifying that it has failed inspection.
- The grave owner will be contacted directly where records permit.
- The area around the memorial may be restricted if necessary.

8. Communication With Grave Owners

Where a memorial fails inspection:

- A letter or email will be sent to the last known contact details of the grave owner.
- Owners will be advised of the required remedial action and the need to appoint a BRAMM-registered mason.
- Owners will be reminded that all works require prior approval and a permit from Great Dunmow Town Council.

Contact details:

Telephone: 01371 872406

Email: burials@greatdunmow-tc.gov.uk

Owners should quote their **plot number** and **Exclusive Right of Burial certificate number** (if available).

9. Repair and Reinstatement Procedures

- All repairs must be undertaken by a BRAMM-registered monumental mason or equivalent.
- The Council must approve a memorial permit application **before** any work begins.
- The Council reserves the right to inspect the completed work to ensure compliance with safety standards.

10. Sensitivity and Respect

Great Dunmow Town Council acknowledges that memorial safety work may be distressing for the bereaved. All inspections and corrective actions will be undertaken with care, respect, and discretion, ensuring minimal disturbance to graves and cemetery visitors.

11. Records and Documentation

The Council will maintain accurate records of:

- Inspection dates
- Memorials tested
- Findings and risk levels
- Actions taken
- Correspondence with grave owners
- Permit approvals and repair confirmations

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every **three years**, or sooner if legislation, guidance, or local circumstances change.