

MEMORIAL SAFETY - Frequently Asked Questions

Why Are We Carrying Out Memorial/Headstone Safety Checks?

Safety inspections and tests are required to ensure our cemetery is a safe place for visitors and for employees working in them. Sadly, over the past few years there have been several incidents in other cemeteries around the country where unstable memorials have fallen over onto people, including children, resulting in both fatalities and serious injuries. The Health and Safety Executive, who encourage, regulate and enforce workplace safety in the UK (HSE), are interested in Memorial Safety and have issued notifications to Local Authorities insisting that they have policies and procedures in place to ensure the stability of memorials. Llantwit Major Town Council has a responsibility for the safety of all visitors to the cemeteries and those working in them.

Who is Responsible for my memorial's repair and condition?

The holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave is responsible for keeping the memorial repaired and in a safe condition. However, the Council has the obligation of making this cemetery safe and will use reasonable means to ensure the safety of those working in or visiting it. A warning notice will be attached to any memorial if it is found to be in an unsafe condition and the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial contacted to discuss the next steps.

What is done during the safety test and inspection?

Each memorial will be given a visual check to assess its condition. It will then be given a push test (steady, gentle pressure applied to the top of the memorial) to check its stability. The results of the test are logged and recorded. This safety check is carried out by the council chosen contractor.

What if the memorial fails the test?

As the cemetery is a public place, the council has a duty of care to make sure an unstable memorial is made safe immediately. Depending on the level of danger posed by unstable memorials, it will either be temporarily made safe and a warning notice will be applied to the memorial or, in the case of an immediate, high-risk hazard, the memorial will be laid flat and a warning notice applied to the memorial. In both cases, the council will then contact the holders of the Exclusive Right of Burial for the grave to inform them.

Why have I not been contacted regarding the temporary support/band and/or cautionary notice that has been applied to my memorial?

It is the council's priority to make safe any unstable memorial found during the inspection. We want the cemetery to be a safe place to visit and work. As soon as possible following the inspection, we will write to the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial using the address we have on our records. If we have not contacted you it may be because we do not have current address. Please contact us on 01446 793707 or info@llantwitmajortowncouncil.gov.uk to check or update your contact details.

Will my memorial undergo tests in the future?

Yes. The council will carry out these tests at periodic, regular intervals and all memorials will be inspected at least every five years.