

Are we protecting our war memorials?



War Memorials Trust

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Starts

A national campaign has been launched to support the preservation of war memorials and ensure that the names of those who died are remembered by future generations.

War Memorials Trust is calling upon local councils to help communities protect and conserve their war memorials by identifying War Memorials Officers.

Many local authorities do not have a member of staff with clear responsibility for war memorials and members of the public can find it difficult to know who to contact when they see a memorial in need of repair or have a war memorial issue.

War Memorials Trust, an independent charity, is leading the campaign. Its Director, Frances Moreton, said: "We hope that having a named contact in each local council will improve the ways in which war memorials are protected, and help create a strong network to ensure their future preservation across the country. War Memorials Trust will work closely with War Memorials Officers to provide support and advice, sharing our comprehensive information resources."

Local councils are not responsible for all war memorials but often people turn to them in the first instance. War Memorials Trust is therefore encouraging them to take a civic lead, particularly in the run up to the centenary of World War I.

Some councils have already taken this step:

Wirral Borough Council explain why they have a Memorials Officer: "Wirral Council recognises the importance and significance of these war memorials. They are a testament to all the brave that have fallen in various conflicts whilst defending our realm. It is particularly prevalent given the current conflict in Afghanistan. The monuments stand as a source of pride and comfort to many. They also serve as an education element within areas of schools curriculum. It is only right and proper that we seek to maintain and preserve these important structures."

Leicestershire County Council War Memorials Project Co-ordinator, Liz Blood describes her project: "Leicestershire County Council's project is recording and researching memorials with the help of community volunteers, and joins the War Memorials Trust in their calls for greater protection and appropriate conservation. We are offering advice, financial assistance and help in finding specialist contractors to selected projects to serve as examples for others. The depth of local knowledge and warmth of local memory that we are uncovering is astounding, and the archive being produced is a fascinating resource on all aspects of war memorials, from the lives of local casualties, to the 'biographies' of memorials. While many are currently serving in Afghanistan, there is no more crucial time than now to show support for the Armed Forces, and encourage care for war memorials, which are the tangible representation of our history and their memory."

Ends

Contact

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Notes to editors

1. War Memorials Trust is an independent registered charity. Established in 1997 due to concerns about neglect and vandalism it works to protect and conserve war memorials. It provides advice, information and administers grants schemes that assist the repair and conservation of war memorials across the UK. As a charity the Trust relies on voluntary contributions to undertake its work. Supporters include annual and life members, donors, charitable trusts and corporate contributors.
2. War Memorials Trust provides grants that can assist repair and conservation of war memorials. Contact the Conservation Team to discuss eligibility on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org or download an 'Expression of interest form' from www.warmemorials.org/grants/.
3. War Memorials Trust provides a free advisory service to anyone with a war memorial enquiry. Specialist Conservation Officers are available on 020 7233 7356 / 0300 123 0764 or conservation@warmemorials.org.
4. Details of grants made can be viewed on the Trust's Grants Showcase www.warmemorials.org/search-grants/. You can search by area, scheme, value and type of work.
5. Photographs and images of war memorials, and grant cases, may be available from the Trust. If images are on the Showcase www.warmemorials.org/search-grants/ then we should be able to provide digital versions. However, we are not a photo library and whilst endeavouring to provide images, we cannot guarantee to be able to provide them as many of the images sent to the Trust are not accompanied by a copyright licence.
6. War Memorials Trust has had a membership since around 2,000. Annual members pay £20 per annum with lifetime members contributing £100. Joint memberships are available and the charity has a gift membership scheme for those who would like to give the gift of membership to a family member or friend.
7. War Memorials Trust has approximately 120 Regional Volunteers, members of the charity who act as local contacts. They raise awareness of the charity and also alert the charity to local war memorial issues.