

News statement

Help to Work programme and the cleaning of war memorials



Date: 30th April 2014

Status: Immediate release

Starts

War memorials have featured in recent coverage of the newly launched Help to Work programme which includes Community Work Placements. In response to this War Memorials Trust would like to outline some key issues:

- War memorials are the responsibility of local or community custodians for example councils, churches, schools, workplaces or regiments. War Memorials Trust has no responsibility for any war memorials and as such could not engage with this programme as it does not commission any work.

With an estimated 100,000 war memorials in the UK there are almost as many custodians and for any war memorial to be cleaned the permission of the custodian should be established.

- War memorials are an important part of our historic environment and shared cultural heritage. It is important that they are treated appropriately. War Memorials Trust often deals with cases where inappropriate cleaning has been undertaken which has caused a significant amount of damage.

Each and every war memorial should be assessed carefully before any works such as cleaning are undertaken. Often specialist contractors or conservators are needed to ensure appropriate methods are used. War Memorials Trust can provide custodians and communities with advice on best conservation practice to ensure their war memorials are appropriately repaired, conserved or cleaned.

- Based on information collected through War Memorials Online, www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk, it is estimated that less than 1 in 10 war memorials is in Poor or Very bad condition. Issues can be very varied and the percentage needing cleaning will be relatively small.

Frances Moreton, War Memorials Trust's Director, said: "In this centenary year war memorials will be a focal point for national and local commemorations. It is important that we treat them with respect and ensure that any works undertaken are in-line with best conservation practice. This will avoid damage and help preserve our war memorials for future generations. Anyone with a concern about a local war memorial should contact War Memorials Trust or upload details to www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk to help create a greater understanding of the condition of war memorials in the UK."

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.