



First steps

When you start your project you should be clear about why you are commissioning a new war memorial and what or who needs to be commemorated.

- **What war memorials are already in the area?**

In order to prevent duplication you should research what war memorials already exist and who is commemorated. The UK National Inventory of War Memorials aims to compile a record of all war memorials in the UK and maybe able to provide you with information about existing war memorials in the area (c/o Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ, T: 020 7207 9851, E: memorials@iwm.org.uk, W: www.ukniwm.org.uk).

- **Establish a committee**

It maybe useful to form a committee of like-minded people to take the project forward. Establish good contacts with others with a legitimate interest: relatives, regiments or other equivalent bodies, ex-service organisations, the local Royal British Legion branch, local historians, local places of worship if appropriate, local youth groups (e.g. guides, scouts, cadets) and community groups.

- **Consult local authorities**

Consult the local secular authorities, especially the local planning authorities, as early as possible as this will reduce the likelihood of delays later and there maybe grants available. In most situations you will need permission to erect a new memorial (planning permission, listed building consent or conservation area consent). Cemeteries and churchyards may also have regulations governing what type of memorials can be erected. Ask for written permission from the relevant authorities.

- **Do your research**

Before selecting a design for your war memorial, you should research all the names, dates, facts and details - make sure these are correct, especially spellings. Useful sources for research include local and regional libraries (including contemporary press reports), local and regional archives, appeals for information and material in local press, regimental bodies and their records, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7DX, T: 01628 507200/634221, W: www.cwgc.org.uk), the Public Records Office (The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU, T: 020 8876 3444, W: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and the Ministry of Defence (Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool, Lancashire FY5 3WP, T: 0800 168 2277, W: www.mod.uk).

- **Inform the local community**

Let the local community know about your plans and your reasons for doing so via a local newspaper, notice board, newsletter, etc. This will give the local community the opportunity to voice their opinions about the plans and to add any relevant information to your research.

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Designing your new war memorial

- **What sort of war memorial do you wish to create? What sort of war memorial would be appropriate?**

War memorials come in a variety of different forms, from the traditional cross, obelisk, plaque and cenotaph, to the more unusual bus shelters, drinking fountains and playing fields. Consider the restrictions of the site, the necessary size and shape of the memorial (i.e. to be able to fit any names on), its purpose and message. Select materials suited to the proposed site and the prevailing environmental conditions and consider access to the site.

- **Select a design**

Designs for war memorials can be chosen from catalogues, by commissioning a design from an artist/sculptor/architect/companies specialising in commemorative designs or you could hold a design competition. If commissioning a design, always ask to see examples of previous work.

The following organisations maybe able to help:

- The Memorials Arts Charity, Snape, Suffolk IP17 1SA, T: 01728 688393,

E: info@memorialsartscharity.org.uk, W: www.memorialsartscharity.org.uk

- The National Association of Memorials Masons, 1 Castle Mews, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2XL, T: 01788 542264, E: enquiries@namm.org.uk, W: www.namm.org.uk

After the initial enquiry, you should ask for a written estimate with full details of the proposed memorial. This should include costs for the memorial itself (price varies according to material), any lettering or ornamentation (price varies according to technique used), installation, labour, fees and VAT, if applicable.

Funding your new war memorial

War Memorials Trust strongly suggests that, **before** commissioning your new war memorial, you make sure that you have the financial resources to complete your project.

Please note that the Trust **cannot** fund the creation of new war memorials.

Remember to target your appeal and be specific about what you are asking for once you know the costs of your project. Please see War Memorials Trust's 'Helping your fundraising' helpsheet for further information.

The future of your new war memorial

- Make sure that ownership of and responsibility for the future care of the war memorial is clear - do not assume that someone will take care of it! If handing over the responsibility to another body, secure a formal written agreement.
- Establishing a management plan for the future maintenance of the war memorial is crucial to the preservation of the memorial. Contact the Conservation Officer at War Memorials Trust for further maintenance information.
- Seriously consider insuring your war memorial against accidental damage, vandalism or theft. Please see War Memorials Trust's 'Insuring war memorials' helpsheet for further information.

Please note that this helpsheet is intended to offer informal advice and is a distillation of experience. The information contained in this helpsheet is not exhaustive and other sources of information are available.