

Starting a war memorial restoration project



War Memorials Trust

First steps

- If necessary, form yourselves into a small committee (3 to 5 people will suffice) and give the project/committee a name as this offers both an identity and a focal point for donations.
- Make sure you have access to a computer with a friendly operator (most local libraries offer IT facilities).
- Define the task and ensure it is manageable. If it is a large, complex project split it into manageable phases.
- Work out the stepping stones to reach your objective like a business plan.

Commence no work yet! You will need comparable and competitive estimates, ensure you are aware of any significant information about the memorial to avoid any problems (including legal) and **do not** start work until the funding is secured.

Starting your project

• **Establish 'ownership'**

Use local sources to establish if there is a formal transfer of 'ownership' to a community body (e.g. parish council, local trust, etc) in order to obtain permission for any work. If this cannot be established, then the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act of 1923 and subsequent amendments allow a local authority to carry out work to a war memorial within its area whether it 'owns' it or not and you may need to obtain permission from them. If the memorial is located in a place of worship or in its grounds then you may need to obtain permission from the relevant religious authority.

• **Research the history**

Use local sources of information to establish the memorial's erection date, designer/architect, builder, materials, etc. Check if there are any special legacies related to the memorial. You may also wish to contact the UK National Inventory of War Memorials (T: 020 7207 9851, E: memorials@iwm.org.uk, W: www.ukniwm.org.uk) as they may be able to assist with background information.

• **Check the listed status**

Contact the Conservation Officer at the local authority to establish if the memorial is listed. If it is listed then listed building consent may be needed before work is undertaken.

• **Set up a project bank account**

Remember that many donors will not give to individuals so you will probably need a project bank account. It may also be advisable to have co-signatories on the account to protect both the money and the committee.

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- **Involve the local community**

The erection of war memorials has traditionally been organised by the local community, with there being no central government directives or funding. There are no set 'rules' and communities make their own decisions about their memorial. As a result, decisions about the future of war memorials are generally felt to be the responsibility of the local community. The Trust strongly recommend that the local community is made aware of any planned work **before** it begins (e.g. via a local newspaper, local newsletter, public notice board, etc). Any publicity may also be useful for fundraising.

- **Employ an experienced professional**

Always use a suitably qualified conservation/restoration practice to advise about the practicalities of restoration and to establish the costs of works. See War Memorials Trust's 'Conservation contacts' helpsheet for further information. You may also need to employ an architect or structural engineer so allow for the costs of their services. War Memorials Trust recommends that you obtain more than one quote for the works.

- **Establish a programme of works**

Before any work begins, clearly set out the steps of your project in order to avoid starting a project which cannot be finished. These should include: drawing up a detailed schedule of works; establishing that your contractor has the experience to complete the project; and making plans for the future of the memorial.

- **Plan for the future**

The committee may disband when your project is completed and you do not want to leave any money in limbo - find a suitable home for it. Also remember to make provision for the future care and maintenance of the memorial so your work is not wasted - additional funds could be used to establish an endowment or maintenance fund.

Financing your project

Before you ask for money make sure you can answer convincingly the obvious question: why should I give you my money?

- Prepare a 'case for support' which clearly shows why your project is urgent and important for the community. This will also demonstrate that you are well organised, that you are dealing with your project professionally and that you are trustworthy.
- Start with a clear idea of what you want, how much you want and what you want it for. You should have a restoration/conservation plan with a detailed method statement, breakdown of costs and good quality photographs.
- Target your appeal by creating a list of potential donors which should include everyone that maybe interested in your project.
- Publicise your project! Make yourself and your project well known and liked. Find someone with links in your community to champion your cause and raise the project's profile.

Please see War Memorials Trust's 'Helping your fundraising' helpsheet for further information.