

Public statement



War Memorials Trust

Western Road war memorial street trees

Date: 12th December 2017

War Memorials Trust is aware of the ongoing discussion about the future of the war memorial street trees on Western Road in Sheffield. A [statement](#) was released in August 2017 in response to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Working Group report of May 2017. This statement follows the Cabinet Report issued on 6th December 2017 for discussion at their meeting on Wednesday 13th December.

The Trust is an independent charity without any legal powers so cannot make decisions or force anyone to undertake a specific approach. As a result, the charity believes that decisions about war memorials should involve members of the local community and the custodian. We recognise that practical considerations do play a part in managing our war memorial heritage. However, as a conservation charity that gives grants, best conservation practice and respect for our shared war memorial heritage underpins the advice and guidance we give. We hope this is the approach others will follow in the best long-term interests of our shared heritage.

The charity was first advised of concerns about the Western Road trees in November 2016. Since then it has provided advice to the public, engaged with the council and given information on available grants. The Trust has monitored the situation and tried to offer its input where appropriate to its resources and remit. At this point we have identified three areas of activity in relation to this case that we feel it is important to recognise separately as the charity's remit only allows it to engage with some aspects:

1. Existing trees
2. Reinstatement of lost trees
3. Planting of new memorial trees in Parks

1. Existing war memorial trees

War Memorials Trust believes that war memorials should be protected and conserved for future generations. Many war memorials were paid for by public subscription and then subsequently managed by a local custodian, often without any planning for their long term future. Each and every war memorial is a unique representation of a community's act of remembrance and should be treasured. The estimated 100,000 war memorials in the UK come in many different shapes and forms creating a multitude of repair and conservation challenges which mean that each case is dealt with by the charity on its own merits. With a very small team of Conservation Officers the charity seeks to provide advice and guidance, underpinned by best conservation practice, to all those engaged with their war memorial heritage.

As such, War Memorials Trust would encourage the preservation of the original trees wherever possible as they have a direct link with those who lost family and friends. Appropriate maintenance should be undertaken to ensure these are managed within their environment for the longest possible period of time.

If there is evidence that trees need to be replaced then trees of appropriate age, size, number and species type should be used to replace those removed. War Memorials Trust does not have tree specialists. The charity is aware that there are a number of reports that have assessed the condition of the trees in Sheffield. War Memorials Trust would encourage consideration of these in light of best conservation practice and the importance of avoiding replacement unless absolutely essential.

As these trees are part of the Amey maintenance contract then works to these trees, or any replacements, would not be eligible for grant funding as War Memorials Trust is unable to fund maintenance costs for any form of war memorial.

2. Reinstatement of original trees

If there is interest in reinstating trees previously lost this could be eligible for funding through grant schemes administered by War Memorials Trust. However, the charity is currently advising all those interested in grants that due to the centenary of World War I demand for grants is at record levels and it is not guaranteed that all eligible applications will be successful as available funding is limited. It is likely the reinstatement of trees would be a low priority. Detail of grants, and how to apply, can be found at www.warmemorials.org/grants.

3. New memorial trees

War Memorials Trust's remit is to conserve existing war memorials. It neither funds nor engages with projects to create new war memorials. The charity has a helpsheet that offers guidance to those considering the creation of new war memorials. The Trust does not have the remit or capacity to engage with any new war memorial project in Sheffield and it has not indicated it would do so.

It should also be noted that the charity lacks the resource to engage with supporting centenary events in detail. With 100,000 war memorials across the UK, its focus is on supporting local communities to protect and conserve their war memorials.

Further details about this war memorial can be seen, and added to, at:

www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/249382

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