

News release

Call to remember: the state of the nation's war memorials and how you can help



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Status: Immediate release

Starts

With the centenary of the First World War approaching now is an opportunity to reflect on the state of the nation's war memorials.

War Memorials Trust (WMT), the national charity that works for the protection and conservation of war memorials, is issuing a 'Call to remember'. It is asking people across the country to look at their war memorials and check their condition. If any works are required WMT can support communities and ensure appropriate methods are used to repair and conserve them. Interest in war memorials will grow through the centenary and it is vital communities understand how long conservation projects can take and what they involve so works are not rushed and damage caused. In the next few years more and more people will want to see war memorials fit for the many for the commemorative events and services that will take place.

To help us all understand the state of our war memorial heritage, data collected in the last year indicates that:

- Up to 10% of war memorials across the UK may be in **'Poor' or 'Very bad' condition**. These need to be identified so advice and available funding can be offered to custodians and communities to improve condition. It is still early days for the project and we know there is a focus on those in 'Poor' or 'Very bad' condition so it is anticipated that percentage will fall
- Incidents of war memorial **vandalism** have **increased** but cases of **theft** have **fallen**. Further details can be found at www.warmemorials.org/news
- Grant interest is growing as more communities are looking at their war memorials and undertaking work. So far in 2013 War Memorials Trust has **helped** 76 war memorials share **grant funding** of £164,377

To help improve this understanding, and ensure we protect our war memorials, the public can contribute to building up a clearer picture. People across the UK can:

- **Add details** of their war memorials to War Memorials Online, www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk. This website, created with the support of English Heritage, is asking the public to share information on their local war memorials. Details of over 12,000 war memorials have been gathered in its first year and WMT is calling on the public to ensure their war memorial is included and its condition noted to help **improve our understanding of the condition** of war memorials
- Obtain **free SmartWater** to deter metal theft through the In Memoriam 2014 project, www.inmemoriam2014.org

- Engage **young people** with their war memorial heritage by using resources available from WMT's Learning Programme, www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org, which will help ensure tomorrow's war memorial custodians will continue to preserve our war memorial heritage

Frances Moreton, War Memorials Trust's Director said: "The information being generated by the public through War Memorials Online is starting to provide clear evidence of the state of the nation's war memorials and enables WMT, and others, to provide advice and target funding at those war memorials that need attention. WMT's 'Call to remember' asks people across the UK to upload information to War Memorials Online and share details of their local war memorials at www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk. Whether highlighting problems or celebrating those war memorials which are cherished you can help us to understand the condition of war memorials and ensure that all are in the best possible condition. It would be wonderful if all our First World War memorials were in a 'Good' condition by the 11th November 2018 to ensure we can all pay our respects to those who are remembered upon them."

Ends

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www.warmemorials.org www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org

Images

Images may be available

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 Online is a website seeking to create a greater understanding of the condition of war memorials. Due to the interest in war memorials generated by the centenary of the First World War this is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to help. Anyone can upload images, add condition updates, contribute information and raise concerns about war memorials at www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk. Any concern raised, or memorial reported in 'Poor' or 'Very bad' condition, is passed to War Memorials Trust

to follow up. This will ensure available funding and support is targeted at memorials, and their custodians, in greatest need of help.

War Memorials Online is managed by War Memorials Trust with the support of English Heritage. It is working with other organisations to share information to support war memorial protection and conservation across the UK.

At 10th November 2013 the website has seen 12,500 records added or edited in its first 12 months. With an estimated 100,000 war memorials we need more people to get involved to complete the picture.

3. In Memoriam 2014 will protect memorials at risk of theft or damage by marking them with a forensic liquid called SmartWater. The crime prevention fluid, which is being made available at no charge, will not only make memorials uniquely identifiable, it also offers robust traceability should a theft occur. This will act as a significant deterrent to those considering desecrating our war memorials by massively increasing their chances of detection and subsequent arrest. Further details about In Memoriam 2014 can be found at www.inmemoriam2014.org. On this website applications can be made to obtain free SmartWater.
4. 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 a Grants Pre-application form from www.warmemorials.org/grants where there is also detailed information on grant eligibility.

All grant funding is reactive so it relies on communities applying for funds. Recent grant activity:

	Jan – Sep 2013	Jan – Dec 2012
Grants Pre-application forms i.e. initial expression of interest grant funding	320	289

The **Small Grants Scheme** is WMT's scheme open to any type of war memorial anywhere in the UK. All funds for this scheme are raised from individuals, charitable trusts etc. The scheme has seen an increase in both offers and offer value of 10% in just the first three quarters of the year.

Small Grant Scheme	Jan – Sep 2013	Jan – Dec 2012
Offers	69	63
Value of offers	£83,858	£75,969

The **Grants for War Memorials** scheme has four annual deadlines per year. Half way through the year, after two meetings, the scheme is on course to make a larger number of offers with a higher offer value than in the previous year.

Grants for War Memorials Scheme	Apr – Sep 2013	Apr 2012 – Mar 2013
Offers	4	6

Value of offers	£57,946	£74,479
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WMT is also administering the **Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund** on behalf of Historic Scotland. This scheme launched in April 2013 and the first batch of offers will be announced in November 2013. Further details will be made available as soon as an announcement is made.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 we will endeavour to provide images this cannot be guaranteed as many of the images sent to the Trust are not accompanied by a copyright licence.
8. War Memorials Trust runs a Learning Programme for young people, launched in 2011. The Trust's learning website www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org provides lesson plans and resources for schools and project ideas and activities for members of youth groups and the Trust's Learning Officer offers visits to schools to lead sessions and workshops for young people. These resources have been well received and used.
9. War Memorials Trust has had a membership since around 2000. 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.
10. War Memorials Trust has approximately 180 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.