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Date: Tuesday, 02 June 2026

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Dear Member

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2026

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Wednesday, 3 June 2026 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item	Page
8.	Revised Memorial Bench Policy	(Pages 3 - 14)

Yours sincerely

Governance Support
Clerk

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MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

Introduction

1. This policy sets out how memorial benches in Torbay will be sponsored, installed and managed.

Background

2. The Council receives requests from people who want to install a memorial bench, or rededicate an existing bench, in a Council-owned public space. This policy sets out a clear and consistent approach to those requests.
3. There is no legal requirement to provide memorial benches. However, they can provide a valued public amenity and contribute positively to the quality of the environment.
4. As demand on parks and open spaces increases, the Council must make careful decisions about the infrastructure it can provide and maintain. Memorial benches therefore need to be durable, good quality and suitable for their location. This policy supports contributions towards memorial benches in appropriate Council-owned public spaces.
5. A formal application process will help the Council deal with requests consistently, efficiently and fairly.
6. There are over 800 benches recorded on a variety of legacy systems and at least a further 200 for which no data is available.
7. Most memorial benches have been in place for more than 10 years and were installed under earlier agreements introduced in 2004, 2006 and 2010. Those agreements stated that the bench would belong to the sponsor for a 10-year period. They also made clear that, if a bench had to be removed during that period, the sponsor could be liable for the cost of a replacement where this was possible.
8. Memorial benches in cemeteries are covered by the separate rules and regulations for each cemetery because of the sensitive management arrangements that apply in those areas.
9. Work began in 2025 to record and inspect memorial benches to date 746 have been inspected, work continues to inspect the remainder. Of those inspected over 40% (330) have been found to require some level of repair.

Policy

10. This policy sets out how memorial benches will be sponsored, installed, maintained and renewed. It reflects feedback from Overview and Scrutiny and will be reviewed in 2027.
11. The policy is based on the following principles:

- The policy is designed to be cost neutral, ensuring that charges recover the full cost of installation, maintenance, and administration.
 - Optional maintenance arrangements give sponsors greater certainty over future repair and maintenance costs.
 - Charges vary by location. Higher charges apply in areas with greater footfall, higher maintenance costs or a greater risk of vandalism.
 - Clear written information is provided at application and renewal, setting out all available options, costs, and terms in plain language.
 - Standard sponsorship includes five years of maintenance cover, with options to renew sponsorship and purchase further maintenance cover at published rates.
 - During the covered period, damage will be repaired or the bench and plaque replaced if they cannot be repaired.
12. Towards the end of the initial five-year sponsorship period, sponsors will be contacted and given the option to extend the sponsorship for a further five years. This offer will be repeated at five-year intervals.
 13. Subject to the sponsorship being extended, the bench will be left in place for as long as it remains in good condition.
 14. Each five-year renewal will incur an administration fee of £35. This process will also ensure that sponsor contact details are kept up to date.
 15. At the point of renewal, and subject to the condition of the bench, sponsors may purchase a further five years of maintenance cover. The cost is £600 for Zone 1 and £300 for Zone 2 (2026 prices) and will be reviewed annually and adjusted in line with RPI.
 16. If a sponsor renews without maintenance cover and the bench is later damaged, SWISCo will discuss the condition of the bench with the sponsor and provide options for repair, replacement or removal. If works or a replacement bench are required, this will be priced as needed and would be at the sponsor's expense.

ACTION	ZONE 1	ZONE 2
Brand new bench for brand new sponsor (bench, plaque and installation) and 5 years full maintenance and replacement e.g. any damage, wear and tear or vandalism will be repaired free of charge to the sponsor up to and including full replacement of bench and plaque if unrepairable.	£2,400	£1,200
Brand new bench for brand new sponsor (bench, plaque and installation) and 25 years (for those without any descendants or wishing to provide their descendants with no long term	£6,000	£3,000

costs/commitments) full maintenance and replacement e.g. any damage, wear and tear or vandalism will be repaired free of charge to the sponsor up to and including full replacement of bench and plaque if unrepairable.		
Renewal of sponsorship agreement , at the end of the original 5-year term sponsors can renew the sponsorship agreement for a further 5 years. The bench will remain in situ for as long as it remains in good and safe condition. No maintenance or repairs are included in the renewal. If the bench is damaged or requires repair the sponsor will be contacted and offered the opportunity to commission the repairs/replacement at a price provided by SWISCo or make the decision to have the bench removed and the agreement ended.	£35	£35
Renewal of sponsorship agreement with further 5-year maintenance/replacement. at the end of the original 5-year term sponsors can renew the sponsorship agreement for a further 5 years and subject to the condition of the bench a further 5 years full maintenance and replacement e.g. any damage, wear and tear or vandalism will be repaired free of charge to the sponsor up to and including full replacement of bench and plaque if unrepairable.	£600*	£300*

*These figures will be adjusted annually in line with RPI.

Example

A sponsor can apply for a memorial bench using the online form on the Council or SWISCo website. SWISCo will then contact the sponsor to discuss the application.

If the sponsor wishes to proceed, SWISCo will confirm the location, bench type, plaque wording, sponsorship term, costs and expected installation timescale.

Once the bench has been installed, SWISCo will send photographs to the sponsor and issue the invoice.

Towards the end of the agreed sponsorship period, the bench will be inspected, and the sponsor will be contacted to discuss the available renewal options.

If the sponsor cannot be contacted, or no longer wishes to continue, the plaque and, if necessary, the bench will be removed. The site may then be made available for a new sponsorship.

Sponsor wishes to extend the agreement for a further five years with no maintenance cover. The sponsor will pay a £35 administration fee to renew the sponsorship. If the bench requires maintenance, repair or replacement during the additional five-year period, the sponsor will be contacted and costs will be provided. If the sponsor agrees to the quoted cost, the work will be carried out and an invoice issued. If the sponsor does not wish to proceed

with repair or replacement, the plaque and, if necessary, the bench will be removed, and the site may be offered to a new sponsor.

Sponsor wishes to extend the agreement for a further five years with maintenance cover. The sponsor will be charged £600 (Zone 1) or £300 (Zone 2) (2026 prices). If any maintenance, repair or replacement is required within the five-year period, it will be carried out free of charge.

17. Changes to the five-year sponsorship model will also apply to the 25-year option. This option will be retained for those who want a longer-term arrangement. Under this option, damage will be repaired during the term and the bench or plaque replaced if repair is not possible. The cost will be reduced by 50% compared to previously published charges, and shorter sponsorship periods will be available on application.
18. The policy is designed to be cost neutral, transparent and fair. It provides clear terms, flexible options and defined maintenance standards for sponsors.

Approach

19. Benches are mapped into geographical clusters (see map and table) and clusters classified as:

- Zone 1 – premier areas
- Zone 2 – residential areas

Premier areas are high-profile public spaces where benches are subject to greater public use, visibility and scrutiny, and where the setting demands a higher standard of design, build quality and maintenance. These areas will typically include conservation areas, principal seafronts, harbours, landmark parks and other prominent destinations with high footfall and strong civic, heritage or visitor value.

Residential areas are lower-profile public spaces where benches are generally subject to lower levels of footfall, visibility and public scrutiny, and where a more modest but still durable standard of design, build quality and maintenance is appropriate. These areas will typically include neighbourhood parks, local green spaces and other community locations with primarily local use and lower visitor pressure.

20. After the notice period, plaques may be removed from benches in the relevant cluster and relocated to a shared memorial feature in that area.
21. People on the waiting list will be contacted first. Any remaining vacant benches will then be mapped and advertised on the SWISCo website as sponsorship opportunities.
22. Vacant benches will be offered for sponsorship on a standard five-year term
 - Zone 1 premier sites will cost £2,400

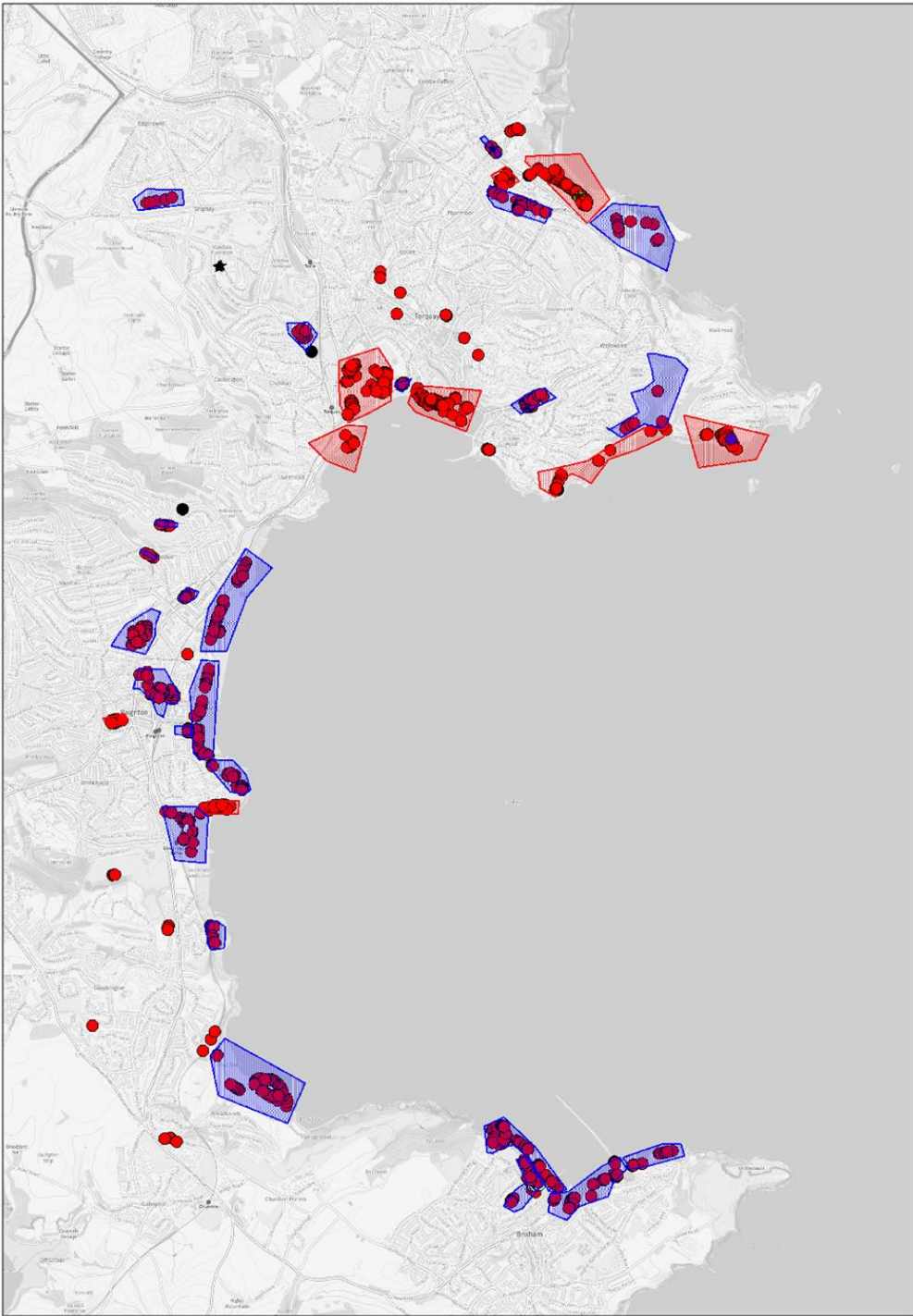
- Zone 2 residential sites will cost £1,200
23. The sites will be advertised on SWISCo and Torbay Council websites, with application process to be digital.
- Zone 1 examples = Torquay seafront, Babbacombe Downs, Preston and Paignton Seafront, Harbours.
 - Zone 2 examples = Victoria Park, Paignton St Mary's Park, Brixham.
24. Some benches may be offered for shared sponsorship. In these cases, there will be a maximum of three sponsors per bench priced at:
- £850 Zone 1
 - £550 Zone 2
25. The Council also recognises that some sponsors will want to ensure that there is longevity to their sponsorship without having to go through a more frequent renewal process and for this group a 25-year sponsorship option will be offered priced at:
- £6,000 Zone 1
 - £3,000 Zone 2.
26. Standard sponsorship includes installation of a new bench and five years of maintenance cover. Longer sponsorship periods, up to 25 years, may also be offered.
27. Should there be demand then an alternative option will be available for a memorial plaque on a shared memorial feature at a cost of £250.
28. To support consistency and efficient maintenance, no more than four bench styles will be used across Torbay.
29. Prices for sponsorship of memorial benches will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's budget setting process for fees and charges.

Bench Clusters, Zones, Numbers and Location of Memorial Dedication.

Cluster	Zone	Est Bench Numbers	Location for Memorial Dedication
Princess Gardens & Seafront	1	186	Royal Terrace Gardens
Old Maids Perch	2	19	Royal Terrace Gardens
Torre Abbey Gardens & Meadows	1	194	Abbey Park Flower Bed by path
Babbacombe Downs	1	127	Wishing Well Nr Theatre
Meadfoot Sea Road	1	55	Notice Board, Kilmore Car Park
Preston Seafront	2	50	Nr Bob Patch Stone
Paignton Seafront	2	63	Seafront Nr Harbour (Hydrangea Bed)
Cliff Gardens	1	57	Behind Fence (Top Path in Bedding)
Paignton Harbour & Roundham	2	37	Behind Fence (Top Path in Bedding)
Broadsands	2	59	Wall ne stream
Battery Grounds & Freshwater	2	75	Near Top Shelter
Brixham Harbour - Breakwater	2	74	Contact harbours \ Friends Group Gardens
Corbyn Head	1	19	near Fence Line
Youngs Park	2	53	Wishing Well
Breakwater - Shoalstone	2	13	Contact Shoalstone Pool \ BTC
Oyster Cove	2	11	at entrance
Walls Hill	2	11	Contact Cricket Club
Tessier Gardens	1	52	On \ Nr Sign
Cary Parks	2	24	Wall nr All Saints Church
St Marychurch Precinct	2	14	High Street Planter
Daddyhole & Meadfoot Sea Road	1	29	Notice Board, Kilmore Car Park
Torwood Gardens	2	49	Scented Garden (Flower Bed)
Ilsham Valley	2	7	Notice Board, Kilmore Car Park
Sherwell Park	2	14	Notice Board either end
Shiphay Park	2	5	On Gate \ Entrance
Oldway	2	71	Contact Friends Group
Victoria Park, PGN	2	80	new Notice Board Nr Pond
Palace Avenue	1	28	In Gardens
Torbay Park	2	5	Back Wall Nr Rugby Club
St Mary's Park	2	13	Entrance flower bed
Summercourt Way OS	2	6	Entrance Way - Notice Board
Furzeham Greens	2	66	Middle Green Nr Community Flower Bed

Coombe Park	2	4	Notice Board - Park Entrance
Sandringham Drive	2	5	Notice Board - Park Entrance
Preston House Gardens	2	8	Notice Board Nr Sun Dial

Location of Clusters and Benches



Proposed Bench Styles



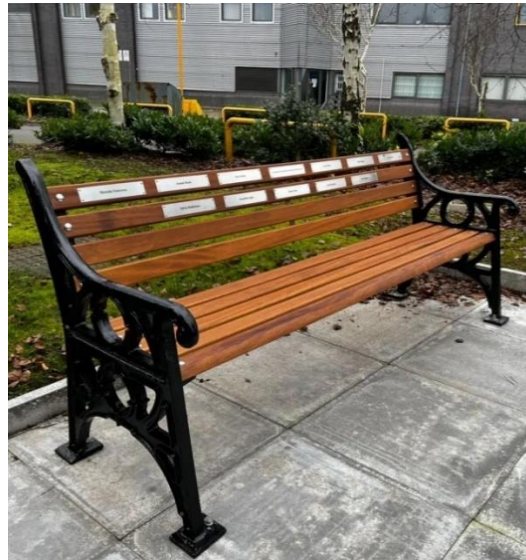
Glasdon Stanford – Zone 1



Broxap Rotherham – Zone 1



Glasdon Countryside – Zone 2



Broxap Eastgate Zone 2

Comparative Pricing and Availability

Benchmarking suggests Torbay's proposed charges are broadly in line with comparator councils once installation, maintenance and replacement responsibilities are considered.

Council	Bench Type	Cost	Installation Fees	Term
Teignbridge	Memorial	£1,360	✓	Unknown
	Timber or Metal memorial bench with new concrete base	£1,885	✓	Unknown
South Hams	Recycled Plastic Bench	£1,680	✓	10 Years
Bournemouth	New Bench	£3560-£5070	From £70	10 Years
	Shared New Bench	£1187-£1607		
	Existing Bench	£2915-£2955		
	Existing Bench	£972-£1005		
Dorset	Memorial Bench	£2,250	✓	10 Years
	Shared Memorial Bench	£250		5 Years
Sidmouth	New seat with plaque	£1,396	✓	10 Years
	New seat with plaque and concrete base-shared with 2 other families	£605	✓	
	Refurbished wooden bench	£1,260		
Torbay Council	Exclusive Bench Zone 1	£2,400	✓	5 Years*
	Exclusive Bench Zone 1	£6,000		25 Years

* Extendable to 10 years by agreement

	Shared Bench (per plaque)	£850		5 Years*
	Exclusive Bench Zone 2	£1,200	✓	5 Years*
	Exclusive Bench Zone 2	£3,000		25 Years
	Shared Bench (per plaque)	£550		
Dover District Council	High Quality metal bench	£3,500		✓
Brighton and Hove City Council	Wooden bench with single cast bronze plaque	£1,650	✓	5 years
	Commemorative plaque on shared memorial bench	£591		5 years
	Commemorative plaque on shared eco or recycled memorial bench	£195		5 years

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