

All local authorities are required by law to carry out testing of memorials in cemeteries under their Duty of Care and safety in public places and following the guidelines produced by the Health and Safety Executive. This is not a task that the Town Council undertakes lightly and every possible measure is being taken to minimize the impact of the testing particularly in relation to those memorials that are found to fail the testing.

There are many examples across the country of good and bad practice in relation to Memorial testing, but Diss Town Council has worked closely with local stonemason H.L. Perfitt Ltd (members of the National Association of Memorial Masons), who will be carrying out the work on behalf of the Council to ensure that the testing of Memorials at Diss Cemetery is an exemplar of best practice.

Inevitably some Memorials failed the testing, however Perfitt's has developed a program to avoid the unsightly use of stakes and ties, instead using an adhesive where appropriate, with a small discreet notice advising that this has been used to make the Memorials temporarily safe until permanent repairs can be effected. It is hoped to avoid, where possible, the laying down of stones because of the distress it causes.

Once the Memorial has been made temporarily safe, responsibility then falls to the individual responsible for the Memorial to arrange for professional maintenance to bring it up to the current standards. The Town Council will endeavour where possible to contact the relatives to notify them of the work required to the Memorial. In the event that no one has been found or has contacted the Council in regard to a Memorial found to be unsafe, then the Council has a duty of care to make it safe. In this instance, the Council intends to follow the latest good practice guidelines and will 'bury' the memorials approximately 15 inches into the ground. This ensures that it is safe, and that should anyone wish to do so at a later date, the Memorial can be reinstated, having not been damaged in any way.

We would recommend that if a Memorial you have responsibility for is found to require repairs, that you contact the Memorial Mason who erected the Memorial to carry out the work required. The Town Council insists that only professional masons carry out the repairs to ensure that the work is completed to the standard required for current safety guidelines. The Council would be willing to provide contact details for local memorial masons should they be required.

The Memorials were last tested in mid-2006 and again in 2018.

All repairs have been completed and all stones are safe.