

New policy for commemorative benches in East Suffolk

East Suffolk Council has introduced a new policy for 'commemorative' benches, the service which allows people to sponsor seating at locations in the district to remember a friend, relative or colleague who has passed.

People can sponsor a new bench with a commemorative plaque for a period of ten years in numerous locations on council land, mainly replacing existing benches that are coming to an end of practical use. The benches are located in places where everyone can sit, rest and reflect.

Members of the public who choose to commemorate someone in this way will also be encouraged to not attach any addition items to the benches. Unfortunately, these items, which can often include flowers, wreaths and balloons, can either prevent people from sitting, or make them feel uncomfortable about doing so.

Items can sometimes be left for a long period of time and can also cause environmental issues, particularly if they are not degradable.

With this in mind, the Council is now also kindly asking people to collect and take care of any items they may have placed on benches on council land, which they would like to keep.

Cllr Craig Rivett, Cabinet member with responsibility for Assets said: "We fully understand that people want something to remember loved ones by and commemorative benches are a special way to keep a memory alive as a place to sit and reflect.

"However, the adorning of benches with a variety items sadly does cause problems. The main purpose of the benches is for seating and we do need to be fair and consistent about how we treat this matter throughout East Suffolk.

"We hope people understand and, of course, we would welcome people who have placed things on benches to claim them and to take care of them personally. With this in mind we are respectfully asking for items to be taken home by the end of July."

To view the new policy or sponsor a commemorative bench see:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/cemeteries-and-burials/