

PUBLIC



ROADSIDE TRIBUTES AND MEMORIALS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

This policy statement outlines what is intended to be a sensitive but controlled approach to the management of roadside memorials and tributes on Derbyshire's roads. Derbyshire recognises that there are differing and sometimes strongly held views about this matter and in putting forward this policy it has sought to adopt an approach that seeks to take into account a diverse range of views and concerns.

The policy relates to all forms of memorial and tribute within what is termed as 'highway limits'. This is the area of land for which the County Council is responsible and includes, for example, the pavement and grass verge adjacent to the main carriageway. The County Council is responsible for all public roads in Derbyshire except for the motorway and trunk roads such as the A38 which is the responsibility of the Government's Highway Agency. For safety reasons the Agency normally resists the provision of memorials on these roads.

It is recognised that many people can be affected by the tragic loss of someone close to them. Where the term 'family' is used in this policy statement it is intended to mean any close friend, partner or family member who has been bereaved, regardless of whether they are directly related to the person who has died.

This document will be reviewed on a biennial basis and additional updates will be provided should legislation and guidance change.

KEY ISSUES

The practice of laying floral tributes at the side of a fatal collision has, in recent years, become more common. To many families involved it is an important part of the grieving process and provides a poignant reminder of the loss of a loved one. At the same time there are those who believe that grieving should remain a private matter and any memorial or tribute should be at the graveside or garden of remembrance.

In some cases tributes include other items such as crosses, toys, scarves and photographs/ Whilst these tributes could be seen as a reminder to some road users of the need to drive with greater care others see them as a distraction or as an unwanted reminder of a tragedy.

This policy seeks to find an appropriate balance between these conflicting views. Clearly there is no ideal solution to this issue but, in offering a balance response that caters for not only the needs of the victim's family and friends but also the wider community, it is hoped that the policy will be seen as fair and reasonable.

APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

Contact with bereaved families will at all times be made through the Police Family Liaison Officer who will be responsible for the liaison between the highway authority, police colleagues and the bereaved families. The officer will be responsible for organising a visit to the site of the collision if requested to do so and will facilitate the safe laying of floral or other tributes.

Derbyshire as the local highway authority will allow the temporary laying of floral or other tributes on the understanding that they will be removed within 12 weeks of the fatal collision. Items should be placed away from locations that are particularly hazardous to access, such

as the central reserve of dual carriageways or the central island of busy roundabouts. Any items that are considered to have an adverse effect of road safety may be removed at any time. In this event the Police Family Liaison Officers will be informed immediately, who will in turn liaise as appropriate with the bereaved family.

Derbyshire will not allow the laying of floral or other tributes after the twelve week period following the fatal collision and any remaining after this period will be removed. Derbyshire will not authorise permanent roadside memorials of any form, but family members or friends may wish to consider the creation of longer term memorials or anniversary tributes at suitable locations away from the public highway. Anniversary gatherings or the laying of tributes would not be permitted.

In allowing floral or other tributes to be placed at the scene of a fatal collision it is important to remember that all roads are a potential source of danger. Sites of road collisions may be particularly hazardous. The precise location of any tributes must take into account the layout of the road and local traffic conditions in order to minimise the risks to those placing or visiting the memorial and to avoid causing a hazardous distraction to other road users.

Derbyshire will remove all tributes from the site 12 weeks after the date of the fatal collision. Flowers or plants will be disposed of immediately, but any non –floral tributes will be stored in a safe place for a period of up to 3 months. The Family Liaison Officer will ensure that families are aware of these arrangements and will facilitate the collection from storage of any items that they may wish to retrieve. Any items that are not collected after 3 months will be disposed of.

The policy does not allow for anniversary tributes to be placed at the roadside and any tribute at the site of a previous collision will be removed with the detailed outlined above. Nor does the policy provide for anniversary and repeat visits to the site.