



Friends of Rowntree Park - Memorials Policy

Remembering loved ones in Rowntree Park

Rowntree Park is a special place for many people. It holds memories, connections and moments of meaning, and we understand why families and friends may wish to remember loved ones here.

Rowntree Park was opened in 1921 as a memorial park, a gift from the Rowntree family to the people of York in memory of cocoa workers who lost their lives in the First World War. It was created both as an act of remembrance and as a place of rest, recovery and enjoyment for the wider community.

Today, the park continues to serve the whole city as a shared public space.

Friends of Rowntree Park is a local charity that works in partnership with the City of York Council, which has overall responsibility for the management of the park. Our volunteers help fund, plant and care for many areas of the park and support a wide range of community activities.

This policy sets out how memorials are considered and managed. Its purpose is to ensure that remembrance is handled with kindness and respect, while also protecting the park as a welcoming, sustainable and inclusive space for everyone. Although Rowntree Park has its origins as a memorial park, it is not intended to be an open site for all forms of personal memorialisation. Any memorials must be carefully considered within the context of the park's history, purpose and long term stewardship.

Our approach

We aim to support remembrance in ways that:

- Are sensitive and in keeping with the character of the park
- Respect the park as a shared space for everyone
- Protect wildlife, plants, and flood-resilient landscapes
- Are manageable for volunteers and council teams to care for long term

Please be aware that, as a riverside park, flooding, weather, and future park works mean that memorials cannot be guaranteed to be permanent.

Memorial benches

Memorial benches in Rowntree Park are managed by the City of York Council.

- Benches must follow an approved design
- They can only be installed where space allows at the time of request
- Unfortunately, not all requests can be accommodated

Where benches are proposed near areas cared for by Friends of Rowntree Park volunteers, we work with the Council to help advise on suitable locations.

For enquiries about memorial benches, please contact the City of York Council directly.
<https://www.york.gov.uk/open-spaces/memorials-donations>

Memorial planting (plants and trees)

We sometimes agree on memorial planting, but only where it can be done in a way that works for the park and our aims.

Any memorial planting:

- Must be agreed in advance
- Uses plant species suitable for the park, including its regular flooding
- Fits within existing planting plans
- Takes place in locations chosen or agreed by Friends of Rowntree Park and the Council

Trees

Trees are a particularly long-term commitment. For this reason:

- Memorial trees are only agreed in specific circumstances
- Requests must be discussed in advance
- Survival cannot be guaranteed due to flooding and climate pressures

Memorial plaques

A limited number of memorial plaques may be able to be homed in the park in discussion with us and the council.

- Plaques must be placed in agreed locations
- There is a limit to the number of plaques that can be installed
- Plaques should not be arranged independently without agreement

Design and installation

To keep things simple and in keeping with the park:

- Plaques should follow a simple, consistent design
- Materials and fixings must be agreed in advance
- Fixings should not damage plants, structures, or wildlife habitats

Ashes and remains

We understand that some people may wish to scatter ashes in places that were meaningful to their loved ones. However, the scattering or burial of ashes is **not permitted** anywhere within Rowntree Park.

This is because:

- Ashes can affect soil and plant health
- Volunteers regularly dig and garden in these areas
- Flooding can cause ashes to spread unpredictably
- The park is a busy public space used by many people

We appreciate that this may be disappointing, and we are always happy to talk through alternative ways of remembering someone.

Shrines and temporary memorial items

Rowntree Park is a place of reflection, but it cannot support shrines.

Please do not leave:

- Plastic flowers
- Balloons
- Laminated photographs
- Candles
- Toys, ornaments, or similar items

These items can harm wildlife, create litter, and add to the workload of volunteers who care for the park. Any such items may be removed sensitively.

How we coordinate memorials

To help everything run smoothly:

- Memorial requests are coordinated with the City of York Council
- Requests affecting volunteer-cared areas are discussed with Friends of Rowntree Park
- Agreed memorials are recorded so we can care for the park properly

A final word

We know memorial requests are deeply personal. Our aim is not to prevent remembrance, but to help people remember loved ones in ways that feel thoughtful, appropriate, and kind to the park and its community.

If you are thinking about a memorial in Rowntree Park, please get in touch before as we are always happy to have a conversation.