

# COMMISSIONING A NEW WAR MEMORIAL

*This information sheet is designed to help those planning the construction of a new war memorial. It outlines different elements of a project from the first steps, through the selection of designs and necessary permissions to financing ideas. (The advice is informal and a distillation of experience)*



Registered Charity Number: 1062255

## FIRST STEPS

When you start your project you should be clear about why you are commissioning a new war memorial and what or who needs to be commemorated.

- ◆ **What memorials are already in the area?** In order to prevent duplication you should research what war memorials already exist in the area and what is commemorated. The UK National Inventory of War Memorials will be able help you with this ([www.ukniwm.org.uk](http://www.ukniwm.org.uk)).

For better results get an ad hoc committee of like-minded people together to take the project forward. Establish good contacts with others with a legitimate interest: relatives, regiments or other equivalent bodies, ex-service organisations, local Royal British Legion branch, local historians, local churches and their ministers if appropriate, local youth groups (e.g. guides and scouts, cadets) and community groups.

Consult the local secular authorities, especially the planning department, early on as this will reduce the likelihood of delays later and there may be grants available. In some situations you will need permission to erect a new memorial (Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent). Cemeteries and churchyards may also have regulations governing what type of memorials can be erected there. Ask for a written permission from the relevant authorities.

Before selecting a design you should get all the names, dates, facts and details. Make sure these are correct (especially spellings). Useful sources for research and contacts: local and regional libraries (includes contemporary press reports); local and regional archives; appeals for information and material in local press; regimental bodies and their records; Commonwealth War Graves Commission ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)); Public Records Office ([www.pro.gov.uk](http://www.pro.gov.uk)) and the Ministry of Defence ([www.mod.uk](http://www.mod.uk)).

- ◆ **What sort of memorial do you wish to create?** Here are some examples: plaque, statue, obelisk, abstract, memorial incorporating other objects (gun, fragments of vehicle), roll of honour, book, structure.

You will need to consider: site, its size and shape, its purpose and message. Select materials suited to the proposed site and prevailing environmental conditions. Does it mark a significant spot? Consider accessibility issues?

There are several ways of finding a design. You can choose from a catalogue or commission a design from an artist/sculptor/architect or from companies specialising in commemorative designs. You can also set up a design competition. Always ask to see examples of previous work. The Memorials Arts Charity ([www.memorialsartscharity.org.uk](http://www.memorialsartscharity.org.uk)) and The National Association of Memorial Masons ([www.namm.org.uk](http://www.namm.org.uk)) will be able to give you some advice on both designs and artists.

## SELECT A DESIGN

**War Memorials Trust 4 Lower Belgrave Street London SW1W 0LA**  
Telephone: **conservation** 020 7881 0862 fax: 020 7259 0296  
Web: **email:** [info@warmemorials.org](mailto:info@warmemorials.org) **www.warmemorials.org**

After the initial enquiry, you should ask for a written estimate with full details of the proposed memorial. This should include costs for the memorial itself (price varies according to material), any lettering or ornamentation (price varies according to technique used), installation, labour, fees and VAT, if applicable. **Before commissioning the memorial be sure you have the financial recourses to complete your project.**

Once you now know the costs of the project you need to raise funds. Set up a bank account for the project, as many grant giving organisations will not give grant payments to private individuals.

Target your appeal and be specific about what you are asking for. For example: money (donation or loan), help in kind (site, materials), pro bono professional advice, people's time or labour.

#### Sources of financial and other assistance:

While fundraising you should contact: local, regional and national grant giving trusts ([www.trustfunding.org.uk](http://www.trustfunding.org.uk)); National grant giving bodies like the Awards for All Scheme ([www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)), Arts Councils ([www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)); local banks and businesses; local organisations and societies; regimental associations and bodies.

Don't forget how effective press appeals can be in raising public interest and financial support! Contact the local/regional press, local TV and radio, specialist publications and regimental bulletins (current and ex-service).

You may also wish to ask for other forms of sponsorship. Some local business can sponsor fundraising events by offering a venue, prizes or lending a member of marketing staff to assist. Always be clear and specific about what you are asking.

Charities and faith groups that are exempted from registering as charities, can reclaim VAT incurred on eligible construction, renovation and maintenance of public memorials. More information can be found at [www.memorialgrant.org.uk](http://www.memorialgrant.org.uk).

Make sure that ownership and responsibility for the future care of the memorial are clear (these two are not necessarily the same thing).

- ◆ Do this now for the future – do not assume that whatever happens someone will take care of it. Especially important if for example, the memorial is on a former military base that is being returned to agriculture or converted to industrial use.
- ◆ If handing responsibility for the memorial over to another body, secure a formal agreement.

Local authorities or cemetery/churchyard management committees are not responsible for war memorials' maintenance (but they will remove it if it becomes unsafe). Make sure you establish a maintenance scheme (for example, with a memorial mason or a conservator).

Finally, do not forget insurance. Make sure this covers accidental damage, vandalism or theft.