

War Memorials Trust Grants Scheme - Kirby Muxloe

As we go to print, the centenary approaches of the unveiling of the war memorial gates in Kirby Muxloe near Leicester on 10th June 1923 (WMO/260354). This reminds us that for many communities, it took several years after World War I ended to erect their war memorials.

Often communities formed war memorial committees to consider options. We know from the minutes of such meetings that their decision-making included the type of war memorial, its location, scale and also how to deal with the challenges of raising sufficient money for the type of war memorial sought. Agreement was not always easy to reach and, as can be the case today, it often took longer than expected.

In Kirby Muxloe, the village chose a practical war memorial in the form of an 11 acre recreation ground. However, the entrance is an ornate gateway that provides a focal point to commemorate the 15 local men whose names are inscribed on the stonework. The gateway comprises two ornamental wrought-iron gates hung between the inscribed stone piers in the classical style with moulded flat-topped capitals.

In 2021, conservation works were assisted with a grant of £3,280 from War Memorials Trust Grants Scheme supported by voluntary donations. The stone piers were steam cleaned. Construction joints were carefully raked-out and re-pointed using lime mortar. SmartWater was applied to all metal elements as part of the In Memoriam 2014 initiative to deter theft.

Repairs were also carried out to the stonework. Damaged areas were cut out and matching stone pieced in to reinstate the profile of the original design. The left pier cap was so badly damaged that it was replaced with new stone cut in a like-for-like style.



Following best conservation practice repair is always preferable to replacement. But in this case, the capstone was extremely friable so rain was causing it to crumble. As the cap is meant to keep water out, if the original was left, water would get inside. If the water then froze inside it would expand and cause the stone to crack.

This is an example of how the charity evaluates each grant application on a case-by-case basis. In some circumstances, replacement is necessary if failure to undertake the repair may cause wider damage. But in other cases it is not required. Our Conservation Officers have the professional skills to assess these options.

Above: Kirby Muxloe gates after works and below: pier before and after works (WM11506) © Kirby Muxloe Parish Council, 2021 and 2022

