

Agenda Item 13 – Suicide Prevention Bench

Received via Email

Dear Councillors,

I hope you are well.

Following your previous advice, I recently contacted Durham County Council regarding the installation of a suicide prevention bench. Unfortunately, they have advised that they are unable to approve the bench on land owned by their Clean and Green service because it does not comply with their approved bench policy. They will only permit benches purchased through their own scheme, which is not suitable in this case, as the wording and design of this bench have been specifically created to support people experiencing mental health difficulties or suicidal thoughts, and to direct them towards sources of help and support.

In their response, Durham County Council suggested that I contact the Parish Council again to enquire whether there may be any Parish Council-owned land where the bench could be installed instead. The bench requires only a small footprint of approximately 1870mm x 555mm.

I would therefore be grateful if you could let me know whether the Parish Council has any suitable space or location where the bench could be placed. Any location within the parish would be greatly appreciated.

The purpose of the bench is to provide a safe and quiet place for reflection, while also promoting suicide prevention and mental health awareness within the community. The bench carries messages of hope and includes contact details 24 hours a day for specially trained support organisations such as Samaritans, Mind and Childline, helping to signpost people towards appropriate support services should they be struggling with their mental health or experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Following the tragic loss of a local resident to suicide recently, there is a strong feeling within the community that more visible reminders of support and hope could make a positive difference. We hope this bench can provide comfort, encourage conversations around mental health, and remind anyone who may be struggling that they are not alone and that help is available.

I would be happy to discuss potential locations and provide any further information you may require.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards

Kerry

Kerry Prentice

Trustee and Head of Operations

Legend on the Bench Charity