

Replacement benches for the Village Green and The George bus stop

1. Purpose of report

This report is to consider replacing the existing wooden benches on the Village Green and at The George (northbound) bus stop on Church Street.

2. Background information

At the Parish Council meeting in May 2024 the Clerk reported that both benches were deteriorating and would need to be replaced in the next year. Council asked the Clerk to research the possibility of replacing the benches and following negative feedback about the recent installation of the Art Trail oak benches to consider removing the Village Green bench as there is a metal bench gifted by the WI nearby.

3. Design

The current benches are at least 20 years old:



Village Green "TO LIVE IN HEARTS LEFT BEHIND IS NOT TO DIE"

The inscription might be a misquote of Thomas Campbell's poem Hallowed Ground "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."



Bus Stop "Presented by Sutton Courtenay Produce & Craft Show Committee In Celebration of The Millennium 2000"

For longevity, comfort and ease of maintenance I have looked at recycled plastic benches. Rather than wooden or metal options. Both benches are on concrete slabs which measure 180cm in width, the Village Green bench utilising the full width whereas the bus stop bench is only 130cm wide. I would suggest replacing both benches with 180cm wide options.

<https://www.realisefuturesecofurniture.co.uk/product/plastic-park-bench/>



The brown plastic can have a slat engraved.

<https://www.earth-anchors.com/product/brighton-seat/>



The ends/supports are cast metal and the slats are plastic. The ends can be in black, green, blue, red, grey. The slats are either black or brown. The slat can be engraved.

https://www.tdp.co.uk/product/dale-commemorative-bench/?attribute_pa_length=1800mm&attribute_pa_colour=brown



This is an alternative solid plastic bench but is further from the style of the original benches.
The top slat could be engraved.

Engraving and Updating the plaque

The Village Green bench should have its inscription included on the new design.

The bus stop bench is dedicated to the organisation that originally gifted the bench, I suggest a new plaque is commissioned to read “Originally presented by the Produce & Craft Show Committee 2020, replaced by the Parish Council 2024.”

4. Costs

	Realise Futures	Earth Anchors	TDP
180cm bench	577.60	840.00	586.35
150cm bench	559.55	n/a	490.45
Engraving	39.00	82.86	50.92
Plaque	40.47 stainless steel 200x50mm*	67.42 stainless steel	52.52 stainless steel 150x75mm
Delivery	150.00	115.20	free
Total for two 180cm	1,344.20	1,945.48	1,180.24

*Supplied by www.brunelengraving.co.uk

The removal and disposal of the old benches, and installation of the new benches would cost £765.

5. Financial considerations

The cost of purchasing and installing the benches could be funded from CIL (we currently hold over £100k). The cost insuring and maintaining the benches is estimated to be less than £40 a year (for both) and can be factored into the 2025/26 budget.

6. Residents' feedback

The Clerk displayed notices on both benches in early June. The bus stop bench noticed proposed replacing the bench and was not renewed. The Village Green notice originally suggested removing or replacing the bench, this was updated at the end of July.

Bus stop bench: 2 people supported the replacement of the bench

Village Green bench: 14 people supported the replacement of the bench, 5 of them suggested repairing it as an alternative (when the current damage was highlighted 4 people responded to say they had not noticed the damaged slats). 3 of 14 people who contacted the Clerk referenced the inscription. One person voiced their dislike of the idea of replacing a wooden bench with a recycled plastic bench.

Once the notice was updated to say the Parish Council were considering replacing the bench there were no further messages.

The Clerk received no correspondence to suggest the benches should just be removed.

7. Legalisation

Parish Councils Act 1957, s.1 Power to provide seats and shelters in roads

Planning permission is not required as the project falls under permitted development rights.

8. Recommendations

That benches are selected for each location with the suggested engraving / new plaque and that these are funded from CIL.