

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Benches  
**Date:** 01 April 2021 08:30:45

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Dear Belper Town Council

I follow various Belper pages on facebook as a good source of local information. I recently shared a post from 'Belper and Proud' to 'Belper' facebook page (see attached) which showed a plaque on a bench with the words:

A 'Happy To Chat' Bench. Sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello.

In 2 days, there has been over 200 'likes' and numerous positive comments and 17 shares so far.

People see it as a very positive idea and I feel Belper would benefit from a couple or so of these plaques on existing benches. My personal advice would be that the plaques be larger than the average memorial plaque, with easy-to-read font suitable for those with less than perfect eyesight. Of course, people do sit and chat, but a bench such as this would indicate to sitters that they are ready to talk. Some people on facebook have offered their services as a 'listener' on a regular basis on the bench.

After the restrictions of Covid, many 'On Their Own' residents need to establish social contacts again, and in the fresh air, and this would be a safe option. It needs no prior planning from sitters, can be for 2 minutes or 2 hours and could prompt new friendships. If the scheme is well received, other benches could always be added later.

The plaques can be made locally (cobblers or graphic designers) or can be ordered online, and in the first instance, attached to existing benches. There would surely be many more positives than negatives to this idea?

[REDACTED]  
thanks

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[REDACTED]