



Ashington Town Councillors  
Ashington Town Council  
Town Hall  
Station Road

Dear Councillors,

We are writing to you with regards to a project we are organising on loneliness. This is something our WI has been involved in, in the past and continually provide support and companionship for women. Due to Covid 19 restrictions more people are suffering from loneliness and isolation, and some are still fearful of venturing out of their homes and being involved in their community.

We are hoping that with permission from the relevant parties such as Ashington Town Council, Northumberland County Council, and others that we will be able to install plaques on benches around the town. The plaque will be a "Happy to chat Bench" and will simply say 'sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello'. This gives people the confidence to meet others without the formalities of attending events and activities.

The Happy to chat plaques will be approximately A4 in size and a hardwearing, weather proof material and installed on 6 benches around the town, we have earmarked the following benches:

- Rose Garden at Hirst Park (NCC)
- Riverside Park (NCC)
- Ashington Colliery Heritage Trail (Advance)
- Outside Holy Sepulchre Church (ATC)
- Ashington Memorial Garden (ATC)
- North Seaton Colliery (entrance) (ATC)

We have chosen these areas for their access to walkers and their setting.

The Happy to chat benches will also have numbers for mental health support:

SHOUT – this is a 24/7 text service and Silverline – this is a 24/7 number

We understand that loneliness does not just affect older people so the numbers we have chosen are appropriate for young and old people.

We are hoping to have a small event during mental health awareness week (9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May) at Hirst Park, and we will forward details to all councillors.

We are hoping to work with Ashington Town Council to locate the areas and install the plaques and we would appreciate it if you could grant permission to install the plaques on the benches above.

Kind Regards

Sheila Screaton – President  
Janice Drysdale – Secretary  
Michelle Brannigan - Treasurer