

West Rainton Stone Bench Proposal

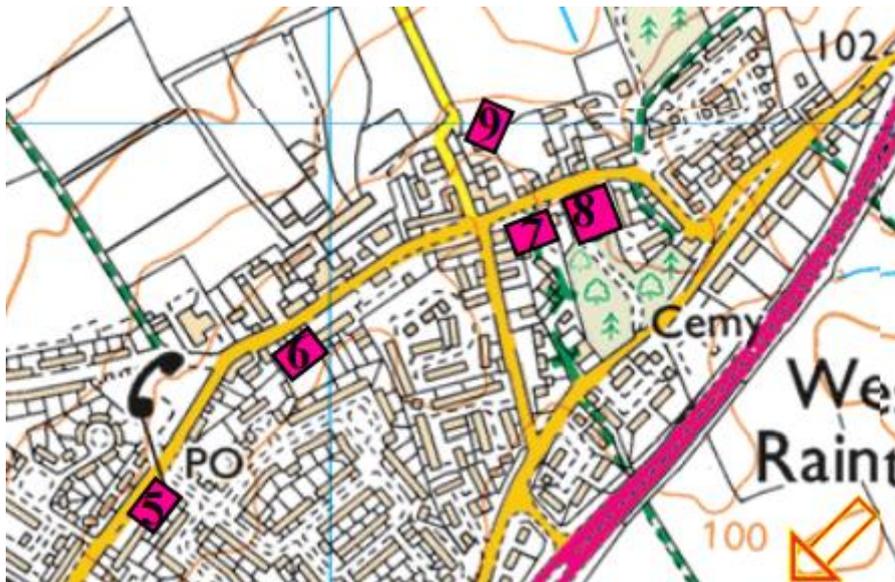
Submitted by Angela Stevenson on behalf of West Rainton Green Group,
to West Rainton Parish Council for consideration
8th September 2018

Background

In 2017 a legacy was left by a woman living in Australia to the North East branch of the UK Dry Stone Wall Association with the purpose of creating legacy projects around County Durham. The group asked for suggested sites for stone benches and I submitted a suggestion of the new west rainton to middle rainton footpath. Unfortunately in the time taken for the legacy funds to be transferred to the group in the UK planning permission has been sought on the Benridge Bank site meaning the footpath is no longer a suitable location for the dry stone wall project. I contacted Cllr. Avril Wallage for advice on alternative sites and the green group would like to seek permission from the Parish Council for the following proposal.

Proposed Site

The proposed site for the new bench is at the top of Marks Lane where there is currently a Parish Council bench (location 9 on the below map). This site has been suggested by the Green Group to be most suitable as the stone bench could replace the current metal bench which is not in a good state of repair and could provide an attractive feature at the entrance to the village. This proposal is supported by Tony Green owner of the adjacent farmland accessed via this site (presumed to also be owner of the site although it could be a pocket of unregistered land).



The stone bench would replace this bench:



The stone bench could be constructed exactly where the metal bench currently sits. Alternatively, due to the slope of the ground up from the road, I wondered if the new bench could be constructed in a slightly different position as detailed below.



This changed position, if possible, would allow for easier access to the benches and a design which includes accessibility features as outlined below.

Stone Bench Construction

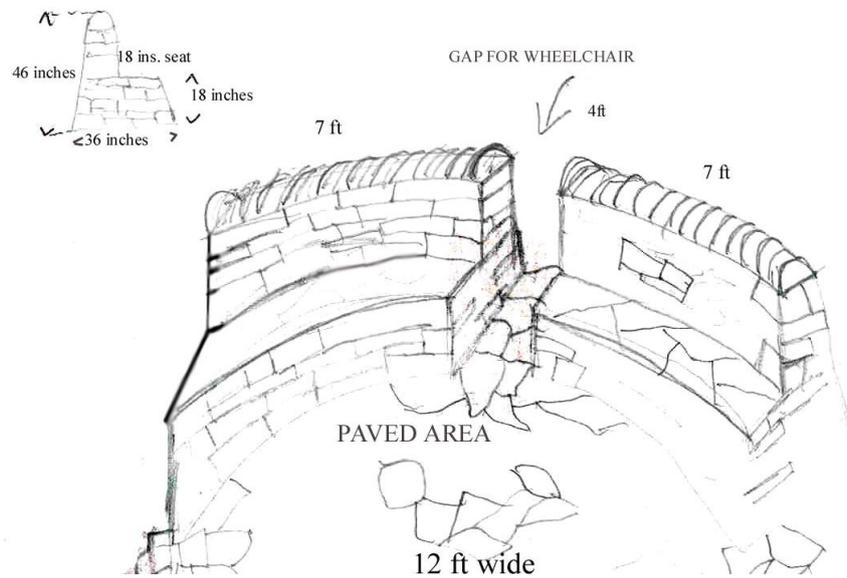
The stone bench would be of dry-stone appearance but would have cement hidden in the middle to make the structure solid, removing risk of falling stones or of being disassembled.

The bench would resemble this construction appearance:



In the original proposal, for which the Dry Stone Association have earmarked materials, there was enough stone for two benches with a gap between. The gap was intended to be paved and at a suitable width for a wheelchair, pram or mobility scooter in order that those with additional needs could enjoy the views from West Rainton. The design below details the initial design, this can be adjusted if required.

As this is a request for permission to install the bench on a new site the final design will need confirmation from the dry stone wall association that the site is suitable for the requirements.



Maintenance and Insurance

The bench would require little maintenance but the Green Group would undertake any weeding or clearance of plant growth which would obstruct access to the bench or views from it.

I have sought the dry stone wall association advice on insurance. They have not previously been asked to insure installations. If insurance were required by the Parish Council the Green Group could arrange quotes and consider payment of a policy, advice on insurance companies would be greatly appreciated.

Removal of existing metal bench

The current bench on the site is not in a great state of repair but is still functional as a seat. Tony Green has offered to relocate this bench to Meadows lane on his land which would offer a seat on the Rainton Meadows outer circuit, a location in which a seat may be useful.