

The idea to create a poetry treasure hunt around benches in Staple Hill came from discussions between South Gloucestershire Council Community Cultural Services, Poetry Can development agency in Bristol, Staple Hill Library and poet Sara-Jane Arbury. We wanted to launch a creative writing project that would involve local people in a fun, inspiring and unique way, encouraging them to discover and be proud of their neighbourhood. The Staple Hill Ten Bench Trail was born!

Thank you to everyone who worked with Sara-Jane Arbury and contributed poetry for the project: pupils from Staple Hill Primary School and The Tynings School, members of Staple Hill Library Coffee Club and English Class and the Lunch Club at Our Place Community Flat. For further information about Poetry Can, go to www.poetrycan.co.uk

For further information about the Library Service and Staple Hill Library go to www.southglos.gov.uk/libraries



If you need this information in another format or language, please contact: 01454 868006



Discover Staple Hill through poetry! The Ten Bench Trail

Follow the poems, find the benches and answer the questions

The Sanctuary Church

B Benches

Page Park

Library

Staple Hill Primary School

Each poem provides clues to the locations of ten benches around Staple Hill. It's up to you to work out where they are! The benches are numbered but you do not need to visit them in order. To make sure there is no cheating and you visit all the benches, you will also have to find the answer to a question for every bench! Find all the answers to finish the Trail.



Bench 1

In Memory

by Sara-Jane Arbury

I rest in a peaceful place,
A gentle area a world away
From the noise of war

Plants are regimented in their beds,
Trees stand close to the hedge,
Soldiers on parade, straight and tall

Every blade of grass keeps in line,
Cut, trimmed and uniform green,
The sign of Nature paying tribute

To the Glorious Memory
Of men and women, the fallen
In two world wars, other campaigns.

I gaze at the monument every day,
Take a moment to march through the gates,
Left, right, left, right, follow the path

And I'm last in line, the last of my kind,
Robust and sturdy, with a cage of birds
On my left singing exotic songs to me

Of faraway lands we will never see.

Q: To whom is the bench dedicated?

A:



Bench 4

Sit And Put Your Feet Up

by Pam, Beryl, Bernice and Helen at Our Place

Between a bin and a pet shop, a supermarket down the way
Elderly people who need a rest sit on me and have a chat or look at the library
Nearly every day an old lady with red hair sits here – have you seen her?
Celebrate Christmas on the Hill, stand on me for a good view,
watch children in the parade, the community spirit – raise a glass!
Have a look at the framed picture of bricks above me – it's street art!

Q: What is written on the legs of the bench?

A:

Bench 5

Old And Young

by members of Staple Hill Library Coffee Club

Brings back memories of school, the old air raid shelter, down in the dark
Endless days of childhood, hopscotch, skipping, conkers and marbles
Now the playground opposite is closed and quiet,
but the beauty of the school remains
Children of the old school take their children to the new school,
different building, same sounds
Have you seen Page Hall? Sit and hear the old and the young together!

I Am A Bench

A collage poem made from work by Year 5 pupils at Staple Hill Primary School

I am a bench encrusted and old,
A wrinkly skin, aged wooden bones,
Handle me with care, I crack and creak, Beware!
I can only hold 9 and ¾ stone!
The worst time is half past three,
Then I have kids climbing all over me!

I am a bench with memories,
Watching children racing the cars
In the abandoned playground in front,
Nannies resting on me, the old school,
Now there's a modern school behind,
A lamp-post opposite stretching up high

I am a bench on my own, all alone,
No other benches rest nearby,
I'm hungry for a buddy, not a bin by my side,
I listen to the trees gossiping, dying their hair
Red, yellow and gold in autumn,
A world of fluttering leaves at my feet

I am a bench that's indestructible,
Even when the cold wind sits on me,
Cars zoom past, don't wake the sleeping policeman!
I am guarded by zigzags, double yellow lines,
Rain pitter-patters but I have my own umbrella tree,
I never play hide and seek, come and find me!



Q: What number is on the lamp-post opposite the bench?

A:

Bench 3

The Bench In Winter

A collage poem made from work by Year 5 pupils at The Tynings School

Branches above me, trees growing over,
Autumn leaves tickle, all shapes and colours,
Naughty, spiky conkers drop down – ow!

Giant tree roots reach out to grab me,
I've been stuck in the ground by an evil villain,
My feet in mud, metal legs bent like branches.

There's a wrinkly-old-man tree near me,
With a crusted trunk, knobby knees,
How did I get here in the first place?

I'm a forgotten bench. I need a makeover.
I think about stretching my stiff legs,
Running around and scoring a goal!

Can you hear the referee blowing the whistle
As loud as an elephant stomping?
No, I can't either. It's just a dream.

But maybe things aren't all that bad.
I love nature climbing on me,
I love looking at the moon and stars all night,

I never get tired because I'm always sat down.
Maybe I do feel okay being an old bench,
Modern benches are all bling and no brain.

I can hear footsteps walking along the path.
Hello, I'm the bench you want,
Have you come to sit on me?

Q: What is the name of the Court behind the bench?

A:



Bench 6

What Kind Of Bench Am I?

by Pam, Beryl, Bernice and Helen at Our Place

I'm a ...
Taxi-pick-up bench
Long-time-here bench
From-the-year-dot bench
Sit-and-wait-for-someone-to-turn-up bench
Grass-beneath-my-feet bench
Tree-above-my-head bench
Nature's-ground bench
Courting-couples bench
Neighbourhood-watching bench
Surrounded-by-buildings bench
Imagine-when-it-was-all-fields bench

The Famous Bench

A collage poem made from work by Year 5 pupils at Staple Hill Primary School

I have a big audience, I sit in a grass square
Like a stadium, everyone looks at me, I am famous,
I have a buddy bench behind me of wood and metal,
Buddy and me are crowded with towering flats,
We see windows every day, windows that spy,
Nelson House, we have no gossip to share with you

My dear old friends from the council community of flats
Rest on me, I am happy connected with people,
I stare at five satellite dishes on the house in front,
I wish I could play football but a sign says I can't,
NO BALL GAMES, no cycling, use the red dog bin,
The cars parked before me are my bodyguards

I am a sturdy wooden bench, a garden bench,
Birds sing to me from two trees dancing near,
They are giants, protecting me, my servants,
I've sat here for years, holding old memories,
Watching people walk past time and time again,
I'm emphasized by flats. Why can't I take a break?

Q: What is the name of the house in front of the bench?

A:

Bench 7

Bench Mark

by members of Staple Hill Library Coffee Club

Better view of the High Street when you sit on my seat
Easy to take car numbers at the crossroads – stop at the red light!
No dedication on me, my metal feet are paved into the ground
Countryside brambles and blackberries grow over the wall behind
Here I'm tucked in a corner, but imagine you're in Paris,
watching the world go by...

Q: What is above the name of the pub you can see from the bench?

A:

Bench 8

A Right Royal Bench

by Sara-Jane Arbury

I am black, modern, a sleek design.
I signify the new way of doing things.
Clipped boxed bushes on either side,
Trees in a row, standing to attention,
Rooted firmly into the pavement.
I occupy a tidy spot, not like the benches
On the other side of the road, a common lot.
The pattern of bricks in the wall behind
Provides a perfect backdrop to my charms.
Park yourself on me if you have the time.

But remember:
If you ever leave me vandalized and bruised,
The word on the street is "We are not amused!"



Q: How many trees are there in a row by the bench?

A:

Bench 9

A Bench With A View

by Staple Hill Library English Class

Oh no! Here comes Joe Bloggs
He slumps down on me, writing his fruit and veg list
I wonder what he's eating for tea tonight?
Maybe he's planning what to plant in his garden... still sitting on me

I get bored not walking about
I'm stuck in one place all the time
If only a bird would rest on me
And sing a beautiful song

I feel old and tired
I wish I could move my concrete feet and hop on the bus
To see somewhere new and quiet
Because this noise is driving me
BANANAS!!!

Fruit For Seating

by Holly Iles

To and fro, to and fro, cemented in the ground. I see no birds. There's a bus stop. I'm so tucked away from view.

How lonely, yet used, I feel. My view of bananas, cherries, tomatoes, lettuce and all the colours of the earth. My purpose, your comfort.

Everywhere I see concrete, buildings, shops, a Co-op, a computer store, a bakery, a pawnbrokers, a skating shop. A friendly-looking café.

Behind me a funeral parlour full of peace and sadness. The bereaved visit me and mourn. Such sadness, yet I see beauty.

Every now and then I hear a distant peep, peep, peep, emerging from beneath the traffic sounds. A crossing. A siren. A horn.

No grass yet so many colours, everything formed perfectly, big and small.

Can it really be true that you never see what I see or notice me at all? Too much hustle and bustle, not enough thought.

Have you worked me out yet? Come and sit on me and keep me warm!

Q: What is the sign for the pawnbrokers? You can see them from the bench!

A:

Bench 10

Seat Life

by Staple Hill Library English Class

Ball Games Prohibited, Blue Sky thinking,
bench with no back – don't lean on me!

Every day I greet the pigeons

No more breakdancing, no more playing,
no more water in the fountain

Concrete around my feet, on the walls, in the road,
cars in front, curtains behind

Hear the traffic, the buses, the noise,
hope I can seize the day in the Therapy Centre sometime!

Q: Sit on the bench with a tree behind you. What is behind the other bench on the right? Draw a picture of it if you don't know what it is!

A: