

**Alone together, the social life of benches : how filmmaking can help to tell detailed and nuanced stories about encounters, exclusion and wellbeing in outdoor spaces.**

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AHRC Connected Communities Call  
**Addressing the Challenges of Disconnection, Division and Exclusion**  
 Innovation Grant · January–November 2015

**The Un-Sociable Bench,  
 and other urban micro-territories of encounter and intimidation**

**Project partners**  
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**The Bench Project · Research Aims**

- *To test how making a film can tell detailed and nuanced stories about encounters, exclusion and wellbeing in outdoor spaces*
- To record the ways in which different people use, and think about how they use, benches and other small places of outdoor gathering,
- To explore how the interactions between users of benches may be sociable or may cause problems,
- To find out how spending time outside is good for people, and,
- To understand ways in which public spaces and seating areas are controlled

On a day such as this, while roaming around this park,  
 if you see a thousand faces then it is good for you.  
 My ancestors used to say that.  
 – Chali Kumari, General Gordon Square, Woolwich

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**Alone Together**  
 the Social Life of Benches


# RESEARCH PROCESS and FINDINGS

**To test how making a film can tell detailed and nuanced stories about encounters, exclusion and wellbeing in outdoor spaces**



**General Garden Square**

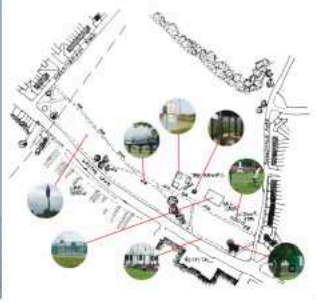
General Garden Square is the heart of Moorpark, in the borough of Greenwich, south east London. What sets it apart is its unique character. In particular, the diverse mix of people who live and work here has made it a vibrant and inclusive community. Moorpark is a working class area and has been used by its residents for many years. It is a place of investment and regeneration. It is the new Council's vision for a vibrant and inclusive community. They managed the square to be a multi-use space with multifunctional uses. Long lines of granite benches face the square, towards the 'big tree' and the water feature.



Spread from *Alone Together, the Social Life of Benches* DVD booklet, BP028 2015

**St Helen's Green Square**

St Helen's Green Square is the southern part of London and is a vibrant and inclusive community. It is a place of investment and regeneration. It is the new Council's vision for a vibrant and inclusive community. They managed the square to be a multi-use space with multifunctional uses. Long lines of granite benches face the square, towards the 'big tree' and the water feature.



Spread from *Alone Together, the Social Life of Benches* DVD booklet, BP028 2015



