

# **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, WESTBOURNE, WEST SUSEX**

## **ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to St Johns. This is a mediaeval Church built on the boundary between West Sussex and Hampshire. We welcome everyone to our Church and include anyone who is disabled for whatever reason, their families and friends. The Church itself is a grade 1 listed building. This statement is intended to cover both the Church and the Church Hall and, briefly, the Rectory. It is intended to help you to know what can be expected of our buildings and practices.

The Church car park is in front of the Hall, although there is limited parking on street close to the main entrance to the Church which is in Church Road. With notice, arrangements can be made to reserve parking here. This would avoid a less than easy route from the main car park to the Church. Conversely of course it would make access to the Hall itself less convenient. The hall is on the other side of Westbourne Road from the Church. This arrangement is not ideal but was necessary because of constraints on the availability of land when the hall was built. The section of Westbourne Road that needs to be crossed to gain access to the Church (assuming parking in the hall car park) is busy and the sight lines along it are not good, and the pavement is narrow with an irregular surface. It is preferable to pass along it and to cross with at least one other person who is familiar with these arrangements.

The car park itself is tarmac. There is one marked disabled space. This is closest to the easternmost of the two entrance doors to the Hall. This is the door that is most frequently in use when there are services in Church.

### **Church Access**

There are two paths to reach the Church. The first and apparently shorter is accessed through a small metal gate at the western end of the flint wall opposite the western entrance to the car park. Although shorter we do not recommend that this entrance should be used. The pathway leading from it to the Church is quite thick gravel and the south door to which it leads is not opened for all services. The other (main) path lies off Church Road and is accessed through the lychgate. There is a straight pathway to the north door of the Church building. This path has been relayed in a surface that is easier for wheelchair use. The path is lit to its sides and there are lights at the lychgate and on the porch to the north door. Both pathways are level.

The Church entrance is level with the pathway itself. There is a slight "edge" between the flagstones that make up the entrance immediately in front of the porch and the end of the path but this is minimal. There is a timber threshold at the bottom of the doorway. This is approximately

50mm in height and extends across the whole width of the door. There are two doors that make up the entrance. They open inwards. The right hand door (viewed coming up the path) is always open. The left hand door will be opened immediately by a sidesman to accommodate wheelchair or pushchair access. The area inside the doors is clear and readily accessible. The seating in the nave of the Church itself is of Victorian pews. These are part of the fabric of the listed building and cannot be adapted for wheelchair users. The main aisle is of sufficient width to allow wheelchairs to be placed at the end of a row of pews. In the alternative there is a large clear area to the right of the doors and to the left (facing the chancel) of two rows of pews, which can easily be used. There are also a few chairs available rather than pew seating if required. These would need to be located in those same areas since they are not a permanent feature. There is a disabled lavatory at the back of the Church. This is fully designed in accordance with BS8300. There is also a baby change unit in this lavatory. Sink taps are of a lever design.

The Church is fitted with an induction loop system for the benefit of hearing aid users. A public address system is used for all services. There are large print hymn and service books available from sidesmen. At various times during services the presiding minister will invite the congregation to stand. You are most welcome to remain seated if this is more comfortable for you or is necessary in your circumstances. There are two steps up to the main altar and it is not possible to fit any handrail. There is no edge marking. Someone who may find this difficult to see may find an escort useful. A sidesman will be pleased to assist. It is our practice to bring the bread and wine of Holy Communion to anyone who may prefer this because of difficulty in climbing the chancel steps or for other practical reasons. Please let a sidesman know if this would be useful to you. In the main 9.30 service on a Sunday, Communion is also received at the head of the north aisle. There is completely level access to this. The aisle itself is narrower than the main aisle.

## **Church Hall**

After the 9.30 service on a Sunday we invite everyone to join us for coffee in the Hall. The access to the Hall from the Church is the reverse of the arrangements described above. Again it is preferable to exit the north door of the Church and to turn right down Church Road and to cross to the south side of Westbourne Road at that point. The access into the Hall is level excepting that there is a 50mm timber threshold at the inner doors. Access is always through the doors nearest to the Rectory (those to the east of the building). There are outer doors that are open when the hall is in use. The inner doors are kept closed for heating purposes but both open inwards. There are lavatories immediately inside the lobby area between the two sets of doors. That to the right (as you enter) is female and to the left is male. These are not adapted in any way. There is a full disabled lavatory again to

BS standards at the western end of the hall. This is most easily accessed by entering the hall through the doors as described and then travelling the (level) length of the hall and locating the doors (to the right in this direction of passage) at the far end. These open inwards (into the hall). The disabled facility is then immediately to the right.

The fire escape doors to the hall both have ramps to ground level. There are five steps up to the stage. There is a handrail on the wall side only. There are edge markings. It is not practical for wheelchair users to gain access to the stage. The servery from the kitchen has a counter at a height of 1200mm only.

### **The Rectory**

The Rectory is situated about 25 metres to the east of the Hall. It has level access to the front door but one high step to obtain entrance through that door. No ramp is available here. The ground floor rooms are wheelchair accessible but there is no ground floor lavatory. The Rectory was built before disabled access became a feature of building design and the Parsonage Board have not yet made alterations to facilitate such access.

### **Conclusion**

We hope very much that you will have found this statement to be of help. We would welcome practical solutions for improvement both to the buildings themselves and to this document. Please contact either of the Churchwardens or the Rector. Thank you.

The Parochial Church Council  
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