

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, WESTBOURNE, WEST SUSSEX

## ACCESS STATEMENT

### Introduction

Welcome to St John's. This is a mediaeval grade 1 listed Church built on the boundary between West Sussex and Hampshire. We welcome everyone enthusiastically to share our buildings and this statement is intended to cover all of them: the Church, the Hall and the Rectory. This guide is intended to help you to know what can be expected in and around those buildings.

The Church car park is in front of the Hall and there is limited parking on street close to the main entrance to the Church in Church Road. With notice, arrangements can be made to reserve parking here if necessary. There is disabled parking provision at the front of the Hall. Parking in Church Road would avoid a less than easy route from the main car park to the Church. Conversely of course it makes access to the Hall and the Rectory less convenient. The Hall and Rectory are on the other side of Westbourne Road from the Church. The arrangement is not ideal. The section of Westbourne Road that needs to be crossed to gain access to the Church (assuming parking in the Hall car park or at the Rectory) is busy and the sight lines along it are not good with a narrow pavement and an irregular surface. It is preferable to pass along it and to cross with at least one other person who is familiar with the arrangements.

### 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 end of the Hall (the one nearest to Emsworth). Although shorter this entrance is not recommended. The pathway leading from it to the Church has quite thick gravel.

The other (main) path lies off Church Road and is accessed through the lych gate. There is a straight pathway to the north door of the Church building.

This path is laid in a surface that is easier for the less able and for wheelchairs to use. There are lights at the lych gate 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 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 top bolt to the right-hand door (looking from inside) is released by pressing the handle towards the door.

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 but there is a large open and carpeted area in the north western corner with an adjacent disabled WC (BS8300 compliant). There is also a pew-free area at the front of the north side of the Nave.

The Church is fitted with an induction loop system for the benefit of hearing aid users. A sound reinforcing system is used for services. There are large print hymn books available.

At various times during services the congregation usually stands. It is just as appropriate to remain seated. If you have a visual impairment and would welcome help please ask a sidesman or indeed any member of the congregation. Communion at the altar rail requires kneeling or standing at the rail.

There is a second communion point at the top of the north aisle where the access is completely level.

The presiding priest will take the sacrament to anyone who may, for practical reasons, prefer to remain in their pew. Please let a sidesman know if that would be helpful to you.

### **Church Hall**

There are two means of access to the Hall. The main (glass) door in the centre of the building has a ramp leading to it and is opened electrically by an activation button at wheelchair level. All the thresholds are level. The disabled WC (to BS standards) is through the first door to the right coming in to the main lobby of the Hall and is equipped with a distress alarm. The eastern double doors (blue) give access into the Churchill Room of the Hall. This is level excepting that there is a very slight threshold at the outer doors. There are lavatories immediately inside the lobby area between the two sets of doors. These are not adapted. The fire escape doors to the rear of the Hall all have ramps to ground level.

### **Woodmancote Church**

Access to the chapel (erected in 1892) is via 3 stone steps to a narrow path leading to the chapel and is not wheelchair friendly .

The chapel does not have an audio induction loop system .

There are no public toilets .

### **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 disabled WC. 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 suggestions for improvement both to the buildings themselves and to this document. Please contact either of the Churchwardens or the Rector. Thank you.

Westbourne Parochial Church Council