Accessibility Audit

The traffic in the High Street was held up because the bus stopped a speeding motorist coming through. This enabled Tom to cross the road safely.

Originally this audit was intended to be a disability audit. However, many of the points highlighted affect older people, pushchair users and the general public, hence the name change.
Accessibility Audit

Contents

Page 3  Introduction
Jubilee Surgery

Page 4  Recommendations

Page 5  St Peter's Church

Page 6  Recommendations
The Square and High Street

Page 7  South Street
Footpath from Churchyard to Bridge Street
Bridge Street

Page 8  Recommendations

Page 9  Residents' foliage
Recommendations
Kerbs
Recommendations
TITCHFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Accessibility Audit 19.09.16.

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Introduction

Part of the work of the Neighbourhood Forum is to attempt to make Titchfield a better place to live, work and play for all. This audit looks at Titchfield from the perspective of the disabled resident, a visitor and the general public. The information will help to inform our strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan, and if implemented, will make life better for all.

The comments within this report relate to The Equality Act 2010 which provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals - …not to treat disabled people less favourably than others for a reason relating to their disability’. Where there is funding, or in fact lack of funding, neither should be used as a reason for not complying with the Act.

Jubilee surgery

Doors:
Entrance hall - door opening 28” which is two inches short of recommended minimum width. The second door to the right of the entrance was not open. All other door openings 30” though access is somewhat difficult for independent wheelchair use due to angle required to access doors to the surgery and treatment rooms
All doors had metal push down handles

Surgery and treatment rooms
By moving chairs within the rooms a wheelchair can be manoeuvred and exited

Reception area
It is demeaning to expect a person with a disability, in a wheelchair or short in stature to go round the reception area and speak to receptionist through the side door just because the reception shelf is too high. This high shelf continues around the area of the computer check in.
Removing the glass partition would provide a large area for patients whilst still maintaining confidentiality. The glass partition to the waiting area is oppressive and unnecessary.
Information and notices
Many of these are too high for wheelchair users to read and the type-face too small for people with visual impairment. Some yellow paper was being used which is apparently beneficial to people with visual impairment.
There would seem to be no braille available and no mention was made of a hearing loop. If there was one, is it checked regularly by users?

Disabled toilet
There was no independent access to the disabled toilet for a person with a disability. The toilet was locked apparently to prevent the public using the toilet. The toilet space was inappropriate as it was not accessible. Although a wheelchair user could get into the cubicle, they could not turn round to wash their hands neither could they slide onto the toilet from their wheelchair as there was insufficient space at the side. They also could not exit unaided.
The light pull was far too high for wheelchair user
One moveable side support was loose

Outside
Adjacent to the private road to the surgery is a footpath which is quite narrow and the kerb is very high. A wheelchair, or in fact anyone, could easily slip off the path. When there are deliveries taking place or an ambulance at the surgery there is no alternative but to use this path.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
A very cheap and easy way of making the reception/waiting area user friendly for all would be to reduce the height of the ‘L’ shaped units where receptionists work, to standard desk height, or to have two separate heights to accommodate need.
The glass partition should be removed.
Notice boards should be lowered and care taken to ensure the typeface is of an appropriate size and font.
The disabled toilet should not be locked. Some sort of radar key system should be provided.
The more expensive work recommended is to re-build the entrance area and include an easily accessible push-button system for entry. This work could be combined with the re-configuring and expanding the disabled toilet. A dustbin store could easily be erected adjacent the building in the doctors’ car parking area.
The council (HCC or FBC?) should be requested to drop the kerb along the access to the surgery.
St Peter's Church

This audit looked purely at the fabric and furnishings of the building and did not look at much of the written material.

The road adjacent the church
There were four cars parked badly in Church Street which made wheelchair access to church land very difficult. This parking would actually also make it difficult for a stretcher to be moved to an ambulance and also for a coffin to be carried into the church.

Entrance
There is no accessible entrance to the front of the church. It is a challenge to accommodate modern day requirements for disabled parishioners due to the historic building and the limitations for change. With this comes compromise and an accessible entrance has been created at the side of the church. Making this more welcoming for both disabled and able bodied would be more inclusive for the congregation thus avoiding segregation. It is often a modern day challenge for people with a disability when accessing historic properties.

Notices should be clear and inclusive and at, and prior to events, due care would be helpful to avoid embarrassment for a person with a disability.

Any new permanent notice advising wheelchair users to go round the side should be 'user friendly'.

People with visual impairment and older people find entering the church quite difficult as the handles on the church doors are some way from the front of the building especially as the steps are uneven and quite steep so need extra care.

Wheelchair access in the church
The slabs leading to the side entrance allow access but do not have up stands at the side. If this entrance is misjudged by the wheelchair user they could fall down the side and tip out of their wheelchair.

Wheelchair access in the church
The ramp is good though concern was expressed regarding the slip-resistant black material used, especially in wet weather. The upstands were a little low.

The positioning of the piano prevented the wheelchair from being moved into the church.

Pews - if someone collapses whilst sitting in the middle of a pew there does not seem to be a system in place to get them out quickly and easily?

Hearing loop and sound equipment – it was not possible to check the equipment but it is understood that sometimes other people have found them unsuitable.

Kitchen – there is no wheelchair access to the kitchen

Disabled toilets - there is no disabled accessible toilet in the church. The only obvious solution at present is to guide users to the public toilet some 500 yards away which re-opens in mid-October. Every effort should be made to try to ensure the current toilet is wheelchair accessible.

Notices and wall collection box - the notices and the wall collection box are too high for independent access to a person in a wheelchair.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Double yellow lines should be placed in the road at the church entrance at least the width of an ambulance or hearse. The road should remain accessible for vehicles and wheelchairs at all times.

New handles should be provided on the church wall on which the doors are hung

Side entrance notice should be welcoming and friendly.

Side entrance slabs should be levelled and upstands provided

Check made on suitability of black covering of internal ramp especially in wet weather with possible raising of upstands.

Piano should be secured

The notices should be lowered, produced in larger print and displayed appropriately. The wall collection box is an integral part of the building but provision should be made to allow wheelchair users to give money if they wish.

Hearing loop and sound equipment should be checked by people who have hearing problems. Someone should also be made responsible for ensuring loop is switched on as appropriate as it is sometimes switched off.

Serious consideration should be given to providing a disabled toilet especially in the light of forthcoming heritage centre. Note: the Heritage Lottery say that the Equality Act 2010 should comply to all work funded by them.

The Square and High Street

A wheelchair user coming from the surgery and wishing to visit the chemist must travel until just after the greengrocers in the Square where there is a dropped kerb on either side of the road. However, due to the way the cars are designated to be parked, the wheelchair user has to go some 12 feet into the road in order to see whether it is safe to cross the road. A forum member who is 84 also recently mentioned the difficulty she has in crossing the Square. On a return visit the dropped kerb on the chemist side of the road was blocked by a truck and a car so it was not possible for the wheelchair user to cross.

All shop entrances were inspected. The best entrance for wheelchair users was One-Stop which would be a good example to follow.
South Street

The scaffold at present on the corner of South Street did not allow wheelchair access. Apparently, the council had informed the builder that he could not put the scaffold in the road due to traffic problems. The builder says the scaffold should be removed within 2 weeks.

The West Street/South Street junction is very difficult to cross to get to dropped kerb, especially for wheelchair users, motorised disability scooters and buggies.

Dustbins are always positioned on east side of Bridge Street and the butcher has a sign on the pavement. The west side of the road was fine and in fact the scaffold was set out appropriately along the road.

Footpath from Churchyard to Bridge Street

The best way for wheelchair and family users to get to and from Bridge Street is along this footpath. However, the path has become very narrow over the years; it is very overgrown and at the end is a gate which does not allow a wheelchair to pass through. The gate was covered in nettles.

Recommendation: the footpath should be cleared to allow wheelchairs, pushchairs and possibly cycles to use the path. The kissing gate should be replaced with a more suitable barrier that allows access but prevents motor cycles using path.

Bridge Street

Footpath to Stubbington past the car park is overgrown and wheelchair users must go in the road if they wish to use this path.

Staggered junction in road by canal - the only way a wheelchair user can use this piece of road on either side is to actually be in the road.

Canal Path - the first barrier along the path has been removed. However, the space that remains is dangerous both for pushchairs, wheelchairs and pedestrians. It is too close to the water’s edge and a piece of flagstone is missing and one is loose.

The next barrier has a kissing gate but a wheelchair could not use this. Also, the gate had two padlocks. Where are the keys for these kept in case of an emergency?
The newly repaired/laid path is not suitable for wheelchairs, cycles or pushchairs. It is domed shaped so wheelchairs etc can easily topple over. Also it is of insufficient width to enable an ambulance to pass through.

Dog fouling - this is a major problem along the path as well as plastic bags filled with 'pooh' being left alongside.

Bridge Street leading into Coach Hill - it is not possible for a wheelchair user to go along the path on the south side of the road especially as a bollard has been sited on the footpath and there is no path on the north side at the start of Coach Hill.

Foothpath on bend on north side of Bridge Street - it is very difficult not just for a wheelchair but for walkers to use this path without going into the road.

The cobbles in High Street - it is very difficult for wheelchair users, buggies, older people and the general public to cross these cobbles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A risk assessment should be carried out along these roads and along the whole length of the canal path to the sea and remedial action taken as a matter of urgency.

Double yellow lines should be painted on the drop kerbs on the Square.

If some of the undergrowth was cut back along canal path the dog bin would at least be visible.

A notice warning drivers of pedestrians using narrow footpath along Bridge Street from Coach Hill should be provided either on the telegraph pole or the lamp post.

One possible idea is to put a car exclusion line along one side of the stretch of Coach Hill/Bridge Street similar to that near the garage in East Street where the road narrows.

The cobbles in the High Street would be improved considerably if they were 'grouted'. 
Residents’ foliage

In Bridge Street and at the top of the High Street opposite Southampton Hill several residents have allowed foliage to overhang their boundaries. This makes the footpath at these points very narrow and pushes both wheelchair users and the general public towards the road.

RECOMMENDATION:

FBC or HCC write to residents who do not cut their foliage politely requesting the vegetation is cut back

Kerbs

East Street/Mill Street - There is no drop kerb on either side of the road at this junction
Disabled car space in High Street - there is no dropped kerb here
Barry’s Meadow - there is a dropped kerb here but it is blocked by the gate used for contractors

RECOMMENDATION:

These kerbs should be dropped appropriately.

With many thanks to Tom Dowsett, a wheelchair user and his carer Michael who made our task so much easier.

AW
04.10.16.