**Disability Access Statement**

Welcome to St. Peter & St John the Baptist, Wivelsfield. The church was built many centuries ago and is Grade II\* listed, it therefore has limitations in its facilities for disabled people. Wherever possible, the PCC has endeavoured to improve access for those with disabilities and to extend the hand of Christian love to all who come to our church. This access statement is aimed at helping you to know what to expect from our buildings and practices.

There is a Parish Council car park is off Church Lane, approx. 75 yards from the church. The car park surface is gravel.

Although it is not proved possible to have a designated parking space for disabled people by the church gate, cars can stop by this gate for passengers to alight and their wheelchairs be unloaded.  A wheelchair for visitors is kept just inside the Church Room entrance. If you would like to use this please ask a steward or sidesman who will assist.

At the main gate is a gentle slope, after which the path is level in length with a slight camber on either side, to shed water. The section of path by the ancient yew tree may be slippery with yew berries at certain times of the year. The path is approx. 140cm wide.

**Church entrance**

The west door gives level access into the church. A stone slab (167cm wide) spans the drainage gulley around the church and there is a drop (max. 25cm) to this. During Services a Disabled Access sign is displayed outside this door.

The south porch has a step up (9cm) followed by a full width wooden door stop (3cm depth) and at the south door there is a step up (12cm) and another full width wooden door stop (2cm depth).

**External Lighting**

For those attending evening Services during the dark winter months, there are lights over the entrance gateway, by the church room entrance, at the south-west corner of the tower and in the south porch. There is a movement-activated light over the north door. There is no access through this door but the light illuminates the path to either the church room entrance or the south door.

**Inside the church**

The nave of the church has Victorian pews. Pews have been removed from some areas to allow space for wheelchairs.

The church is fitted with an induction-loop system for the benefit of hearing-aid users. This does not, however, operate in the side chapel. It is suggested that those wishing to use the induction-loop system sit in the main body of the nave. The public address system is used at all Services.

Large print Service booklets (but not prayer books or hymnbooks) are available by the south door. A sidesman should provide you with one of these at the main Service.

At various times during the service the minister may invite the congregation to stand or kneel; you are welcome to remain seated if this is more comfortable for you.

There is a step up (14cm depth) into the chancel (altar) area of the church; as the church is Grade II\* listed it is not possible to put edge-markings on the steps. Those with impaired vision may find this step difficult to see when returning to the seating area. People who may have difficulties in seeing the edges of steps may find an escort to be useful. During the Eucharist a sidesman stands by the chancel step to give assistance or a steadying hand for those stepping up or down.

It is our practice to bring the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion to the seat of anyone who might find difficulty in climbing the chancel step; please let a sidesman know if you would find this helpful.

**Other steps** that may be encountered by visitors to our church outside Service times are:

From the Chancel to the Side Chapel (14cm in depth)

From the Chancel to the Sanctuary (14cm in depth)

**The Church Room**

From the church room entrance door there is level access to the Church Room. The room is level with an extremely small kitchen. The Church Room door is fully glazed with safety glass. The room is joined to the church by a short corridor ending in two steps down (15cm each) and a heavy swing door which has no window.

**Toilet**

There is a level corridor from the Church room entrance door to a toilet with limited access space. The width of the doorway is 76cm. It has not been possible to fit grab rails in the toilet as this would further decrease the room width.

A toilet for the disabled, which complies fully with current legislation, is in the church hall. This is normally available during all Sunday services, it other times it may not be available when the hall is let to other users.

Should you have any queries as to the access to the Church or this statement please contact us.

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