



# ACCESS AUDIT

## for Cole Street Methodist Church, Dudley

**Access Audit Ref: AA0006**

**Date: 03/06/23**      **Review: when a significant change occurs to the property**

**Assessor(s): DM/GM on behalf of the Property Committee**

**Rationale:** An evaluation for an access audit is to establish the extent to which a facility provides independent access for people with disabilities. The audit exists to provide information to those responsible for the building to ensure that people with disabilities can have access to the services provided within the building in a way which does not disadvantage them to able bodied people. The audit exists to seek to confirm this and make recommendations for improvement where this is not the case.

### 1.0 Audit Details

The audit took place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 on a temperate, dry day. Measurements were taken with a steel tape and gradients measured by calculating change in slope angle. No drawings or specification of the building were provided.

### 2.0 Site Description

The church is situated on a cross roads where multiple main roads join. The church is within walking distance of the local town of Netherton. There is a bus stop on the opposite side of the road to the church by the main entrance. There is vehicular access to the church and car park with entrances off Withymoor Road and Double Row. A small dwelling occupies the land on which the church sits, however is not connected to the church.

### 3.0 Legislation

Access audits are carried out with reference to the Equality Act 2010 and Part M of the Building Regulations 2010, with reference to British Standard 8300 2009 'Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.' The Equality Act incorporated much of the legislation included in the Disability Discrimination Act and requires that service providers should not discriminate against disabled people. Public bodies including Local Authorities are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The access audit is carried out with reference to this legislation and the code of practice.

### 4.0 Criteria for Assessment

The legislative framework in 3.0, forms the basis for the criteria for assessment used in the access audit. Design layouts recommended in BS 8300 2009 and Building Regulations part M are used to compare facilities provided by the service provider and as the basis for recommendations where necessary. Reference is also made to 'Designing for Accessibility' produced by the CAE.

### 5.0 Disclaimer

This report sets out recommendations that will assist the building owner in providing an accessible facility for the general public. It does not remove the building owner from any responsibility under the Equality Act or other relevant legislation. The report also assists any potential users of the building on the suitability of the venue as an accessible public meeting space for various events.

## 6.0 Audit report and recommendations

### 6.1 Approach routes, street furniture, external access and parking

The church is within easy reach of multiple public highways and bus stops. A controlled pedestrian crossing is within 10m of the entrance to the church. In excess of 25 car parking spaces are available on the car park area. There is a dropped kerb along both entrance to the car park. The kerb is flush to the road level meaning that it is suitable for independent wheelchair use. The church car park does not have a designated disabled parking bay or area. There is a pathway around the church which is accessible from most parts of the car park. The pavements around the two front entrances to the church are sufficiently wide enough for wheelchair users in excess of the recommended 1.5m.

The pavement varies in gradient from the car park marginally. Wheelchairs can be used independently to access the accessible entrance from the car park.

The pavement is segregated in parts from the car park by a plastic chain linked/bollard partition. The bollards are fitted with reflectors and the chain a white colour.

The main entrance is reached via a step or a permeant ramp. The step is consistent across the doorway and is painted in a contrasting colour to the surrounding floors. There are handrails located adjacent to all stepped entrances/exits. There are no visual or tactile warnings at the top or bottom of the step. The access ramp is a permeant concrete structure with tactile slabbing and grips. It satisfies the required gradients. A handrail exists across any part of the ramp. The ramp leads directly inside the building. The area is used for storage but is clear enough to allow a wheelchair user access. Access into the main hall part of the building is then through an opening outward double door. Suitable external lighting is provided outside the entrance.

Recommendation:

- A car parking bay should be adapted to provide a designated disabled parking space with appropriate markings.

### 6.2 Main Entrance

The main entrance is easy to find and entrance to the building is via double doors. The main door outward opening and the adjoining double door is outward opening, however both hinge backward to ensure the access is not impeded. The entrance door handle is at the recommended height of 1000mm allowing for access by wheelchair users. Although there is furniture stored in the concert entrance this does not impact on the space available for users to move in. There is no seating provided in the entrance. No doors are automatic opening. Doors have an acceptable tension factor to open.

The floor surface of the entrance is tiled. There is no entrance mat.

There is an accessible toilet off the entrance lobby.

Recommendations:

- Ensure all door handles are within 1000mm above floor level limits.
- Door closer tensions should never exceed 30N closed from a 30 degree of opening and above 22.5N when between 30 and 60 degrees.

### 6.3 WC Provision

Men and Women's WCs are located at the rear of the property. Both are access via narrow doors (600mm). A designated WC as accessible is locate off the entrance area (concert entrance) through a suitable door. Door handles are fixed at the correct height.

The accessible WC has dimensions of greater than the recommended 1565mm x 2200mm. This means that there is sufficient turning space for a wheelchair to allow transfer to the WC pan. The layout of the grab rails and support is acceptable with a distinct colour contrast between these and the wall (blue against white). The WC height is above the recommended 480mm from ground level. There is an emergency push button located in the WC which sounds an alarm in the concert entrance. Some items are stored in the WC which may hinder some users.

**Recommendation:**

- Review the emergency alarm system and consider a visual element to this.

**6.4 Access around the internal of the property**

The main hall has a clear floor space with individual moveable seating so that the seating pattern can be adjusted to suit requirements. None of the seats are fitted with arm rests. The floor finish is of old tile design which can become slippery when wet. The polished finish should be slip resistant as far as possible and anti-glare. The Sunday School Room is fitted part tile/carpet with individual moveable seating. The Guild Room is fitted with carpet throughout with individual moveable seating. Lighting levels are adequate throughout the building. All internal doors (excluding those to the toilets) around the building are wide enough for wheelchair access.

There is a stage at a height of approx. 1m accessed only by steps. Individual risk assessment and procedures would need to be undertaken in order to provide access.

The main hall is fitted with an induction loop system which provides an output to all inputted devices to the system. The Sunday School and Guild Room are not fitted with an induction loop system.

There is a central heating system and wet heating system fitted within the building ensuring a timed, comfortable temperature. Some door handles exist above the recommended 1000mm.

Two projectors and screens are used in the main hall of the church and a single projector onto a wall used in the Guild Room. These are of suitable size and the projected images comply with DDA guidelines.

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure all door handles are at the correct height to enable a wheelchair user to independently navigate the building.

**6.5 Way finding and signage**

Rooms, areas and toilets are signposted around the church. A site plan is provided on fire safety posters and on the Health & Safety noticeboard. 'One-off' signage is positioned around the church for large scale events to aid with way finding.

**6.6 Means of escape**

Escape routes are published on posters around communal areas. Emergency lighting is installed and maintained. Evacuation signage is in place throughout the building. A fire assembly point is located on the car park. Fire fighting equipment is noted around the building with appropriate signage. These are maintained and tested annually with records maintained. Wheelchair means of escape are signposted on fire posters around the church.

**References**

The Building Regulations Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings (M3)

BSI British Standards BS 8300:2009, Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled persons – Code of Practice

Centre for Accessible Environments: Access Audit Handbook

Assessor(s): David Moss & Gary Moss Date: 03/06/23

on behalf of the Property Committee of Cole Street Methodist Church