

Access audit for

**Box Methodist Church
The Parade
Box,
Nr. Corsham
Wilts.,
SN13 8NX**

Audit completed: 29/10/21

Introduction:

The building is a chapel, situated on a hill in a central village location, alongside the busy main A4 Bath road. The environment is relatively noisy, with the sirens of occasional passing emergency vehicles.

The building is equipped with a permanent ramp for wheelchair access, a toilet designed for persons with disabilities, a hearing loop system, a digital projection system and large-text books available. The exterior very much resembles a traditional place of worship, but inside it underwent a thoroughgoing complete renovation some 25 years ago and so is relatively up-to-date and modern on the inside.

Pre-arrival:

Box has no rail station; bus stops from Bath (X31 service) and Corsham. Nearest stop on either side of the road is Primary School (church is 115 metres uphill from Corsham side) If arriving from Bath side, pedestrian crossing located 47 metres *downhill* from bus stop; cross over the road, then 102 metres back *uphill* to the church. Pavement from stops to the church is standard council-maintained tarmac running beside the busy main A4 Bath road.

Car Park and Arrival:

Car parking outside the church is limited (double-yellow lines on a slope) Room for 2 or 3 vehicles in a marked bay outside the church, then double-yellow lines extending downhill. Blue badge parking is permitted. Nearest public car park is 150 metres (with steep slope upward to the church involved along narrow but quiet road ("Market Place" with very narrow to no pavement) Municipal street lighting in car park and streetside.

Permanent ramped access to the church; double fairly heavy Oak doors to the church are normally open before services. Single width = 22", double width opening = 45". Manual doors open inwards on lever-handles if closed. Stewards on duty to greet visitors will open the second door if required.

Entrance and Reception:

Entrance to the front of the church is via a solid permanent ramp from the pavement: 1200mm wide, constructed from 600mm square textured slabs. Entrance foyer is carpeted with short-pile carpet squares, flat, uniform. Internal manual double doors on return-springs give access to the main body of the church. Again, one or both will be open before the service. Single width = 690mm; double width = 1380mm.

The whole floor area of the main body of the church is similarly carpeted with short-pile flat uniform carpet tiles. Seating is free-form individual upholstered seats, either carvers (arms) or plain. Seats can thus be moved/removed as required to accommodate wheelchair-users. Sunlight penetrates the large front windows to either left or right, depending on season, but since seating is free-form this can easily be overcome.

The main participants of a service usually stand either behind a pulpit mounted to the left on the raised platform at the front of the church, or walk about on the same platform. The platform is 600mm above the main floor.

Their words are relayed through a speaker system, as well as an induction-loop system. Hymn and service books are available in large-print; words and responses are projected onto the right-hand front wall so book-use is purely optional. Lighting is sufficient for lip-

readers.

The acoustics are of a fairly large open space without too many soft furnishings, although this is mitigated by the fabric cushions of the seating and the large drapes up in the organ-loft. It's a little echoey but not like a cathedral. Speakers' words are amplified and clear. Lighting is diffuse general electric, general and bright enough to read by. Augmented by low-voltage PAR-38 lamps running all around the edges of the ceiling.

There are no "surprise" participants or calling from the back. The congregation sings; music comes from the organ above and to the rear of the hall. Sometimes it is loud but never obtrusively so. Sometimes video is played via the projector and the accompanying audio is then relayed through the speaker system.

Toilet Areas:

Immediately to the left on arrival in the foyer is a gender-neutral toilet facility, designed for use by persons with disabilities. Flat level access from the foyer. 830mm wide door opens outwards with easy-lock swivel lever-arm fastening. Wheelchair and mobility aid accessible. Space to side of WC = 900mm. Both fixed and drop grab rails provided. WC pan height from floor = 470mm. No alert mechanism; a shout for assistance will always yield results however. Fluorescent strip lighting. Wipe-clean continuous sheet vinyl flooring. Sink is 730mm from floor, paper towel dispenser 770mm from floor. Tap with long lever on hot-to-cold swing type operation.

Means of Escape:

Fire exit indicated by illuminated green sign at rear left of raised platform. Emergency exit route is up and along the long gentle ramp running up the entire right-hand side wall of the church. Flooring same as church. Out through 780mm wide primary fire door, down solid permanent ramp along flat level smooth footpath to exterior side of building (min. width 760mm) to metal push-to-open barrier. Arrive at outside front of church. All doors and barriers open outwards. No formal PEEP in place, but people are always available to lend assistance.

Additional Information:

Assistance dogs are welcome; provision either in the foyer or may stay with owner as appropriate. HSE approved signage in place indicating facilities and direction of travel (Covid-19 precautions) Power points for charging of electrical mobility aids are available both on the rear wall of the main body of the church or in the foyer. Nearest A&E dept is Royal United Hospital, Combe Park, Bath. (6.8 miles; 14 minutes depending on traffic).

Audit completed by Tony Knight, property steward, 29/10/21.