

East Dean and Friston Parish Council

Wealden District · East Sussex · South Downs National Park

Disability Plan

Accessibility and inclusion across the parish, 2026–2029

Draft for adoption

Version 1.0

Document control

Item	Detail
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This plan sets out how the Parish Council will, within the scope of its powers and resources, work to remove barriers faced by disabled residents and visitors in East Dean, Friston, Birling Gap and Crowlink. It is a working document. It will be updated annually with progress and revised in full at least every three years, or sooner if circumstances change materially.

Foreword

East Dean and Friston is a small but distinctive parish set on the South Downs, with two villages, the hamlets of Birling Gap and Crowlink, and a substantial network of footpaths and open countryside. Our parish is also home to a significant number of older residents, residents living with long-term health conditions, and visitors of all ages and abilities who come to enjoy the village, the Seven Sisters and the coast.

Disability is something that touches most families at some point. Around one in five adults in England reports a disability, and that proportion is higher in older populations. Our village should be a place where disabled residents and visitors can take part in community life, use local facilities, and move around safely and with dignity.

This Plan is the Parish Council's commitment to doing what is reasonable, practical and affordable in pursuit of that aim. It is grounded in our duties under the Equality Act 2010, but it is also a matter of community values. The Council cannot do this alone: we will work with the Village Hall Trust, the Residents' Association, Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council, the South Downs National Park Authority, the National Trust and local groups.

We welcome comments, corrections and suggestions from anyone in the parish — particularly from disabled residents, carers and the organisations that support them.

Signed:

Chair, East Dean and Friston Parish Council

Date: _____

1. Introduction and purpose

The purpose of this Disability Plan is to set out, in one place:

- How East Dean and Friston Parish Council understands its responsibilities towards disabled residents and visitors;
- The areas of village life where the Council has direct control, can exert influence, or must work in partnership;
- The objectives and actions the Council will pursue over the next three years to remove or reduce barriers; and
- How progress will be monitored, reported and reviewed.

The Plan is anticipatory. The duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 is not only a duty to respond when problems arise; it is a duty to think ahead and remove barriers in advance, so that disabled people are not at a substantial disadvantage when they come to use a service or facility. This Plan is the Council's structured way of doing that thinking.

The Plan also makes clear what is not in scope. Many things that matter to disabled residents — for example NHS care, benefits, social care assessments, building regulations enforcement, and the maintenance of the A259 — sit with other bodies. Where that is the case, the Council's role is to signpost, to advocate, and to influence.

2. Legal framework

2.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the principal law protecting people from discrimination on the basis of disability and other protected characteristics. The Act protects disabled people from direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, harassment and victimisation.

Under the Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This definition is wide and includes, among other things, mobility impairments, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, mental health conditions and many long-term health conditions.

2.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, public authorities — including parish councils — must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

"Due regard" means that equality considerations must be properly and genuinely considered before decisions are taken, and built into how the Council operates. It is not a duty to achieve a particular outcome, but it is more than a tick-box exercise.

2.3 The duty to make reasonable adjustments

Sections 20–22 and section 29 of the Equality Act impose a duty on service providers and public bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a provision, criterion or practice, a physical feature, or the absence of an auxiliary aid would put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage. The duty is anticipatory: adjustments must be considered in advance, not only when an individual asks.

2.4 Other relevant frameworks

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified by the UK in 2009), in particular Article 9 (Accessibility) and Article 4(3) (involvement of disabled people in decisions that affect them);
- Building Regulations Approved Document M (access to and use of buildings) — relevant when commissioning works on Parish Council assets;
- The Highways Act 1980 and Equality Act-related guidance on the public realm — relevant to footways, pavements and street furniture, which are highway authority responsibilities;
- Statutory guidance and codes of practice from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3. About the parish

The civil parish of East Dean and Friston lies in the Wealden District of East Sussex, within the South Downs National Park, between Eastbourne and Seaford. It covers approximately 3.3 square miles. The most recent census recorded a resident population of just under 1,600, and there are around 760 households, though the population fluctuates significantly with visitors throughout the year.

The parish includes:

- The village of East Dean, centred on the Village Green with its war memorial, the medieval Church of St Simon and St Jude, and The Tiger Inn;
- Friston, on the higher ground to the north-west, with its own church (St Mary the Virgin) and pond;
- The Downlands Estate, a more modern residential area to the north of the A259;
- The hamlet of Birling Gap on the coast, including the National Trust visitor facilities and the cliff steps;
- The hamlet of Crowlink, set back from the coast in a designated area of countryside.

The Parish Council owns or manages a number of assets which are directly within the scope of this Plan, including the Recreation Ground, cricket pavilion, playground, tennis courts,

Friston Green (including the pond and car park), the Downlands Way car park, bus shelters, public seats, white highway finger posts, waste bins, and 38 public rights of way. The Council is the custodian trustee of the Village Hall, which is run by the Village Hall Trust.

Several characteristics of the parish are particularly relevant to disability access:

- The population skews older than the national average, and an older population means a higher prevalence of mobility, sensory and cognitive impairments;
- The terrain is hilly, with significant gradients on Friston Hill, in parts of the Downlands Estate, and along the coast and Downs paths;
- Many footpaths, kissing gates and stiles are not currently accessible to wheelchair users, mobility scooter users, or people with limited mobility;
- Public transport options are limited, making the twice-weekly shopping bus service, taxis and community transport especially important;
- Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters draw very high visitor numbers, including disabled visitors who may not be familiar with local conditions.

4. How this Plan understands disability

This Plan uses the legal definition of disability set out in the Equality Act 2010 (see section 2.1), but it also takes a broad and practical view. The barriers people face are very varied. They include:

Mobility and physical access

- Wheelchair and mobility scooter users — needing step-free routes, dropped kerbs, firm surfaces and accessible toilets;
- People who walk with sticks, crutches, frames or who have limited stamina — needing seating, level ground, and short distances between rest points;
- People with reduced manual dexterity — needing easy-to-operate gates, taps, locks and door handles.

Sensory access

- Blind and partially sighted people — needing clear signage, tactile information, well-lit spaces and audio alternatives;
- Deaf and hearing-impaired people — needing hearing loops, written information and BSL where appropriate;
- People with sensory processing differences — needing quieter spaces and predictable environments.

Cognitive, neurodivergent and mental health needs

- People with learning disabilities — needing plain English, easy-read materials and consistent processes;
- People with dementia — needing familiar layouts, clear wayfinding, and patient communication;

- Autistic people and others with neurodivergent profiles — needing predictability, advance information and low-stimulation options;
- People living with mental health conditions — needing flexibility, dignity and absence of stigma.

Hidden conditions, carers and the wider community

Many disabilities are not visible. Long-term health conditions such as chronic pain, fatigue conditions, cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, and many neurological conditions can affect a person's day-to-day life without being apparent. The Equality Act also protects people who are discriminated against because they are associated with a disabled person (such as carers and parents) or because they are wrongly perceived to be disabled.

The Council adopts the principle that designing the parish to work well for disabled people generally makes it work better for everybody — including older residents, parents with pushchairs, people carrying shopping, and visitors.

5. Scope: where the Parish Council can act

The Parish Council is the first tier of local government. Its powers and budget are limited, and many decisions that affect disabled people in the parish are made by other bodies. This section sets out clearly where the Council can act directly, where it can influence, and where it must signpost or advocate.

5.1 Direct control

The Council has direct control over the following, all of which are within scope of this Plan:

- Recreation Ground, cricket pavilion, playground and tennis courts;
- Friston Green, including the pond and car park;
- Downlands Way car park and other Council-owned parking;
- Bus shelters, public seats, waste bins, white highway finger posts and noticeboards owned by the Council;
- The 38 public rights of way the Council maintains, in conjunction with East Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority;
- Mowing and strimming of designated areas (Village Green, Church Green, Friston Pond, the Greensward, the Recreation Ground and identified footpaths);
- The Council's own procedures: agendas, meetings, communications, recruitment of councillors and engagement with the public;
- Commissioning and procurement decisions where the Council is the customer.

5.2 Custodian and partner roles

The Council is the custodian trustee of the Village Hall, which is run by the Village Hall Trust. The Council also works closely with the East Dean and Friston Residents' Association, the Parochial Church Council, the East Dean Responders and the Community Watch.

Where the Council is not the operator, it will use its custodian and partner roles to encourage and support accessibility improvements, share guidance, and ensure that accessibility is part of routine conversations about the use and upkeep of community assets.

5.3 Influence over other authorities

Many issues that disabled residents raise sit with other bodies. The Council will engage with these bodies on behalf of residents and as a consultee where appropriate. They include:

Body	Areas relevant to disabled residents
South Downs National Park Authority	Planning, public rights of way, landscape works, signage and visitor facilities
Wealden District Council	Local planning enforcement, environmental health, waste collection, public toilets where applicable, community grants
East Sussex County Council	Highways (the A259, footways, dropped kerbs, road safety), public rights of way, adult social care, transport, libraries
National Trust	Birling Gap, Crowlink and Seven Sisters access and facilities
NHS Sussex / GP services / pharmacies	Healthcare access and accessible information
Bus and community transport operators	The shopping bus, scheduled services and Dial-a-Ride / community transport
Sussex Police	Hate crime reporting, disability-related harassment and safeguarding

5.4 Out of scope

This Plan does not duplicate the statutory roles of healthcare bodies, social care, the police or housing providers. The Council's contribution in those areas is to signpost to appropriate services, share clear and accessible information, and raise systemic issues affecting residents through the appropriate channels.

6. Vision and guiding principles

6.1 Vision

East Dean and Friston will be a parish where disabled residents and visitors can take part in community life, use local facilities, and move around safely and with dignity, and where the Parish Council's decisions, services and assets are designed with accessibility in mind from the start.

6.2 Guiding principles

1. Anticipate, do not just react. The Council will think about accessibility in advance of decisions and works, not only in response to complaints.
2. Nothing about us without us. The Council will involve disabled residents, carers and relevant organisations in shaping the actions in this Plan, in line with the principle of co-production.
3. Be proportionate and honest. The Council has limited powers and a small precept. Actions will be realistic, costed where possible, and prioritised.
4. Inclusive design benefits everyone. Improvements made for disabled people typically benefit older residents, families and visitors too.
5. Confidentiality and dignity. Information about an individual's disability will be handled sensitively and in line with data protection law. Reasonable adjustments will be made discreetly wherever possible.
6. Transparency. The Council will publish this Plan, report on progress at least annually, and make it easy for people to raise issues, suggest improvements or request adjustments.

7. Current position: baseline assessment

The actions in this Plan are informed by an initial baseline assessment of accessibility across Council-controlled assets, Council practices and the wider public realm. This baseline is a starting point. It will be reviewed and refined as Year 1 of the Plan progresses, drawing on more detailed audits and engagement with disabled residents.

7.1 Built environment and outdoor spaces

Village Hall

The Village Hall is the principal indoor community venue, the polling place for elections, and the meeting place for the Parish Council. As custodian trustee, the Council has a particular interest in the Hall's accessibility. Key areas to confirm and address with the Village Hall Trust include step-free access to all areas in use, an accessible WC, a working hearing loop, accessible parking close to the entrance, clear and consistent signage, and accessible hire information.

Recreation Ground, playground, tennis courts and cricket pavilion

The Recreation Ground and playground serve children, families and casual users. Key questions for audit include: the surfacing and gradient of paths and entrances; the inclusivity of play equipment (provision for children with sensory, communication or mobility needs); seating and rest points; accessible parking close to the Recreation Ground; access to the cricket pavilion, including WC facilities where available to the public.

Friston Green, pond and car park; Village Green; Downlands Way car park

These open spaces are heavily used and visually important. Key questions include: the firmness and evenness of surfaces and desire lines; the placement of bollards, posts and

barriers; the existence of accessible (Blue Badge) parking bays where appropriate; safe routes between car parks, bus stops, the shop, the pub, the church and the Village Hall.

Bus shelters, public seats, waste bins and noticeboards

These small items of street furniture, owned by the Council, make a disproportionate difference to people with limited mobility and to those with sensory impairments. Seats are particularly important on uphill routes and between facilities.

Public rights of way

The 38 rights of way maintained by the Council include a mixture of surfaces and furniture. Many stiles and kissing gates are not accessible to mobility scooter or wheelchair users, or to people walking with sticks. The Council recognises that not all paths can be made accessible — much of the terrain is steep and the National Park has landscape protections — but it will work to identify a core network of more accessible routes, in line with the British Standard for outdoor accessibility (BS 5709) and the principle of the "least restrictive option" for gates and furniture.

7.2 Communications and information

The Council communicates with residents and visitors through its website, noticeboards (at Downlands Way and the car park), printed agendas and minutes, the Annual Parish Meeting, and occasional newsletters and notices. The Village Emergency Plan is a key document for vulnerable residents in particular.

Areas to confirm and improve include: website accessibility against WCAG 2.2 AA, plain English, the availability of large print or alternative formats on request, the legibility of noticeboards (height, glare, font size), the accessibility of online meeting joining instructions, and how the Council reaches residents who are not online.

7.3 Council meetings, governance and participation

The Council meets at the Village Hall and operates within Standing Orders, a Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations. There is a public session at the start of every meeting.

Key questions for the Council include: how accessible the meeting venue and arrangements are in practice; whether the requirement to submit public representations in writing (in some formats) creates a barrier for some disabled residents; how the Council recruits and supports councillors with disabilities; and whether the casual vacancy and co-option processes positively welcome disabled candidates.

7.4 Wider public realm and partner services

Issues such as the condition of footways along the A259, dropped kerbs, bus stop infrastructure, and the accessibility of the shopping bus and other services lie largely with East Sussex County Council, bus operators and other partners. The Council's baseline includes mapping the issues most frequently raised by residents in these areas, so that the Council can raise them effectively with the bodies responsible.

8. Strategic objectives

Building on the baseline above, the Council will pursue six strategic objectives over the life of this Plan. Each is supported by specific actions in the Action Plan at section 9.

Objective 1: Know what we have, and what needs fixing

Carry out and maintain a structured accessibility audit of all Council-owned and Council-influenced assets, prioritising those used by the largest numbers of people and those where small interventions would make the biggest difference.

Objective 2: Build accessibility into how we make decisions

Embed an Equality Impact consideration into Council decision-making, so that the Public Sector Equality Duty is genuinely and consistently met when the Council takes decisions on policies, projects and major spending.

Objective 3: Make Council-owned spaces and assets as accessible as we reasonably can

Use the annual budget cycle and any external funding (Community Infrastructure Levy, grants, partner contributions) to deliver a rolling programme of practical accessibility improvements across the Recreation Ground, Friston Green, car parks, seating, bus shelters and signage.

Objective 4: Improve accessible information and communication

Bring the Council's website and routine communications up to a clear accessibility standard, ensure information is available in alternative formats on request, and make Council meetings genuinely open to disabled residents.

Objective 5: Identify and promote a core network of accessible routes and amenities

Working with East Sussex County Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and the National Trust, identify a small number of routes and amenities suitable for wheelchair, mobility scooter and less mobile users, and publish clear information about them so that residents and visitors can plan with confidence.

Objective 6: Be a good partner and a clear advocate

Use the Council's voice to raise systemic disability access issues with Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council, the SDNPA, the National Trust, bus operators and other partners, and to support local groups, the Village Hall Trust and the Residents' Association in their own accessibility work.

9. Action plan, 2026–2029

The actions below are grouped by the six strategic objectives. "Lead" identifies who is responsible for taking the action forward (it does not, in most cases, mean they will

personally do the work). "Timescale" is indicative and may shift in response to capacity, weather, partner involvement and funding. "Success measure" describes what done looks like.

The plan is deliberately conservative: it lists what the Council believes it can credibly achieve within its precept and partner support over three years. Stretch actions and longer-term aspirations are flagged in section 11.

Objective 1 actions: audit and baseline

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
1.1	Commission and complete a structured accessibility audit of all Parish Council-owned outdoor spaces (Recreation Ground, playground, tennis courts, Friston Green, Downlands Way car park, Village Greens) using a recognised tool such as the CAE Access Audit method or equivalent.	Clerk + nominated Councillor	Year 1	Audit report received, considered at full Council, published as an appendix to this Plan
1.2	Work with the Village Hall Trust to undertake or refresh an accessibility audit of the Village Hall.	Custodian Trustee Councillor + Village Hall Trust	Year 1	Joint audit completed; agreed action list with the Trust
1.3	Map the 38 public rights of way managed by the Council, recording surface, gradient, gates, stiles and any furniture; identify which paths are candidates for accessibility improvements.	Footpaths lead + Clerk	Year 1–2	Rights of way accessibility map and schedule
1.4	Establish a simple log of disability-related issues and requests raised with the Council, anonymised where appropriate.	Clerk	Year 1 ongoing	Log in place, reported on annually

Objective 2 actions: decision-making

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
2.1	Adopt a short Equality Impact prompt to be included in Council and Planning Committee report templates for substantive decisions, asking decision-makers to consider impacts on disabled people and other protected groups.	Clerk	Year 1 (within 6 months of adoption)	Updated report template in use

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
2.2	Review Standing Orders and the public participation arrangements at meetings to ensure reasonable adjustments are clearly offered (e.g. accepting representations in alternative formats, allowing more time, providing assistance with reading documents).	Standing Orders working group	Year 1	Revised Standing Orders adopted by Council
2.3	Provide councillors and the Clerk with basic awareness training on the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and disability awareness, including hidden disabilities.	Clerk	Year 1, refresher Year 3	Training completed; record kept
2.4	Review the Council's procurement and grant-making practices to include accessibility expectations where appropriate.	Clerk + Finance lead	Year 2	Updated procurement/grant guidance

Objective 3 actions: accessible places and assets

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
3.1	Following the audit, deliver a Year 1 quick-wins package: replacement or addition of resting seats on key uphill routes; review of seat heights and arm rests; clearer accessible parking provision in Council-owned car parks where space allows.	Clerk + Open Spaces lead	Year 1–2	Seats installed; accessible bays marked where feasible
3.2	Programme of improvements to surfacing and approaches at the Recreation Ground and playground, including consideration of more inclusive play equipment when items are replaced.	Recreation Ground lead	Year 2–3, dependent on budget and any CIL/grant funding	Improvements completed; playground inspection reports note inclusivity
3.3	Audit bus shelters and noticeboards for legibility, lighting and approach; replace or refurbish where end of life.	Clerk	Year 2–3	Noticeboards refreshed; bus shelters reviewed
3.4	Adopt the principle of the "least restrictive option" for any new or replacement gates and furniture on Council-managed rights of way, in line with BS 5709 where feasible.	Footpaths lead	Year 1 ongoing	Policy adopted; reflected in replacements

Objective 4 actions: communications and information

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
4.1	Bring the Parish Council website up to WCAG 2.2 AA where it is not already, including alt text on images, accessible PDFs (or HTML alternatives), readable font sizes and good colour contrast.	Clerk + website provider	Year 1	Independent accessibility check completed; remediation actions closed
4.2	Publish a clear "Reasonable adjustments and accessibility" page on the website explaining how residents and visitors can request adjustments, alternative formats, or raise a concern.	Clerk	Year 1	Page published and linked from the homepage
4.3	Offer large print and plain English versions of key Council documents on request (this Plan, the Village Emergency Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan summary).	Clerk	Year 1 ongoing	Requests met within 10 working days
4.4	Review how the Council reaches residents who are not online, including use of noticeboards, printed notices in key locations and the Residents' Association network.	Communications lead	Year 1–2	Documented communications approach
4.5	Where Council meetings are hybrid or remote, ensure joining instructions are simple and that there is a route for people who cannot attend online to have their views heard.	Clerk	Year 1 ongoing	Joining instructions reviewed; alternative routes documented

Objective 5 actions: accessible routes and amenities

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
5.1	Working with East Sussex County Council, the SDNPA and the National Trust, identify a short list of routes within the parish suitable for wheelchair users, mobility scooter users and those with limited mobility.	Footpaths lead + Clerk	Year 1–2	Short list of routes agreed with partners

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
5.2	Publish an "Accessible East Dean and Friston" page or leaflet describing these routes, accessible parking, accessible toilets in the parish and at Birling Gap, and benches and rest points, with honest information about gradients and surfaces.	Communications lead	Year 2	Page/leaflet published
5.3	Engage with the National Trust on access to Birling Gap (including Hope Gap access discussions and any future works), advocating for the most accessible practical solutions.	Chair / nominated Councillor	Year 1 ongoing	Documented engagement; Trust responses on file
5.4	Continue to support the twice-weekly shopping bus and explore with operators and ESCC how the service can best meet the needs of disabled passengers.	Transport lead	Year 1 ongoing	Annual review with operator

Objective 6 actions: partnership and advocacy

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
6.1	Raise prioritised public realm issues affecting disabled residents (e.g. footway condition on key routes, dropped kerbs, signage clutter) with East Sussex Highways at least annually.	Highways lead	Year 1 ongoing	Annual list submitted; responses logged
6.2	Build an accessibility consultation panel of disabled residents, carers and local representatives who are willing to be consulted on Council proposals (with appropriate data protection).	Clerk	Year 1–2	Panel established; first consultation held
6.3	Engage with the Wealden District Council Community team, local disability organisations (such as Possability People, East Sussex Hearing, Sight Support East Sussex, ESAB and others) for advice and partnership.	Clerk	Year 1 ongoing	Contacts established; advice received

Ref	Action	Lead	Timescale	Success measure
6.4	Ensure the Village Emergency Plan identifies, with consent, residents who would need additional support in an emergency (e.g. power cuts, severe weather, evacuation) and that the plan is reviewed annually with disability in mind.	Emergency Plan lead	Year 1 ongoing	Plan reviewed annually; sign-off recorded

10. Engagement and consultation

The Council does not assume it knows what disabled residents need. The Plan will be shaped and improved by engagement, in line with the principle of "nothing about us without us". Specifically:

- This draft Plan will be published for a defined consultation period of at least six weeks before adoption, with copies available in alternative formats on request and a clear, accessible route for submitting comments;
- Disabled residents, carers and relevant local organisations will be invited to comment, including (where they exist locally) groups representing older people, sight-impaired and hearing-impaired residents, and people with learning disabilities;
- Once adopted, the Council will establish the accessibility consultation panel referred to in action 6.2;
- Major proposals affecting Council-owned assets (for example, significant works at the Recreation Ground or Village Hall) will be subject to specific accessibility consultation as well as general consultation;
- The Annual Parish Meeting will include a standing item on progress against this Plan.

11. Monitoring, review and reporting

11.1 Annual progress report

The Clerk will prepare an annual progress report against the actions in section 9. The report will be considered by full Council in public, published on the website, and form a standing item at the Annual Parish Meeting. Where actions have slipped, the report will explain why and propose a revised timescale.

11.2 Full review

This Plan will be subject to a full review no later than three years after its adoption, or earlier if circumstances change materially (for example, significant changes to the law, major works on Council assets, or feedback indicating that the Plan needs more substantial revision).

11.3 Indicators

As a small parish, the Council will keep indicators simple. They will include:

- Number of actions delivered, in progress and delayed against the Action Plan;
- Number of accessibility-related issues logged and how they were resolved;
- Number of reasonable adjustments requested and made;
- Outcomes of any independent audits (Village Hall, website, etc.);
- Qualitative feedback from disabled residents, the accessibility consultation panel and the Annual Parish Meeting.

11.4 Longer-term aspirations

Beyond the three-year horizon of this Plan, the Council aspires to: a fully accessible core route between the Village Green, the Village Hall, the shop and key parking; a Recreation Ground and playground that include genuinely inclusive equipment and surfacing; and a published, well-maintained "Accessible parish" information set. These aspirations will inform future budgets and bids.

12. Requesting adjustments and raising concerns

If you are a disabled resident or visitor and you would like to request a reasonable adjustment, ask for information in a different format, or raise a concern about accessibility in the parish, you can:

- Contact the Parish Clerk by phone or email — contact details are on the Council website and noticeboards;
- Speak to any councillor;
- Write to the Council care of the Village Hall;
- Raise the matter at the public session of any Council meeting (representations in writing in advance are helpful but not required if that is itself a barrier — the Council will accept representations in the format that works best for the person making them, including by phone or in person).

The Council will acknowledge requests and concerns promptly and respond substantively within a reasonable period, ordinarily within 20 working days. Where the matter is not the Council's responsibility, the Council will explain that and, where it can, signpost or refer the matter to the body that can help.

The Council's existing Complaints Procedure applies to formal complaints about how the Council itself has behaved. Where a matter relates to potential discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, residents may also seek advice from the Equality Advisory and Support Service or take independent legal advice.

Appendix A: Accessibility audit checklist (summary)

This summary checklist will be used to structure the audits referred to in actions 1.1 and 1.2. A more detailed version will be developed by the Clerk in Year 1.

A1. Approach and arrival

- Is there accessible parking within a short, level distance of the entrance?
- Are the dropped kerbs, paths and approach surfaces firm, even and free of trip hazards?
- Is the route well lit and clearly signed?

A2. Entry and circulation

- Is the main entrance step-free, with adequate clear opening width?
- Are doors openable with limited dexterity (lever handles, light operation)?
- Is there clear, high-contrast signage to facilities, toilets and meeting rooms?

A3. Sanitary and seating provision

- Is there an accessible WC, and is it kept available (not used as storage)?
- Is there seating, including seats with arm rests, at sensible intervals along outdoor routes?

A4. Information and communication

- Is there a working hearing loop where the venue is used for meetings or services?
- Are documents and signage in clear, readable fonts and adequate size?
- Is information available in alternative formats on request?

A5. Outdoor spaces, rights of way and play

- Are gates and furniture the "least restrictive option" reasonably possible?
- Are there resting seats on uphill or longer routes?
- Does play equipment include items usable by children with mobility, sensory or communication needs?

A6. Maintenance and operations

- Are accessibility features included in routine inspection and maintenance schedules?
- Are staff and contractors briefed not to obstruct accessible routes (e.g. with bins, signage, A-boards)?

Appendix B: Useful contacts and references

Internal

- East Dean and Friston Parish Council — Village Hall, Village Green Lane, East Dean, BN20 0DR (see Council website for current Clerk and Councillor contact details).
- East Dean and Friston Village Hall Trust — via the Parish Council in the first instance.
- East Dean and Friston Residents' Association.

Local and regional authorities

- Wealden District Council — wealden.gov.uk
- East Sussex County Council, including Highways and Adult Social Care — eastsussex.gov.uk
- South Downs National Park Authority — southdowns.gov.uk
- National Trust (Birling Gap and Seven Sisters) — nationaltrust.org.uk

National and statutory

- Equality and Human Rights Commission — equalityhumanrights.com
- Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) — equalityadvisoryservice.com, 0800 800 0082
- Government overview of the Equality Act 2010 — gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Disability and inclusion organisations (illustrative; not exhaustive)

- Possability People (Sussex) — supporting disabled people in Sussex
- East Sussex Hearing
- Sight Support East Sussex
- Age UK East Sussex
- Carers Support East Sussex
- Mencap and Mind, for learning disabilities and mental health respectively

Standards and guidance

- Equality Act 2010, in particular sections 20–22, 29 and 149
- Equality and Human Rights Commission statutory Code of Practice on Services, Public Functions and Associations
- Building Regulations Approved Document M
- BS 8300 — Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment
- BS 5709 — Gaps, gates and stiles

- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2**