

Advice to Little Chalfont Parish Council

You seem to have done all you can to make the site as accessible as possible. You have planned from the outset to make it 'accessible for all', rather than it being an after-thought and trying to 'retro-fit' structures and design. It's free to access without any charges being made for disabled people, i.e. the 'service' you are providing for able-bodied people costs the same for disabled people.

You have provided resting places for those with, for example, walking distance problems (arthritis or pregnant women), have provided a specific picnic bench accessible for a wheel chair. The site is relatively level and is accessible from the highway (footway network); there are no kerbs without being 'dropped'; and there are no gates that can't be opened from a wheelchair or mobility scooter (see below*). There are some formal surfaced paths around the site so a certain percentage of the site is accessible for wheelchairs, with the intension to provide more surfaced paths when funds allow. There are no steps along any of the paths, but if these are necessary in future then adjoining ramps can be provided at the correct gradient. The grass paths will be regularly mown so mobility scooters can use the paths and stronger wheelchair users can use these more challenging path surfaces.

*You mentioned a pedestrian gate at the entrance to the site. Is this really necessary? Why not have just a 1m gap so wheelchairs and mobility scooters can just wheel in without stopping. This would overcome any problems leaning forward and fiddling with gate latches from a mobility scooter or wheelchair, or in future if the gate latch becomes stiff if one of the posts drops.

In your case, a lack of funds is a legitimate defence to any DDA challenge, but what you have been able to provide *is* accessible. Challenges tend to come when wheelchairs can't even access a site, or when charges are made for disabled people while others access for free (e.g. Ryan Air).

Gavin has said he would be happy to come and assess the site. His email is: gavincaspersz@glasswa.com

There is also a Chiltern Disability Focus Group who you could consult: <https://isa.chiltern.gov.uk/democracy/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=244>