

A Critical Re-evaluation of the Usage by Disabled Groups of the Church Lammas Demonstration Project



Project Reference MA/6/1/009

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	page 3
2.	THE REVIEW PROGRESS	page 5
3.	PHYSICAL CONDITION OF SITE	page 7
	A) DESIGN MATTERS	
	B) MAINTENANCE MATTERS	
4.	LOCAL CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY SITUATION	page 12
5.	WHAT SUCCEEDED	page 14
6.	WHAT FAILED	page 15
7.	LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS	page 15

FIGURES

1.	Site Location Plan	page 2
2.	Original Improvement Plan	page 19

APPENDIX

The Good Practice Handbook:
'Disabled Access -.A Guide For The Quarrying Industry.'

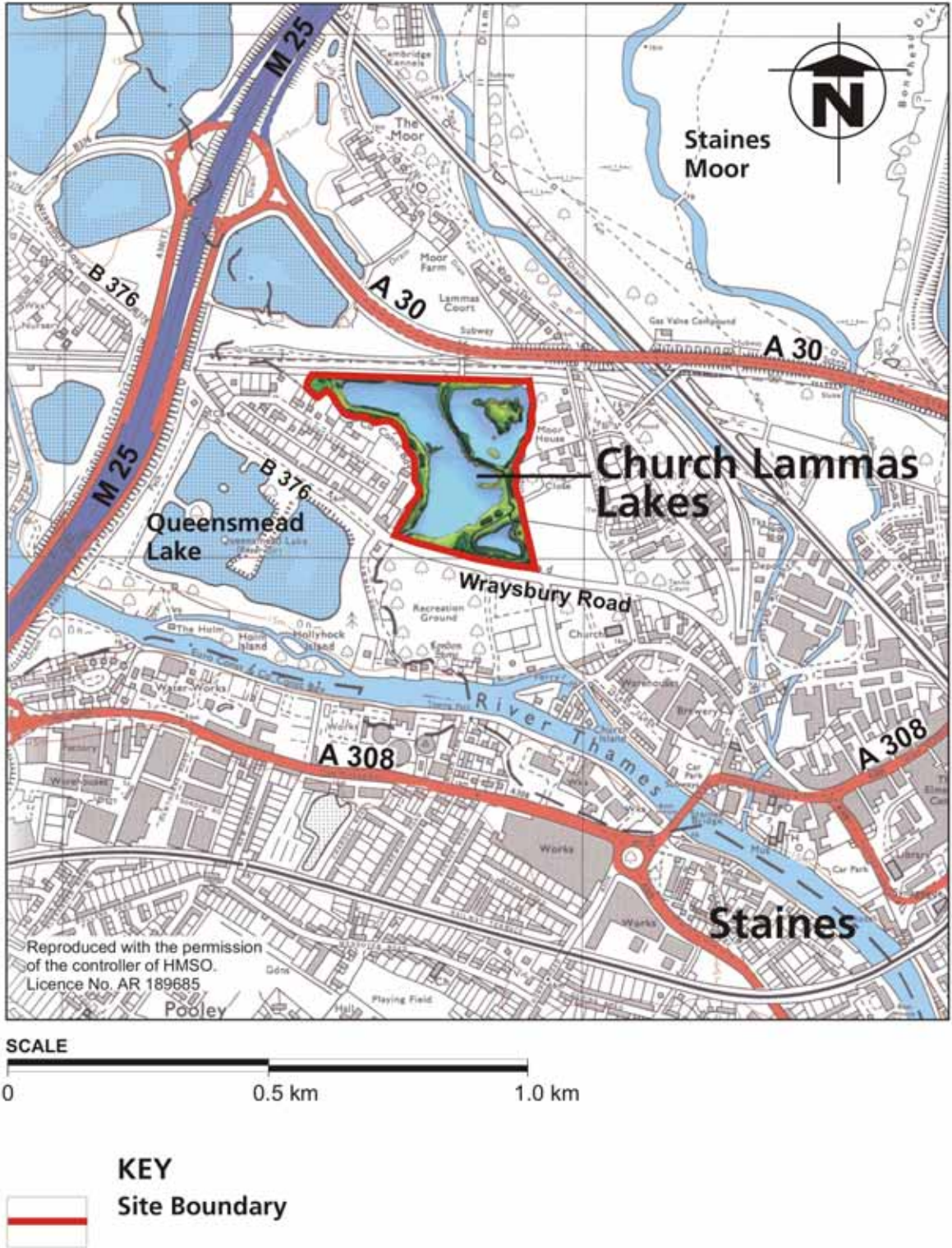


Figure1. Site Location Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Church Lammas site covers 8.8 hectares and is located just north of the River Thames and west of Staines town centre, in Surrey. The site location is shown on Figure 1. The land had been worked for sand and gravel during the 1990s, and was fully restored as three lakes, for wildlife and public enjoyment, by the end of the decade. The final site restoration was carried out by the mineral operator, Brett Group of Faversham, Kent, in a joint scheme with minerals planning authority Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council, in whose area the site lies. This scheme included access gates in the northern and southern boundaries, paths linking the two, and some bench seats overlooking the lakes.
- 1.2 In 2004, the site owner identified Church Lammas as a suitable site for an innovative study into the practicality and benefit to the local and wider communities of the direct involvement of disabled people in the restoration and after-use of a minerals site. The drivers for this initiative were:
- the coming into effect in October 2004 of the final part of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, making this issue of current concern to minerals companies
 - the site's location in an area having a large potential population catchment, which would be likely to have access to it
 - its relatively small size and good links to road and footpath routes, which would facilitate use by local people
 - the selection of the project as suitable for both an entry in the 2005 Cooper-Heyman Cup, (the minerals industry's premier restoration award) and for an application to MIRO for match funding, to enable the study and its outcome to be made available more widely within the industry as a whole



Original restoration works shown to the left of a view taken from a similar location in the Autumn of 2007



Original restoration works shown to the left of a view taken from a similar location in the Autumn of 2007

1.3 Key elements of the completed scheme were:

- the widening of the existing footpath through the site, and removal of steep gradients and cross-falls.
- extension of the path network to allow easier access around the site.



Improved footpath under construction in 2004 and a recent view taken in 2007

- the installation of extra seats, to give more rest stops for people with limited mobility.
- the construction of two water-side viewing terraces, from which wildlife can be more easily observed.
- the construction of a bird-watching shelter designed for wheelchair users in a quiet corner of the site, overlooking the smallest of the lakes.
- the construction and installation of bird and bat boxes, made by a local Cub Scout troop.
- the erection at the site entrance of a pictorial information sign with relief carvings of wildlife species and a braille information panel.

- the design and distribution in the local community of a colour printed leaflet, to show the features of the site to those who would otherwise not know of its existence. For disabled people, this is one of the most important aspects, since casual visits are harder to arrange than for the able bodied.

1.3 In the event, the Church Lammas project was successful both in winning the Cooper-Heyman Cup for Brett Aggregates, and in attracting MIRO funding under Reference MA/6/1/009. Two years on, this report reviews the physical and social outcomes of the original project, and makes recommendations for those considering similar projects in the future.

2. THE REVIEW PROCESS

2.1 Initially, a site visit was made in the company of Brett representatives responsible for the upkeep of the site. This established the following:

1. Regular maintenance has been undertaken, consisting of grass cutting, path clearance and repair, trimming of overhanging branches and emptying of litter and dog waste bins.
2. There has been relatively little damage or vandalism since 2005 (for details see section 3).
3. Numbers of visitors have increased since 2005, although many local people are still discovering Church Lammas for the first time.
4. There has been no progress in the construction of the pedestrian-controlled crossing of Wraysbury Road, although the local councillor and disability access group SCAN are actively pursuing this.



An original footpath shown to the left in 2004 and a view taken in 2007 of the same path having since been improved and regularly maintained.

2.2 Following this initial visit, contact was made with the key groups and individuals who were actively involved in 2004-5, chiefly the following:

- The Fieldfare Trust, who were the original project partner with practical experience of disabled access to the countryside.
- Staines MS Society, who provided active involvement from the beginning, including visits to site during the design process.
- Staines Shopmobility, who also showed interest from the beginning, and have been holding stocks of the information leaflet.
- Staines Committee for Access Now (SCAN), an organisation that audits local access issues in the town, and was also involved in setting the original project goals.
- Spelthorne Borough Council, particularly the officers responsible for asset management and access/countryside issues, who had been strong supporters of the original scheme.
- Private individuals with a range of impairments who have visited the site, and their carers.



Lammas Water fully restored at the start of the demonstration project in May 2004.



A photograph from a similar viewpoint taken in October 2007

- 2.3 Using the original project document as a guide, new photographs were taken, to highlight any changes in the appearance and condition of the site and its features in the last two years. These are included throughout this report, and show some of the items mentioned in section 3 below.
- 2.4 Responses were sought through meetings, and by telephone and email from the participating organisations, to identify current usage of the site, and any recommendations for the future.

3. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE SITE

3.1 Design Matters

Layout: there has been no change since 2005, apart from the installation of the footbridge over the outlet to Lammas Water, which had been planned in 2004 as a joint undertaking by Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency. This bridge was installed as a result of safety concerns over people's use of the weir at the outlet to gain access to the western side of the lake. Unfortunately, the height of the underside of the bridge, set by the EA, means that access is by means of several steep steps, which would deny access to wheelchair users and those having limited mobility.

Car Parking: this is in Lammas Park, an adjacent open space on the south side of Wraysbury Road, as it was in 2004. Parking is now pay-and-display; there are two disabled spaces, constructed as part of Spelthorne's upgrading of the park in 2005, but due to the configuration of the site these are on a slope, making entering and leaving a vehicle difficult for wheelchair users.

Toilets/facilities: as before, there is a toilet block with disabled facilities in Lammas Park, at the south end close to the Thames riverside. This facility is generally well-kept, despite being in a public park, which is probably due to the proximity of popular children's play facilities and the park-keepers' office. For users of Church Lammas, however it requires a walk of several hundred metres and a double crossing of Wraysbury Road.

Road Crossing: a pedestrian-controlled crossing of the 40mph Wraysbury Road was one of the first improvements that all who visited the site in 2004 suggested. It is clear that, especially for people with disabilities and those with children, a safe crossing would greatly enhance the safety and appeal of the complementary facilities offered by the two areas of open space. Whilst the logic of this is accepted by Spelthorne, Surrey County Council as highways authority and local access groups, no progress has been made in construction, due to financial constraints and other higher priority schemes in the locality. SCAN are still pursuing this with the help of a local Councillor, Brett's have offered part funding, and the situation is being kept under review by Surrey CC. The crossing may come to fruition in the next few years.

External Signage: prior to the commencement of the improvement scheme in 2004/5, Church Lammas had been allowed to develop as a wildlife site with relatively little disturbance. Since the mineral restoration scheme consisted of extensive new plantings, the formation of lake beds and banks to encourage wildlife, and minimal provision for public access, having the site as a "well-kept secret" without prominent external signs was appropriate to its aims. The focus of the site's value is still on wildlife and conservation, albeit with improved access and visitor facilities, and until a safe crossing can be provided, no new signs visible from the road are planned. At a future date, if Church Lammas becomes a part of the long-distance Colne Valley Way and is better linked to the open spaces to the south and north (Lammas Park and Staines Moor respectively), some more prominent signing of the entrance may be appropriate.



The information sign at the time of installation to the left and in late 2007

Internal Signage: the new information sign just inside the entrance was a major element of the original scheme, designed to convey the content and character of the site to all, and it was endorsed by a blind member of SCAN as “impressive” during a familiarisation visit in 2005. It had already suffered from some racist graffiti and physical damage soon after installation (the latter caused by someone attempting to scratch out the former), but this was removed and the paint touched up within a short time. No new instances of damage have occurred, although paint and wood stain colours have weathered a little in the ensuing two years. The warning and information signs at the gate are as before, and remain in good condition.

Gates: the main access gate had originally been configured as a kissing gate, to deter horse riders and motorcyclists, but although just allowing a standard wheelchair through, it was not



The original kissing gate proved adequate for wheelchair access but unsuitable for use by powered chairs

large enough for the increasingly common powered chairs, and difficult for some of the larger pushchairs. As part of the 2005 scheme, the railed enclosure was lengthened and other gates re-hung to allow easier access for pedestrians and maintenance vehicles, and to provide a RADAR lock on an existing access gate, for those not able to negotiate the kissing gate. If further developments take place on the site in the future (such as a classroom /shelter for community use) these access improvements will already be in place. The gates are still functioning as intended, although the RADAR lock mechanism is not engaging properly and needs some attention. This gate is temporarily chained shut until repairs can be effected. Some minor touching-up to paintwork would also be beneficial.



Improved access arrangements, October 2007

Decorative Gateposts: to add interest to the site entrance, a pair of cast iron mallard duck finials were added to the existing gateposts, painted in realistic plumage colours. These have been positively commented on by visitors but one has been stolen. There are signs that the other has been used for shooting practice, as it has pock marks.

Security Fences: these had been in place during the mineral extraction phase for obvious health and safety reasons. Sections of this fencing were left in place where they did not conflict with permitted access or the appearance of the restored site, for example along the eastern boundary. Unauthorised access to and through the site has been an issue, as the site lies between the A30 and Staines town centre. Also, the need for an open floodwater channel running north to south through the site means that the secure enclosure is discontinuous along the northern boundary. Motorcyclists and horse riders have removed rails from the timber highway fence north of the site from time to time, allowing access through to Wraysbury Road. Brett's staff carry out repairs to overcome this access and the damage to paths and grass surfaces which it causes. In general, site enclosure is mostly effective, although some personnel access continues to be made through the fence near the bridge at the south-west corner. After inspection, it was felt that it would be more costly and difficult to try to prevent this than to let it be, especially now the footbridge gives safe access across the end of the lake. An earlier problem with litter and rubbish coming over the fence from the Housing Association site in the north-east still persists and is dealt with as necessary by Brett's staff.

Viewing Platforms: these are still in good condition, although the woodstain finish on the smaller hexagonal one is now weathered and could be renewed to advantage. This structure is a favourite place for seagulls, which has led to soiling of the handrails. The larger viewing terrace overlooking Ashby Pond remains as constructed, with no apparent signs of damage.



Recent photographs of the viewing platforms, Autumn 2007

Bird Watching Hide: this is also still in good condition, showing little sign of misuse. As it was deliberately sited in a quiet corner of the site away from the main path, this lack of damage is not surprising. Its open-backed 'bus-shelter' form was designed to avoid previous problems of misuse in an enclosed hide, and this appears to have been successful.



Two views of the bird watching hide as built to the left and in its current condition (October 2007)

Water Safety / Signage: most lifebelts are still in place, although one or two are missing - Brett's staff are aware of this, and replacements are on order. Signs warning of deep water etc. are in place at both the northern and southern site entrances.

Paths: these are generally in good condition; the maintenance team keeps things in order, although some strong weeds e.g. knotweed are showing signs of breaking through the surface in a few places. The rolled, self-binding surface installed in 2005 has performed well, with the very few soft spots initially caused by surface water ponding having been overcome by the installation of drainage pipes. Access to the bird hide is by means of a reinforced grass path, which was tested by a user with a powered wheelchair after installation. The reinforcing mesh is designed to integrate with the turf, but this has occurred to the extent that the path is only visible over short sections, and its route is not clear. Also, some sections of mesh have been pulled up, either deliberately or accidentally by mowing machines. Better marking of the safe route, and attention to repair will be required.

Benches: one has been stolen and will be replaced. The remainder are in good condition, although the natural oak is now weathering to a greyish finish as was intended. Bolts fixed through the legs of new benches before concreting in would reduce the chance of theft.

Drainage: no significant problems are apparent; one section of the unsurfaced grass path around the north side of Moor House Pool lies wet at times, and some re-spreading of soils has been carried out to lessen this. This section of the site has always been less accessible than the remainder, and path levels and gradients were improved as part of the 2005 scheme. Some lower-lying spots beneath the trees remain wet for a time after rain, but no long-term problems have been identified.

Freedom From Obstructions: path routes are all kept clear, although the stepped access to the SCC/EA bridge over Lammas Water is for the able-bodied only. Maintenance staff periodically remove overhanging willow branches and brambles that interfere with pathways, and some more radical control of waterside willows will be needed from time to time, in order not to allow the lakes to become completely enclosed. This will probably be needed around Ashby Pond in the first instance, where willow growth is most advanced.

Bird /Bat Boxes: although these remained in place for the first two years of the scheme with little apparent damage, inspections in summer 2007 have shown that several have now either

fallen or been dislodged, and are lying on the ground. Those noted had clearly been used, although access holes had been widened. Failure may have been due to the nail fixings giving way or to high winds, but vandalism is also a possibility. A review and refixing operation is underway.

3.2 Maintenance Matters

Maintenance of the restored site was well established before the Church Lammas improvement scheme was carried out, and regular maintenance has continued during and since that time. Items addressed during visits are as follows:

Grass: mowing of the main part of the site close to the principal footpath routes is carried out at fortnightly intervals during the growing season, with occasional `topping` cuts at other times, to maintain a good appearance. Areas to the west of Lammas Water and around the north and east sides of Moor House Pool are not regularly mown, apart from a mower width to define a walkable route through the longer sward. Differential mowing of these areas encourages grasses and other plants to flower and seed, with benefits for invertebrates and birds.

Shrubs and Trees: many of the trees on the boundaries of the site pre-date the mineral extraction phase, and include mature willows, oaks and chestnuts. A particularly fine Horse Chestnut was preserved to the east of Ashby Pond, where a tree seat encircling the trunk formed part of the minerals restoration scheme. Some of the boundary Willows need attention to deadwood from time to time, and this work is carried out to prevent public safety issues arising. Trees and shrubs planted towards the end of the minerals restoration phase are now well established, covering the former works processing area and forming visual enclosure to the site boundaries. Within the site, groups of native shrubs beside the main pathways provide leaf, flower and autumn berry interest, as well as food for birds. All these categories of plants are monitored for health and trimmed as necessary to maintain path clearances.

Aquatics: all the lakes contain aquatic plants of various kinds, from underwater oxygenating species to native water lilies. Such plants are transferred between water bodies by transient wildfowl, and are brought in by inflowing waters. Lammas Water has sufficient depth and surface area that colonising plants do not cause any problems. But the smaller water bodies now support considerable rafts of water lily leaves in summer, plus blanket weed, and some partial clearance may become necessary in the future in order to maintain open water. Reeds and Reedmace (Phragmites and Typha species) are also establishing along the shorelines of all the lakes, and a management decision to control their spread may be needed at



Two views of Lammas Water from similar viewpoints in 2004 to the left and 2007 to the right

some time, if it is desired to keep some sections of bank open.

Paths: surfaces are maintained by the removal of penetrating weeds, and by repair to unevenness as necessary. Small hollows can be infilled with surrounding loose material. Cambers were set at the time of construction to shed water, and no corrective action has been needed to date. Edgings were not installed, partly for reasons of cost, but also because a soft edge to the paths is more appropriate to the character of Church Lammas. Manual or chemical means are employed to maintain the designed path widths by controlling the encroachment of grasses.

Gates and Gateposts: as noted above, one of the decorative gatepost finials has been stolen, and there has been minor wear to paintwork on the operating parts of the kissing gate. The original two-part epoxy paint finish was in known RAL colours, and re-touching can easily be carried out as required. A decision on replacing the missing mallard duck finial has yet to be made. Keys to the temporary gate padlock are held by Brett staff, and the repair or replacement of the malfunctioning RADAR lock is in progress.

Viewing Platforms (Surfaces / Barriers): these remain structurally sound, and fulfill their original purpose of allowing safe access to the water's edge. Some re-coating of timber components would help to prolong life, and give a cared-for appearance.

Drainage: due to the gravelly nature of the site, no general drainage system was required. Small lengths of pipe to lead surface water away from low spots on the paths were installed in 2005, and continue to function.

Signage: as noted above, some minor retouching of the information sign near the entrance would freshen up its appearance. No other work to information or warning signs has so far been necessary.

Hide and Seating: the natural oak bench seats should not require any maintenance, apart from scrubbing or power washing if surfaces eventually begin to accumulate excessive dirt or algal growth. The bird hide would benefit from a re-application of woodstain every two to three years.

4. LOCAL CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY SITUATION

- 4.1 The Church Lammas site is set between Lammas Park and Staines Moor, and offers a pedestrian route from the Thames river bank northwards to the Moor, albeit with a detour to cross the A30 trunk road. Despite these links it seems that most users access the site from the car park to the south, and use it for short circular walks, often with dogs, on or off the lead. Some local residents are more aware of the possibilities of longer walks (or cycle rides), and use it as part of a route. Usage has increased since 2004, but visitors with whom one speaks frequently say that they have discovered the site for the first time. "I've lived here for many years and didn't know this place existed" is a common observation.
- 4.2 Use of the site by disabled groups and individuals still represents a small proportion of the total: whether this is a reflection of their numbers as a proportion of the population as a whole is hard to say. The cub scout troop which was involved in the construction of bird and bat boxes has used



A view from the north towards the Church Lammas site 2004



A view from a similar location 2007

the site for badge work related to nature studies, encouraged by their leader who is a wheelchair user and was herself keenly involved in the project from the beginning. Groups from the county's Fairways Day Care Centre at Knowle Green, Staines, which serves local people with physical and mental impairments, have also visited the site from time to time. It is valued for its naturalistic character, as a change from the urban environment at the Centre, whilst being a safe and enclosed site with no traffic hazard once inside. Although there is one parking space outside the gate on the north side of the Wraysbury Road, a pedestrian-controlled crossing would undoubtedly assist access for this and similar groups.

- 4.3 Spelthorne Borough Council remain keen to maximise the value of the Church Lammas site for the local community, both as an asset in itself, and as a link to other open spaces nearby. The borough has an ongoing programme of open-space improvements, which has seen significant investment in the Lammas Park and other sites in the last few years. This has resulted in increased usage of the facilities, which now include a skate park and an enhanced enclosed water-play area. Better links with the Church Lammas site to the north would also widen the appeal, offering a "countryside" experience to add to the more structured play and leisure facilities in Lammas Park.
- 4.4 In the longer term, it may be possible to extend the pedestrian links still further, to include Staines Moor and the Colne Valley Way, forming a linked series of open spaces of different character, extending from the Thames riverside in the south as far as Denham in the north.

5. WHAT SUCCEEDED

- 5.1 There is no doubt that the involvement of local disabled groups and individuals in the planning of the improvement scheme made it more likely to succeed. One of the key elements, the information leaflet, was successfully printed and distributed after the receipt of comments from the Fieldfare Trust and other disability organisations. Supplies are still available at the Staines Shopmobility office in the town centre.
- 5.2 Information about the site on the pictorial sign near the entrance has also been welcomed and commented on favourably by visitors, particularly the provision of a Braille panel and the relief carving on the sign surface. It appears to be weathering well, but will need touching up some time in the future.
- 5.3 The design of the waterside terraces, and their construction by a timber craftsman from Surrey, has added some attractive elements to the site without unduly changing the naturalistic character of Church Lammas. They offer opportunities for all visitors to have close contact with the water's edge and the wildfowl upon it, without the need to approach the lake banks which are steep in places.
- 5.4 The widened paths, finished with a sympathetic rolled surface, have stood up well to use and weather, and have required very little repair or maintenance. They have been tested by wheelchair users and others, and have proved accessible throughout.
- 5.5 The general maintenance of the site has been kept up to a high standard, due to the continuing investment by Brett's, and this has helped to minimise the incidence of damage and vandalism.
- 5.6 One item on the original "long-list" of improvements was provision for disabled anglers, but after discussions with the Environment Agency, it was agreed that fishing at Church Lammas was not compatible with the function of the site as part of the flood relief system for the River Colne. This element of the scheme was transferred to the Brett site at Hithermoor, a few miles to the north, where two fishing platforms for disabled anglers were constructed by members of the existing fishing club in November 2005. Although not part of the Church Lammas site, these facilities have benefitted local disabled and junior anglers, and have been well-used over the last two years. They would not have been constructed without the support and involvement of the site owner.



The fishing platforms at Hithermoor in Autumn 2007, two years after construction

6. WHAT FAILED

- 6.1 Whilst there was a high degree of enthusiasm among the project partners at the start and during the development process, it has not been maintained to the same degree in subsequent years. This is entirely natural, as other more pressing issues have intervened, and the project was always going to lose its novelty after a while.
- 6.2 Although a long list of desirable improvements and facilities was drawn up at the start of the project, only the initial scheme has been implemented so far. A second phase, including more radical (and costly) interventions such as a boardwalk over part of the lake, a sensory garden, and a classroom/shelter has not been undertaken, and is not currently planned. These works, or a development of them, may follow in time, but current discussions between the landowner and Spelthorne Borough are focussed on other issues.
- 6.3 Likewise, the pedestrian crossing on Wraysbury Road, a key element in the access plan for the site, has not yet been constructed, although local pressure, including from the access group SCAN, is being maintained. There is still a strong possibility that the crossing will be implemented in the future, perhaps as part of wider improvements in the Staines Moor area.
- 6.4 None of the above items are actual failures of the Church Lammas project itself, in the sense of things that were attempted but which were not achieved, but rather they represent delays in achieving the full potential of the site. This potential still remains, but it will be for the current and successor organisations and individuals that have an interest in the site to decide how much effort should be put into realising it.

7. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Early research at the start of the Church Lammas project revealed a vast amount of information and organisations dealing with issues of disability, from which relevant guidance needed to be abstracted. Early contacts with the national offices of the main disability charities such as RNIB, MENCAP, RNID and others produced general information about particular impairments, but it is the local representatives who have the best links with the local community, and who will be most interested in a project in their area. Such people are also likely to have contacts with other local organisations which can be contacted. From a wide initial base, a small number of key people will emerge who have the necessary interest and commitment to see the project through.
- 7.2 One important organisation is the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP - www.bcodp.org.uk), not in the sense of providing individual involvement in the achievement of a particular project, but in setting out an agenda for disabled people's rights and expectations. A key theme is that disabled people should be able to participate in improving the quality of their experiences and life chances, and not be content with having good things 'done to' them. This means that it is vital to involve local disabled people right from the start of a project, ideally before its aims and scope have been fixed.
- 7.3 At Church Lammas, the minerals extraction and restoration stages had already been completed before the improvement project was conceived, so any opportunity to adjust the method of working or the configuration of the site for an after-use that might accommodate a particular disabled group activity had already been lost. Ideally the assessment of a site's potential for such uses, along with provision for appropriate uses by the local population as a whole, would be done as part of the working plan and site restoration proposals. The earlier that disability groups and individuals can be invited to participate, the more likely it is that the completed site will both meet

local needs, and achieve a sense of ownership in the local community.

- 7.4 Information about the site should be readily available to people who may like to visit. For able-bodied people, it is usually not difficult to arrange a visit 'on spec', to see whether a location is worth returning to. For a disabled person, who may need to arrange specialist transport or the assistance of a carer, trips usually have to be planned well in advance. Information available by email, leaflet or poster will help in avoiding both wasted journeys and disappointment if a site turns out to be not as imagined.
- 7.5 For more structured activities such as angling, boating or absailing, there would need to be an established organisation that can ensure safety and that the right equipment and personnel are in attendance. The possibility of setting up such a club, or the addition of a restored minerals site to the facilities offered by an existing one nearby, should be one of the issues addressed during the site design stage. It would be no good configuring the site for such a use if there were no possibility of it being used, due to remoteness or the lack of a local catchment population. In this respect, the Church Lammas site is very well placed, being close to a motorway junction and in easy reach of a large population.
- 7.6 On starting the review of Church Lammas in 2007, it soon became clear that many of the individuals who had had the greatest involvement in and contribution to the original scheme were no longer available to maintain their interest. Reasons for this ranged from a change in personal circumstances, through career moves to other charities or locations, to a change in areas of responsibility, and in one case to a person's death. One of the tasks during this review has therefore been to re-connect some of the organisations with the project, where individuals have moved on and knowledge of the site had been lost.
- 7.7 This process of change and re-connection is likely to be a continuous one, and it emphasises the need to establish a core group of people who can maintain the site and continually review its operation and objectives. At Church Lammas, the site is small, it is open to all without restriction,



and its value is chiefly as an informal recreation area that is distinct from the urban open space nearby. Future upkeep and development of the site will be taken forward by representatives of the site owner, the local authority and hopefully the local access and disability groups. On a private quarry site, the core group might include the owner, the local authority, established local clubs (sailing, angling, canoeing), and organisations such as the Ramblers' Association and a specialist such as the Fieldfare Trust or the Sensory Trust, both of which have expertise in countryside access for the disabled.

7.8 In summary, the chief lessons learned from carrying out and reviewing the aim to involve disabled people in the restoration of a minerals site have been:

1. A core group of people with local connections and a commitment to the idea of disabled access is essential if the goals of the project are to be realised.
2. Be clear about the appropriate after-uses and types of access which will suit the site. Don't try to provide too many facilities that will be hard to fund and sustain.
3. Begin the consultation process as soon as possible, ideally before the working plan has been finalised, so that methods of working can be adapted to achieve the desired end state.
4. Ensure that information about what the site offers is available off-site, aimed at the core potential users. Different methods and styles of publicity will be needed to attract different groups of users.
5. Recognise that people's lives move on for many different reasons, and sustaining the interest and value of the site for disabled people require continual review and re-connection with the local community.



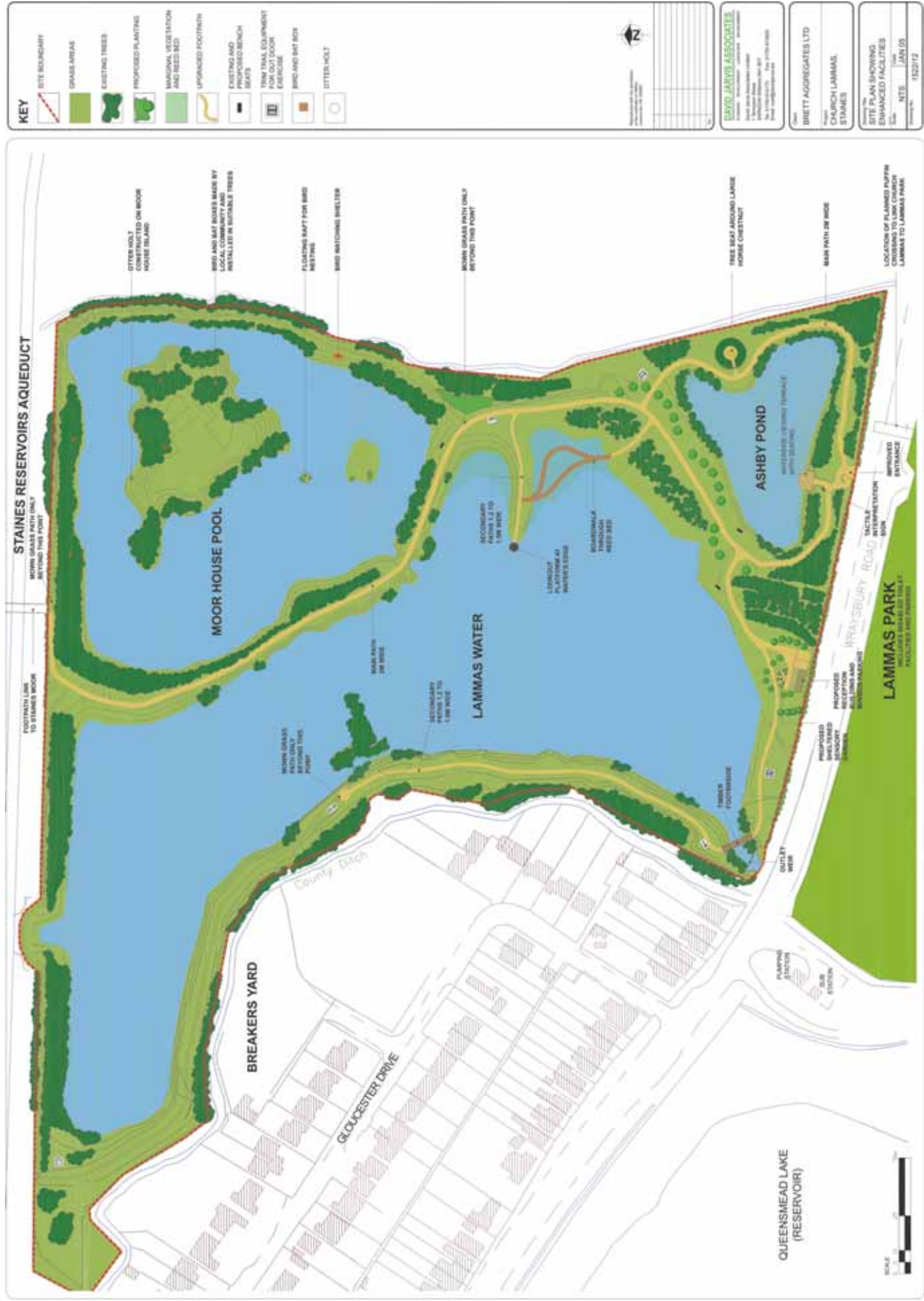


Figure 2. Original Improvement Plan

APPENDIX

The following pages have been incorporated into a Good Practice Handbook which has been widely distributed to the Industry.



DISABLED ACCESS

A GUIDE FOR THE QUARRYING INDUSTRY

There are currently in excess of 1,300 quarries within the UK, a large proportion of which incorporate public access into their design and restoration. However, very few have ensured that the access offered can be used by the whole of the population, including the 1 in 5 who are disabled.

This document seeks to remove some of the fear surrounding the issue of Disabled Access and to provide a useful source of advice on how to go about designing your site appropriately, what you should and should not be considering, where you may be able to look for funding and who to consult along the way.



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M·I·S·T
Mineral Industry
Sustainable Technology

Step 1: Can you incorporate disabled access at your site?

Quarries by their nature are highly variable, some will be ideally suited to Disabled Access and some will not.

Considering general public access to your site is a good starting point. Is public access desirable, necessary or indeed essential? If the answer to this is YES, then the next step is to consider how access can be made **inclusive**, i.e. how it can be made to meet the needs of all people, with or without disabilities.

An access audit may help to identify those areas of the site where it is best to concentrate efforts in terms of achieving access for all and, also, those areas of the site where access is not going to be feasible and where time, effort and expense could be wasted.



Identifying and removing the barriers: About the site location

- Can you get to it?
- Can you park, if necessary?
- Can you take advantage of public transport?
- Can you make use of adjacent facilities or are facilities provided on site?

About the path network

- Can you find the start of the path?
- Can you follow the path without getting lost?
- Can you physically travel on the path? widths, surfaces, gradients, steps?
- Can you negotiate any gates or barriers, stiles or fences?

About the site Interpretation

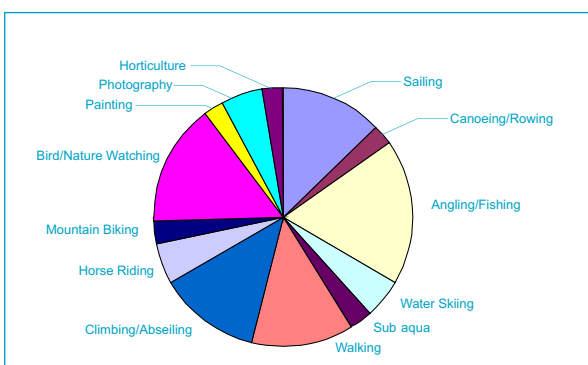
- Can you find out about the site in advance of a visit?
- Is information available on site?

About the Local Population

- Who lives in and around your site?

It may be worth contacting a professional Access Consultant for more advice in this respect.

Countryside Agency	www.countryside.org.uk
Fieldfare Trust	www.fieldfare.org.uk
The Sensory Trust	www.sensorytrust.org.uk
Centre for Accessible Environments	www.cae.org.uk
Disabled Living Foundation	www.dkf.org.uk



Helpful Tips:

Improvements should not be undertaken in isolation but link together to form a comprehensive chain.

Step 2: Who should you speak to and when?

Consultation with interested bodies is key to the success of any scheme. It is particularly important to involve groups of disabled people at an early stage in order that they can influence the types of facilities being provided.

The Rights of Way Officer or Access Officer, employed by the Local Authority, should be able to provide advice on any local initiatives and local contacts. In addition to the Local Authority, try approaching local Disabled Groups directly.

British Blind Sport www.britishblindsport.org.uk Believes in the many benefits that sport can offer visually impaired people.

British Council of Disabled People www.bcodp.org.uk Promotes the full participation of disabled people in UK society.

British Deaf Sports Council www.britishdeafsportsCouncil.org.uk Aimed at everyone who is interested in being kept informed of the latest events in the deaf sporting community.

British Disabled Angling Association www.bdaa.co.uk The BDAA helps to develop fishing opportunities for disabled people.

British Disabled Water Ski Association www.bdwsa.org.uk BDWSA aims to introduce newcomers to waterskiing who, due to their disability would not have considered the challenge previously possible.

British Wheelchair Sports Foundation www.bwsf.org.uk The Foundation exists to provide, promote and develop opportunities for men, women and children with disabilities to participate in recreational and competitive wheelchair sport.

CARE www.care-ltd.co.uk Dedicated to supporting people with learning difficulties throughout their daily lives to achieve greater independence and a more fulfilled lifestyle.

Cerebral Palsy Sport www.cpsport.org Cerebral Palsy Sport aims to provide opportunities for all people with cerebral palsy to take part in sporting activities at local, national and international levels.

Deafblind UK www.deafblind.org.uk Provides a range of support services to deafblind adults and their carers.

Disability Sport England www.disabilitysport.org.uk Creates opportunities for participation in sport for people with all disabilities.

Down's Syndrome Association www.downs-syndrome.org.uk Helping people with Down's syndrome to live full and rewarding lives.

English Federation of Disability Sport www.efds.net Responsible for developing sport for disabled people in England.

English Sports Association for People with Learning Difficulties www.mencap.org.uk (now integrated with mencap) Working with Special Olympics and Mencap, they help young people with learning disability fulfil their sporting dreams.

Jubilee Sailing Trust www.jst.org.uk The aim of the Trust is to promote the integration of able-bodied and physically disabled people through tall ship sailing adventure holidays and associated activities.

KIDS www.kids-online.org.uk Dedicated to helping children and young people with disabilities and special needs develop their skills and abilities and to realise their potential.

Mencap www.mencap.org.uk Providing a variety of services for people with a learning disability and their families and carers.

Multiple Sclerosis Society www.mssociety.org.uk Provides advice on Multiple Sclerosis.

National Blind Children's Society www.nbcs.org.uk Enabling blind and partially sighted children to achieve educational and recreational goals by providing serviced recreational opportunities.

RADAR www.radar.org.uk Promoting education, welfare and integration into the community for disabled people.

Riding for the Disabled Association www.rda.org.uk Aims to provide disabled people with the opportunity to ride and/or to carriage drive to benefit their health and well-being.

Royal National Institute of the Blind www.rnib.org.uk Offering information, support, advice and practical solutions to everyday challenges for anyone with a sight problem.

Royal National Institute for Deaf People www.rnid.org.uk Aiming at radically better quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing people

SCOPE www.scope.org.uk For people with cerebral palsy, their families and carers.

Sense www.sense.org.uk Offers a wide range of support and services across the UK to help sensory impaired people of all ages to reach their full potential.

Spinal Injuries Association www.spinal.co.uk Support for people affected by spinal cord injury.

Sport England www.sportengland.org Committed to creating opportunities for people to start in sport, stay in sport and succeed in sport.

Stroke Association www.stroke.org.uk Providing support for people who have had strokes.



Helpful Tips:

It may be very difficult to find the appropriate contact at a national level, so stay local where ever possible.

Step 3: What should you be seeking to provide?

The provision of facilities on site can range from the most simple, relatively low cost solutions up to money-no-object schemes. Before detailed design is undertaken it is worth consulting with interested people and bodies to understand better what they would like. It is important to select options that are appropriate for your site and, where possible, to ensure that improvements are done to the highest standard. As the schemes become more complex, so you may require additional input from professionals in the field of Disabled Access.

Car Parking

Disabled car parking needs to be clearly signed and measured: bay width should be 3.6m overall (2.4m bay plus 1.2m access way), with a length of 6m overall (4.8m bay plus 1.2m access way at rear).

Viewing Points

The surface should be firm, level and stable. It may be a good idea to include seating, resting places and shelves for people to lean on when using cameras or binoculars. Information boards should be positioned so as not to obscure the view for wheelchair users. Where safety barriers are installed they should take account of the viewing height of the users. The barrier should be a maximum of 920 millimetres high and should not be a solid feature. Slats should be positioned 100-125 millimetres apart.

Seats and Perches

Seats and perches should:

- Be placed at regular intervals along paths, with stops less than 100m apart.
- Be visible to provide goals for users.
- Be located with something to look at.
- Have a tactile clue on the path to draw attention to their location.
- Be set 0.6m back from the path.
- Be 0.45 -0.52m high for seats and 0.5 -0.75m for perches.

Fishing Platforms

- Platform width 1.8 m & depth 1.5m.
- Safety board (bump stop) minimum 0.15m height & 0.75m depth.

Surfaces must be:

Compactable, Stable, Non slip, Obstacle free.

Suitable materials:

Concrete, Bitumen/macadam, Stone, Timber, Brick/paving, Mown grass

Specification for paths and Hard Surfaces

	Excellent Provision	Good Provision
Path Surfaces	Hard and firm surface with very few loose stones and none bigger than 10mm.	Hard and firm surface with some loose stones and chippings covering the surface, stones should be no bigger than 10mm.
Path Widths	1.2m, to accommodate wheelchair and pedestrian, with occasional wheelchair passing places 1.5m in width.	1.0m
Maximum:		
-Distances between passing places	100.0m	150.0m
-Distances between rest areas	200.0m	300.0m
-Steepness of ramps	1:12	1:10
-Height rise between landings		
On ramps steeper than 1:20	83.0cm	95.0cm
-Slope across path	1:45	1:35
-Step levels	1.0cm	15.0cm

Also:

- Sustained slopes of 1:20 will need to have resting points at least every 30metres. These should be level and approx 1.8m long.
- There should be no steps, stiles or barriers to access.
- Surface breaks, in grills or board-walks for example, in the surface of the path should be no more than 12mm measured along the line.
- Path width may be reduced to 815mm for a maximum of 300mm, at a gateway for example.
- Ideally there should be a clear walking tunnel 1.2 width x 2.1m height

Helpful Tips:

Don't try and do too much, good access over part of the site may be better than poor access over the whole.

Step 4: How will people know about the site?

Most decisions to visit a site are made at home. It is, therefore, important that sufficient relevant information is made available in order that a visit can be planned. This information will need to show that the site is safe, welcoming and accessible and will need to include:

Parking and Transport Information

Information produced will need to include:

- Local access information on toilets, refreshments and other facilities
- A description of the sort of independent activities available
- Information on guided events
- Opening times

It may be necessary to consider the provision of this information in:

- Large print
- Braille
- Plain language
- Audio

The following methods of production can also be considered:

- Local Radio
- Leaflets in surgeries, day centres and community halls
- Direct mail to disability and other groups

Interpretive Materials

Signs- Sign design should follow these basic rules:

- They should incorporate upper and lower case letters, as words are recognised by shape rather than by individual letters
- The font should be Helvetica type or a similar uncomplicated style.
- They should have increased space between the words (25%)
- Tactile characters must be embossed or raised to an approximate thickness of 1-15mm and must not be engraved
- Sign characters should contrast with the background

Leaflets- Written material should:

- Be at 14-20 point minimum with letters at least 2.5mm in height
- Have a standard format e.g. Helvetica Regular, Times New Roman or Univers 55
- Have both upper and lower case lettering
- Have less than 40 - 65 characters per line of text
- Have a simple layout
- Be justified to the left
- Have a strong contrast between text and background printed on opaque, non-glossy, medium weight paper



Helpful Tips:

Ask local disabled groups where they usually acquire information for interesting visits.

Step 5: How can you finance the project?

The following list is by no means exhaustive but provides a good overview of the types of funds that could support projects, affording disabled people access to the environment. Most of the funds will only give to registered charities, some are aimed at educational projects, some at specifically funded projects for children.

Abbey National Charitable Trust Limited

www.abbeynational.com Operating nationally, the Abbey National Charitable Trust donates money to a range of causes including disability.

Barclays Community Investment Fund

www.barclays.com Operating nationally through a network of regional offices, the Barclays Community Investment Fund provides sponsorship and donations focussed on five main areas, including helping people with disabilities.

Camelot Foundation

www.camelotfoundation.org.uk The Camelot Foundation seeks to work with young people who have slipped out of mainstream society, including young disabled people.

Carnegie UK Trust

www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk Part of global partnership, the Carnegie Trust funds projects aimed at rural community development and young people.

Chase Charity

www.chase-charity.org.uk Operating nationally, the Chase Charity seeks to support people with mental and physical disabilities.

Chelsea Charitable Trust

www.thechelsea-charity-foundation.co.uk Operating nationally, the Chelsea Charitable Trust seeks to support vulnerable people including disabled people.

Children in Need

www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey Operating nationally, Children in Need gives grants to organisations working with disadvantaged and young children, including disabled children under the age of 18 living in the UK.

CLA Charitable Trust

www.clacharitabletrust.org.uk Operating nationally, the CLA Charitable Trust provides funding for facilities for disabled and disadvantaged people to take part in recreation and education in the countryside.

Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust

www.cfct.org.uk Operating nationally, the Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust seeks to promote community access to the natural environment.

Community Fund

www.community-fund.org.uk Operating nationally through a network of local offices, the Community Fund distributes money raised by the Lottery. Grants are mainly to help meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and also to improve the quality of life in the community.

Denne Charitable Trust

www.denne.co.uk Operating nationally, the Denne Charitable Trust was set up to offer assistance to local charities, with particular emphasis on those with disabilities or medical need.

Ford Britain Trust

www.ford.co.uk/ie/fob_trust/

Operating nationally, but with a preference for charities located and working in areas in close proximity to Ford Motor Company Limited's locations in the UK, Ford Britain Trust offer funding to projects concerned with disabled people. Grants normally range from £100 to £5,000.

Foundation for Sport and Arts

www.thefsa.net

Operating nationally to distribute money raised through Littlewoods Gaming, the Foundation supports sporting and artistic causes.

HBOS Foundation

www.hbosplc.com

Operating nationally, the HBOS Foundation provides funding for projects which seek to bring people back into the community who have been excluded, including disabled.

John Ellerman Foundation

www.ellerman.org.uk

Operating nationally, the John Ellerman Foundation provides funding for severely disabled people, including deaf and blind.

Lloyds TSB Foundation

www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk

Operating nationally, the Lloyds TSB Foundation makes grants to charitable organisations which help people (especially those who are disadvantaged or disabled) to play a fuller role in communities throughout England and Wales.

Peter Harrison Foundation

www.peterharrisonfoundation.org

Operating nationally, the Peter Harrison Foundation provides funding for projects that provide sporting equipment or facilities for disabled or disadvantaged people.

Lord's Taverners

www.lordstaverners.org

Operating nationally, the Lord's Taverners raise money to 'give young people, particularly those with special needs, a sporting chance'.

Sport England

www.sportengland.org

Operating nationally, Sport England provides funding for sports related facilities.

Tesco Charity Trust

www.tesco.com/everyLittleHelps

Operating nationally, Tesco Charity Trust benefits local organisations whose core work supports children and adults with disabilities, offering one-off donations from £1,500 and £5,000. Applications for funding must be made by 30 June each year.



Helpful Tips:

Contact these bodies early in the design process and establish their requirements so that you can tailor your scheme.