

10 Jun 20

VISIT TO BRATTON FLEMMING VILLAGE STORES – 9 JUN 20

At the request of the Stores Manager I visited on 9th June to provide advice about accessible parking. I also looked at any other areas for improvement.

Accessible Parking

Following a local complaint about the location originally designated and marked for accessible parking it is now used for outdoor seating. This area was close and immediately downhill of the entrance walkway. While it was step-free from parking there was a moderate incline to reach the level access walkway to the entrance door.

The Stores Manager's suggestion is instead to mark an accessible parking space on the entrance road to the car parking area immediately uphill of the entrance walkway. There would still be sufficient space to mark a reserved space and also enable 2 cars to pass to/from the car park. The advantage of this option is it would be very close and step free to the level access entrance walkway. It would also help to prevent parking on the road instead of in the car park by customers of the stores who for some reason do not park in the car park! I could not see any reason why this option is not feasible.

There may need to be some local discussion about who can use the accessible space? Will it be limited to Blue Badge Holders only? Society is moving away from describing 'disability' needs to 'accessibility' needs to recognise the wider diverse needs of individuals as less than 7% of the 13m people in the UK with a disability use a wheelchair – 'accessibility' needs to recognise those with physical, sensory and cognitive additional needs or impairments and likewise a parent with young child etc.

Other Suggestions

It was clear the staff in the Stores are already very supportive of customers with additional needs. However, some suggestions to consider:

- Mark the entrance door threshold in a high contrast colour. It could currently be a trip hazard for someone with impaired vision.
- Consider a hearing loop by the till. A small mains powered loop can be purchased from Amazon for ~£100. It is important to make the sign clearly visible once installed so that customers are aware when using a hearing aid.
- Accessible toilet – keep transfer space clear for customers with a wheelchair or mobility aid to enable easy access when using the toilet.
- Actively seek feedback from customers with additional needs for their views on further improvements.
- Promote accessibility about the Stores on social media.

Tony Potter

Judge for South West Tourism Awards – Accesible and Inclusive category.

North Devon Marketing Bureau – Director with lead for accessibility.

