



The Parish of
St Mary the Virgin
STANWELL
&
St Matthew
ASHFORD



Accessibility Policy



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&
St Matthew
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*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

Welcoming Everyone

We want everyone to be able to get as much as possible out of their experience at both St Mary's and St Matthew's.

We are committed to doing everything we can to make the parish churches and their environs as accessible as possible to as many people as possible. This includes both physical access to the building itself, and how we present information so that we can support visitors both able-bodied and disabled alike.

We know that people have different needs and like to access the parish churches and their environs in different ways. We have carried out access audits led by people with disabilities, to help develop this policy. This work has included a physical audit of the buildings and an audit of our website and information. We are also committed to training our volunteers and staff at all levels to raise awareness of key issues and how they can help people to access the parish churches and their environs.

Accessibility of the Parish Churches and the Parish Centre

- **Wheelchair Access:**

Wheelchair access to the Parish Churches is available at the North door at St Mary's and the South door via a portable ramp at St Matthew's. The entrance to the Parish Centre at St Matthew's is wheelchair friendly. There are some parking spaces suitable for the disabled outside the Parish Centre at St Matthew's.

- **Disabled Toilet Facilities:**

Disabled toilet facilities are available at St Mary's and within the Parish Centre, which is behind St Matthew's.

Access to Worship

The Parish Priest and Parochial Church Council (PCC) want everyone to be able to join in the events and acts of worship held here. Therefore, wherever possible, we provide physical access for all to the places in the church where worship and events take place. Additionally, we administer Holy Communion at an accessible point at every Mass.

We can provide a large print version of our publications, including service sheets, and a hearing loop operates during services.

Do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office (located within the Parish Centre) with any queries.

Additional Support Services

- **Assistance for Visitors with Specific Needs:**
We understand that some visitors may require additional assistance during services or events. If you or someone you know needs special assistance, please feel free to contact the Parish Office in advance, so we can make the necessary arrangements to ensure a comfortable and accessible experience. This could include assistance with seating, help navigating the premises, or providing personal care services during events.
- **Specialised Services for Hearing and Visually Impaired Members:**
We are committed to supporting individuals with hearing or visual impairments. In addition to our large-print publications and hearing loop, we are open to suggestions and feedback from our congregation on how we can further improve our services, such as providing sign language interpreters or audio descriptions for services. Please contact the Parish Office to discuss your needs.
- **Transportation Assistance:**
For parishioners who have difficulty accessing the church due to mobility issues, we may be able to arrange transport to and from church services. Please reach out to the Parish Office to enquire about any available transport options.

Inclusive Events and Activities

- **Adaptation of Parish Activities:**

We strive to make all parish events, including study groups, social gatherings, and outreach activities, accessible to everyone. If there are particular needs or considerations that should be taken into account for an upcoming event, please inform the event organisers or contact the Parish Office so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

- **Volunteer Support for Accessibility:**

Volunteers are always available to assist anyone who may require help in navigating the building, accessing resources, or participating in parish activities. If you need assistance during events or services, please look for one of our volunteers, or ask for help at the Parish Office.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- **Your Feedback Matters:**

We value the input of all our parishioners and visitors. If you have suggestions on how we can further improve accessibility or if you encounter any barriers when visiting our parish, please do not hesitate to share your feedback with us. Your insights help us ensure that St Mary's and St Matthew's are truly welcoming for all. You can provide feedback directly to the Parish Office or through any of our accessible communication channels.

Emergency Evacuation Plans for Those with Disabilities

- **Safe Evacuation Procedures:**

In the event of an emergency, we have clear evacuation procedures that take into account the needs of people with disabilities. These procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure everyone can exit the building safely and promptly. Please inform the Parish Office if you or a family member requires assistance during an evacuation, so that the necessary support can be arranged.