

**TONBRIDGE CASTLE GROUNDS – ACCESS AUDIT
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Present: Chris Fox and John Dicker, Leisure Services Five members of the Tonbridge and Malling Access Group		Date of Audit: 16 June 2009 Priority: 1 = High 5 = Low	
Weather fine and sunny Please note: This was an inspection of the grounds only and did not include internal areas of the Castle Gatehouse visitor attraction or Tonbridge Gateway facilities. However the toilet/changing provision inside the building was included as some of the group had knowledge of this provision. Note: Alterations/proposals within this Audit may be subject to formal approval from English Heritage due to the Castle's designated status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.			
Issue	Comment/ Recommendation	Cost (approx)	Priority
1. Car parking	Good parking provision for disabled users on site: by the Tonbridge Gateway (4 spaces), Upper Castle Field (5 spaces) and Lower Castle Field (8 spaces), making a total of 17 disabled bays – Satisfactory no action required.	N/A	-
2. Public Transport	Bus - the main High Street bus stops are nearby, just outside the site boundary at the Watergate entrance. The pavement by the bus shelters is a stone paving slab surface with wide pointing which makes this area uneven and difficult to traverse. The group has already raised this issue with the owner – KCC ownership - no TMBC action proposed.	N/A	-
3. Promotional information about the site	Events are promoted on the Council's website, via leaflets and through the Leisure Guide, the latter two are widely distributed throughout the Borough. The leaflets 'Music Festival' and 'Events 2009' did not include the standard large print text that 'information is available in other formats ...' - Include in future leaflets.	No additional cost	1
	The website had limited information about the Castle Grounds - Improve information about the grounds.	No additional cost	1

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<p>4. Path surfaces</p>	<p><i>In general paths were in good condition although the following specific comments were noted:</i></p> <p>Bailey Lawn surround – dressed tarmac path 4 metres wide, some pot holes – Fill pot holes</p> <p>Cannon Lawn Area – Brick paver construction path of 2 metre width, generally in good repair – dropped kerb edgings were uneven and need adjustment.</p> <p>Upper Castle Field – Tarmac construction, 1.5 metres wide path with some pot holes – Fill pot holes.</p> <p>Upper Castle Field Play Area – no path linking the play equipment to the main path – No action proposed.</p> <p>South Curtain Wall Area (river frontage) – Dressed tarmac construction, 4 metre wide path in good order – Satisfactory no action required.</p> <p>Moat Path – Dressed tarmac construction path 1 metre width, surface dressing minor erosion and cracked. – Satisfactory no action required.</p>	<p>£1,000</p> <p>£200</p> <p>£500</p> <p>£500</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>4</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
<p>5. Steps</p>	<p><i>Steps can be awkward to some users and alternative routes are sometimes possible. Handrails and tactile edge indicators can make steps easier to find and use.</i></p> <p>Bailey Lawn – There are two sets of steps down to the Bailey Lawn both from the path in front of the building, there is one handrail on each, but no defined edge along the top of the steps - Install tactile paving slabs at the top of steps.</p>	<p>£500</p>	<p>1</p>

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<p>5. Steps (continued)</p>	<p>Motte Area – The steps at bottom had a handrail but had no defined edge along the top step. - Install tactile paving slabs at top of steps.</p> <p>Top of Motte – Steps present at the top of the sloped path though no handrail or defined edge along the top step – changes not felt to be essential as the steps lead to the top of the Motte and it was felt unlikely that this would be attempted by people who needed these requirements.</p> <p>Stepped access from the Watergate/ High Street to Cannon Lawn – Steps being removed later in the year and reinstated to grass bank – No action required.</p> <p>Swimming Pool to Upper Castle Field – Path with steps by the Castle Valves, the slopped steps have no defined edge, no handrail, the bottom steps are particularly uneven. - An alternative route (a slope) is available nearby so low priority see path ‘Slopes’ below.</p>	<p>£500</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>2</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
<p>6. Path Slopes</p>	<p><i>Slopes offer a challenge to some users and can be awkward to use. Crossfalls along a sloping path can make using paths even more difficult. Gradients can sometimes be altered or handrails added and passing places made.</i></p> <p>Moat Path – Fenced path with a width of 1.10 metres. The Gatehouse end of the path has an incline of around 20° degrees with no handrail and a crossfall on the bend. – Consider a new handrail attached to the existing fence.</p> <p>Motte Path – Tarmac path has a steep incline (20° degrees approximately) although has a fence and handrail. – Satisfactory no action proposed.</p>	<p>£500</p> <p>-</p>	<p>3</p> <p>-</p>

Issue	Comment/ Recommendation	Cost (approx)	Priority
6. Path Slopes (continued)	<p>Barrens Walk to Bailey Lawn – Dressed tarmac path has a steep incline 30° degrees approximately, with crossfall, and no handrail. – Consider attaching a handrail to the existing fence.</p> <p>High Street to Cannon Lawn – Path has an incline of 30° degrees approximately; with a handrail (it was not possible to walk this path during the site visit due to building works.) – Satisfactory – no action proposed.</p> <p>Swimming Pool to Upper Castle Field – Path 1.5 metres wide, has a steep incline of 30° degrees approximately, with no handrail – Consider a freestanding handrail.</p>	<p>£500</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>£500</p>	<p>2</p> <p>-</p> <p>3</p>
7. Resting places	A standard design of seat is used in the grounds, and this has a back and arms which was good. There were numerous seats (mainly sponsored) at the site – Satisfactory but replace and keep seats in good order as required.	N/A	-
8. Vegetation	Some vegetation was overhanging the path by the river path. - Vegetation is cut back annually by Ground Maintenance Contractor. Monitor and action as appropriate.	N/A	1
9. Signs	Directional signage present and was felt to be easy to read. A number of interpretation panel signs present around the grounds explaining the historical features (these are numbered and linked to the Audio Trail available from Tonbridge Castle but not tried on the site visit) – Satisfactory no action proposed.	N/A	-

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10. Events	<p>Members of the group had attended events at the castle and felt that they were accessible. Events at the Castle included the Music Festival, Medieval Fair, Heritage Open Day and band concerts. Leisure Pass discounts available and additional parking for disabled users were provided on the days of the Music Festival – Satisfactory no action proposed.</p>	N/A	-
11. Toilets	<p>Excellent provision of toilets. There were new disabled toilets included in the 'Tonbridge Gateway' at Tonbridge Castle with a separate purpose built room a 'Change place' and toilet - a fully accessible facility for people with more complex physical needs and their carers.</p> <p>More public toilets available at the Castle Street entrance with a separate accessible toilet.</p> <p>– All satisfactory no action proposed.</p>	N/A	-
12. Market survey	<p>The outside hearing loop suggested by one customer in the 2008 Tonbridge Castle market survey was not felt to be essential or practical by this mixed ability Group of users. – No action proposed.</p>	N/A	-
13. Sensory experience	<p>The Castle Grounds offer an area of peace and quiet away from the busy high street. The historic riverside setting of the Castle, with flowers, trees, wildlife and plants all add to the sensory richness of the site. Occasional events in the Castle Grounds contrast by adding new dimensions of sensory experiences with band concerts and festivals – Satisfactory no action proposed.</p>	None	-