

Design and Access Statement

Background.

The Dame Alice Leigh Almshouses were founded in 1594, originally to provide for the poor of the Ancient Parish of Stoneleigh. Whilst the intention may have changed somewhat from the original founding principle, the Almshouses are actively managed by a team of Trustees with the eligibility criteria for a place being clearly defined. Essentially, among other criteria, one has to be an older person (qualifying age approximately 55 years) and residents should be able to look after themselves.

However, having an older population does mean that some residents, whilst able to look after themselves, will have mobility issues. In some cases, with an inability to be able to walk longer distances, a mobility scooter or some other form of propelled movement may be required.

As the property has some steps to the principal elevation to the Almshouses and accepting that even if access could be gained, the items would most likely need to be stored in the small entrance hall. This is not desirable especially if the mobility devices need to be recharged on lithium ion batteries and the Trustees are aware of the risk that this can pose to residents.



So, it is desirable that access is afforded to the rear of the Almshouse where the devices can either be stored on the patio areas to the rear of each dwelling or in the storage sheds, but the latter would mean that one would need to walk down there to get the equipment out. At least one resident already uses such devices, and so this need is pressing and also this will "future-proof" the use of the residences.

There are two possible access routes to the rear, one being the steps up to the path from Church Lane, which cannot practically be amended due to the distance required to install a ramp, the access to the rear of number 1 and the need to amend drainage.



The other access is via the gates to the rear of the garden, which is the favoured route and of course an access there already exists.



There will be no need to amend the pavement line/ install a kerb crossing as this will just be a pedestrian access point from the pavement.

Design.

The intention would be to create a gentle ramped up area, max gradient 1:12 but more likely to be about 1:20 to create a route up to the garden. The path would be resin bonded gravel, colour sandstone to ensure that there is contrast between the grass and the surface and also to allow for clearer vision in lower light levels. There will be a concrete edging stone to the edges of the path, and the path will reduce in width from the gate opening size (as it may look absurd to be less than the width of the gates) to a width for one person manoeuvring with ease, so set at not exceeding 1.2m (4'0").

The path will head towards the apple tree then move to the left of this and then turn again to join up with the existing paths.

Access.

This will improve access to the rear of the Almshouses for residents and some smaller items of equipment, especially mobility devices which can then be stored to the rear.