

PURTON MUSEUM'S APPROACH TO THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1998



A sub-committee meeting of the Purton Historical Society on 17th August 1999 reconfirmed the intention of the Society to address the needs of all visitors to the Purton Museum, particularly in regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1998.

Purton Museum is a small museum with a low budget and free admission, wholly staffed by volunteers and located on the first floor of a Grade II listed building. However the Society welcomes the generous support offered by Wiltshire County Council in providing the Museum's accommodation at a very low annual rent and in providing curatorial and conservation advice and assistance. In addition the Museum is grateful to the Purton Parish Council for grants which they have given to help with the costs of running the Museum.

It was agreed within the sub-committee that there was much that could be done to help those with disabilities to utilise the facilities of the museum and some of these activities were already in effect. The needs of the disabled would be addressed wherever practical.

Actions that are already in progress are:

- Moving displays, storage and office space to more appropriate positions in the museum to maximise use of space and ensure easier access for all;
- A programme of replacing signs and labels with more easily read versions with larger print versions of handouts where appropriate;
- Provision of seating for those who might find standing difficult for long periods;
- Use of the downstairs display case to best advantage with changing displays allowing exhibits to be rotated;
- Availability of the curator by appointment for escorted visits to the museum;
- Offers of transport to the elderly or disabled to Historical Society events.

Other activities that will be investigated include the following:

- Putting on temporary displays at locations outside the museum where facilities for the disabled are available, e.g. village and school halls;
- Reviewing lighting to ensure easier viewing of displays;
- Use of the internet to provide a "Virtual Museum";
- Producing a regular article in the Historical Society's *Bulletin* as a vehicle for describing and discussing new and existing exhibits in the museum's collection;
- Approaching the editor of the *Purton Magazine* to investigate whether it could carry a periodic column on the museum's collection.

In general, all plans for the museum will take into account the needs of the disabled to ensure that proposals do not impose unnecessary barriers that would have the effect of excluding disabled persons.

Rick Dixon
Hon. Curator
7th September 1999