



I am pleased to say that the Windlesham Parish Council actively supports and is in compliance with the law in relation to the provision that they must make “reasonable adjustments” to allow those with disabilities to participate in and engage with the democratic process, by their attendance at meetings. In a recent specific example it applied to a hearing disability, recognising the estimated 15 million people in England who have limitations in this respect, but the law applies to the many other disabilities.

Under the Equality Act 2010 public bodies such as local councils, government departments and NHS Trusts have a legal duty to ensure that people with disabilities can attend and participate in public meetings on an equal basis with non disabled people. This includes a proactive, “anticipatory” duty by those bodies to make “reasonable adjustments” in advance, rather than waiting for a specific request.

Democracy depends on active public engagement of ALL the electorate – including Parish Councils who “report” to their electorate who in turn have a non legal but essential duty of oversight. Those with disabilities have a simple legal Right of Access, but you may agree that, in some cases, it would be reasonable to notify the public body of any particular difficulty in advance.

