Comments on Middleton Parish Church 17/01/2021

My name is Chris Cammiss, and I work as an Independent Consultant on disability matters. As a local resident I was recently asked to visit the church to look at certain changes that had been made to assist disabled visitors – specifically the new accessible toilet.
On leaving, as night had fallen, the outside lighting had come on to illuminate the entrance and approaches to the church.
I immediately noticed how inadequate this lighting was.
It was not strong enough in general and it was not well directed. There was also too much extraneous "dazzle" from other lighting intended to illuminate the building itself as a feature.
I strongly advised the interested parties present to improve the lighting as soon as practicable.

Technical issues

- The current lighting level intended to assist visitors is far too weak and cannot deliver sufficient illumination in key areas. Lighting in this situation needs to be strong and even. It mustn't create excessive glare which can temporarily "blind" anyone with a visual impairment, or someone who's eyesight is simply poorer due to age. Similarly, the lighting must not create darker areas which will appear completely blank to many with a visual impairment.
  New, better, lighting will also link well with the interior lighting in the church, particularly for visitors leaving the church at night, creating transitional lighting so there is no time lapse whilst eyes adapt to the dark conditions outside.
- The church approach consists of paths constructed of a variety of materials - cobbles, flagstones etc which are an issue for anyone ambulant but with a mobility impairment or for a wheelchair user. There will often be trip hazards and also slip hazards when wet or frosty.
- There are slightly raised borders at the edges of the paths which present a potential trip hazard.
- There is a gradient when approaching from the parking area.

All these risks can be minimised by the use of appropriate lighting in this area.

I strongly advise upgrading of the lighting in these areas to assist any visitor with a mobility or visual impairment, which, I suspect will apply to a large number of visitors to the church.

Chris Cammiss B Sc (Hons). PGCE
Independent Consultant
Access Auditor and Disability Trainer