

Location: Subscription Rooms  
George Street  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire, GL5 1AE

Date of visit: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### **Parking**

There are 8 disabled parking bays for blue badge holders located at the back of the building. There is also a rear entrance where disabled performers can park right outside, there is room for 1 car here. This is great for disabled visitors to the Subscription rooms. The nearest public car park is at Stroud train station which is about a 10-minute walk for somebody in a wheelchair. You can park here for free with a blue badge.

### **Accessibility**

There is a ramp to the right hand-side of the building and electric doors to enter, there are then 3 steps leading to the building and a ramp to the right hand-side. Directly to the left is the tourist information centre which has ample access around the room. The reception desk was quite high with no lowered section.

The ballroom is on the first floor, standard access is up a flight of stairs. The lift is located to the left-hand side of the stairs and down a corridor which is tight but wide enough for my wheelchair, some larger chairs or scooters may find this too small.

The lift brings you out to a landing which is also the refuge point in the case of an emergency. There is an evac chair here and there are two sets of stairs that can be used to exit the building. Just through the landing is the entrance to the ballroom.

The ballroom is a large open space with large windows for natural lighting. The room can be hired out for events and performances, the stage is next to the entrance for the room and can only be accessed via some steps to the right (if looking at the stage). This makes it inaccessible for wheelchair performers.

The room can be set up for an audience of up to 400 for theatre events with chairs, wheelchairs are seated in the first 4 rows at front of the stage as this is the closest to the fire exit in the case of an emergency. Each wheelchair space replaces two standard seats. There is also a balcony area, this is typically used when a show is sold out for extra seating, however they would allow this space to be used for somebody on request if they would prefer to be away from crowds etc.

At the back of the room through a passageway is the Kendrick bar which is open throughout performances, the doorway through here is quite tight for wheelchair users. The bar is directly to the left which could cause congestion for people trying to get through to the queue and be difficult for a wheelchair user to get through. To the right-hand side of the bar is another door which takes you back to the landing and refuge point.

The dressing room is on the second floor which is accessible via the lift. I was unable to look inside the dressing room as it had been hired out privately. There was a walkway which was outlined by some tape so that the gangway was kept clear of chairs etc.

### **Lift**

The lift is large enough for a wheelchair and for somebody to assist but not large enough to turn around in. The buttons are easy to reach and there is a lift voice communication.

### **Toilet**

The disabled toilet is located to the right hand-side of the building on the ground floor. The toilet was very small and difficult to use for a wheelchair users. It is not very well placed with the door blocking the ladies toilet doorway when open. The facilities within the toilet are adequate with the sink, dryer and soap dispenser within reach and they were kept clean. The sign on the emergency cord is a good idea to remind people it should not be tied out of the way, I am going to be creating my own version of these to give to other venues.

### **Café**

The café tables are all inaccessible for a wheelchair user to get underneath as they are so narrow and the bar has no lowered section.

### **Recommendations**

- Lowered reception point in TIC
- There are tight corners to get to the back of the building past the stairs, it would be useful if this could be widened by losing the corner of each bottom step. The media stand with leaflets was also an obstruction and needs to be placed in the corner more.
- Wider corridor to the lift
- A ramp installed to access the stage for people with disabilities.
- The bar in the corner of the room in the Kendrick bar, a lowered section for the bar.
- Toilet needs revamping to be made bigger
- Wider tables for wheelchairs to get underneath in the café
- Lowered section to the bar

### **Moving the dressing room from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor**

It would be useful if we could visit the subscription rooms again when the dressing rooms were not in use so we could get an idea of what is planning to be moved from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. In principle this would be good for accessibility and performers to be closer to the stage rather than needing to use the lift or stairs. However, my first recommendation would be to make the stage fully accessible for wheelchair users by installing a ramp, this could be installed at the front of stage but would possibly remove 1/2 rows of seating.

Need to consider the impact of losing the bar in the Kendrick room, would this impact drink sales? Is a new bar going to be built in its place somewhere?