Parish Council

Mobility Scooter Access Policy

Document	Mobility Scooter Access Policy
Document owner	Operations Manager
Version	V2.0
Issue date	November 2026
Review date	October 2027, or within 12 months of adoption
Review	Annually, and sooner after a significant incident, material change or relevant legislative / guidance change
Applies to	Visitors using mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs; staff, hirers and operators of Council-controlled premises.

Change log

Version / date	Updates from November 2024 policy	Whom
V2.0 / Oct 2026	Standardised format; expanded access assessment, staff responsibilities, evacuation, charging and complaints provisions; revised parking and liability wording. Clarified site assessments, management exceptions and alternative access; retained reasonable adjustments and practical safety controls.	**AB**

1. Purpose

Central Swindon North Parish Council recognises that mobility scooters help people remain independent and use community facilities. The Council must also keep its buildings safe for visitors, staff and hirers, with sufficient room for movement and clear escape routes.

This policy sets out when large motorised scooters must remain outside indoor communal areas, how staff should apply restrictions and how the Council will consider individual access needs.

2. Scope and definitions

The policy applies to Council-controlled community centres, libraries, cafés and other public buildings, including relevant facilities at Moredon Sporting Hub. It applies to visitors, staff and hirers. At independently operated or leased premises, the Council and operator must establish their respective responsibilities and agree appropriate arrangements.

For this policy, large mobility scooters are motorised scooters designed primarily for outdoor travel whose overall dimensions, weight or turning requirements may exceed the safe capacity of an indoor route or room. Road classification or maximum speed alone does not determine whether a device can be accommodated.

Smaller scooters intended for indoor use, powered wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs are not automatically subject to the restrictions on large outdoor scooters. Their access must be considered against the routes, space and facilities available.

3. Indoor restrictions on large mobility scooters

The Council's facilities have limitations on doorway widths, circulation space and room layouts. Large outdoor mobility scooters can be unsuitable for indoor communal areas, including cafés, libraries, meeting rooms and corridors, because they require more space to manoeuvre safely.

Large mobility scooters are not permitted in indoor areas where a site assessment identifies that they cannot be accommodated safely and reasonable adjustments cannot adequately address the risks. The restriction must be supported by the actual conditions in the affected area, including:

- Insufficient space to enter, turn, pass other users or approach seating safely.
- Risk of collisions with visitors, particularly in busy areas or where children are present.
- Obstruction of circulation routes, fire doors, exits or accessible facilities.
- Unsuitable thresholds, gradients, floor or lift capacities, or evacuation arrangements.

Each site must identify the rooms and routes affected and explain the restriction clearly. Permission to enter one part of a building does not mean that every room or route is suitable. Staff must follow the documented site arrangements and refer requests for adjustments or exceptions to the site manager.

4. Site assessments and responsibilities

The Operations Manager oversees this policy, approves site restrictions and resolves complex access issues. Before restrictions are introduced, the site manager must record the physical constraints, actual hazards and reasonable adjustments considered, in consultation with the person responsible for fire safety.

Assessments must consider door and route widths, turning space, thresholds, gradients, room layouts, pedestrian activity, relevant floor and lift limits, and escape arrangements. Device dimensions and manufacturer information should be checked where needed. Staff must not decide suitability solely from appearance.

Site managers must keep access routes clear, brief staff and hirers, and review arrangements after changes to layouts or activities, incidents or access complaints, and at least annually. Busy events and temporary furniture layouts must be considered before use.

Front-line staff must explain restrictions respectfully, ask what assistance would help and seek management support where an access need cannot be resolved. Users must operate their devices safely and follow agreed routes and parking arrangements.

5. Reasonable adjustments and exceptions

The Council will anticipate barriers and consider reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Health and safety concerns must be based on actual risks and the available controls. An inconvenience or an untested assumption is not sufficient reason to refuse access.

Where a restriction affects a visitor, staff must discuss their needs without assuming that they can walk or transfer. Options may include moving furniture, using another suitable entrance or route, managing congestion, or providing the same service in another accessible room. Arrangements should preserve independence and dignity and avoid an unnecessarily inferior service.

The site manager may agree access to an otherwise restricted area where an assessment confirms it can be made safe. Record the permitted route or room, controls, duration and any review date. Refer unresolved or complex requests to the Operations Manager. Permission must be reviewed if conditions change or a safety concern arises.

Advance contact is encouraged where a visitor knows that special arrangements may be needed, but it is not a general condition of admission. Staff must help visitors who arrive without notice. Reasonable adjustments will not be charged to the visitor.

6. Parking and assistance

Where a scooter cannot safely enter, staff should identify a suitable parking position as close as practicable to an accessible entrance. Parking must not block doors, escape routes, pavements or access for other users. Shelter and security vary between sites and must not be promised unless available.

Leaving a scooter outside is an option only where the user can safely access the service through an agreed arrangement. Visitors must not be required to walk, transfer or leave an essential mobility aid outside where this is unsafe or impracticable. Staff must seek management assistance to identify an alternative.

Staff may open doors, clear routes and help locate seating. They must ask before assisting and must not lift people, undertake unsupported transfers or operate unfamiliar devices without appropriate training, equipment and agreement.

7. Safe use inside buildings

Where indoor use is permitted, scooters and powered wheelchairs must be driven at a slow walking pace or slower where conditions require. Users must give way to pedestrians, take particular care near doors and children, and stop if visibility or manoeuvring space is inadequate.

Devices must not obstruct exits, fire doors, corridors, firefighting equipment or accessible facilities. Where a user chooses to transfer safely, staff should agree a parking position. Staff must not move a device without permission, except where immediately necessary to protect life.

If a device is being used unsafely, staff should ask the user to stop, explain the concern and seek a safe solution. Where the risk cannot be resolved, the site manager may restrict further use of the affected area and must consider alternative access to the service. Record the incident and reasons for the decision.

8. Storage charging and battery safety

Overnight storage and charging require prior site management approval. They are not routinely provided. Any approved arrangement must be covered by the building's fire risk assessment and use a suitable designated location, compatible manufacturer-approved charging equipment and an appropriate electrical supply.

Charging is prohibited on escape routes, in positions that obstruct access, or where leads create a trip hazard. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and the site's agreed charging arrangements. Do not use damaged charging equipment or charge a device showing signs of battery damage.

If a battery becomes unusually hot, swells, leaks or gives off an unusual smell, stop use or charging if safe, keep people away and notify the site manager. If there is smoke or fire, raise the alarm, evacuate and call 999. Staff must not handle a smoking battery or move a burning device.

9. Emergency evacuation

The site manager must ensure that the building's emergency arrangements address people who use mobility aids, including visitors who have not contacted the Council in advance. Plans must not rely on the fire and rescue service arriving to make evacuation possible.

Agree an individual evacuation arrangement where appropriate for regular users. For other visitors, staff must understand the accessible escape routes, assistance available and any refuge communication arrangements. A refuge is a temporary place within an evacuation plan; a person must not simply be left there without arrangements for assistance.

A scooter may not be suitable for every escape route. Ordinary lifts must not be used during a fire. Any evacuation lift, evacuation chair or assisted transfer must follow the building's plan and be used by trained staff. Staff must not attempt lifting or transfers beyond their training, except where immediately necessary to protect life.

10. Incidents liability and insurance

Accidents, near misses, access disputes and damage must be reported to the site manager and recorded through the Council's normal procedures. The manager must review whether changes to the layout, access arrangements or staff briefing are needed.

Users should secure parked scooters and are encouraged to consider insurance for theft, damage and third-party liability. Insurance is not a general condition of access. The Council does not accept custody merely because a device is parked on its premises, but nothing in this policy excludes liability where it would be unlawful to do so.

11. Information and staff training

The Council will explain site access arrangements through appropriate entrance signs, booking information and its website. Information must describe the actual restrictions and facilities available, give a contact for assistance and be available in accessible formats on request.

Site managers must brief relevant staff and hirers before this policy is implemented. Induction and refresher training must cover:

- The areas where large scooters are restricted and the reasons for those restrictions.
- How to discuss access needs respectfully and consider practical adjustments.
- Who can authorise exceptions and how to record and escalate decisions.
- Safe routes, parking positions, evacuation arrangements and charging controls.
- The limits of assistance staff can safely provide and how to report incidents.

Keep a record of staff briefings and update them when the building layout, access arrangements or emergency procedures change.

12. Requests complaints and review of decisions

Visitors may request an adjustment or a review through the site manager or Parish Office on 01793 466499 or by email to Admin@centralswindonnorth-pc.gov.uk . Staff must assist anyone unable to submit a written request.

The site manager must record the access concern, relevant site and device information, the visitor's needs, options considered, decision and reasons. Keep only necessary personal information, restrict access and follow the Council's privacy and retention arrangements.

Unresolved access decisions should be referred to the Operations Manager. Where the Operations Manager made the original decision, the Clerk should arrange an appropriate review. Explain the outcome and any agreed access arrangements to the visitor. Formal complaints will be handled under the Council's published Complaints Procedure and its timescales.

13. Implementation and policy review

Before implementation, the Operations Manager must ensure that each affected site has a documented access assessment, clearly identified restricted areas, practical arrangements for adjustments and exceptions, and staff who understand their responsibilities. Existing risk assessments may be used where they cover these matters adequately.

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of adoption and annually thereafter. An earlier review will take place following a significant incident, a complaint revealing wider access problems, a material change to premises or relevant changes in law or guidance.

14. Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the Council's site risk assessments, fire risk assessments, emergency arrangements and Complaints Procedure. Relevant legislation includes the Equality Act 2010, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, as amended.

Reference: Equality and Human Rights Commission, Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations, 2026, particularly the provisions on reasonable adjustments and proportionate safety decisions.

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/codes-practice/code-practice-services-public-functions-and-associations/chapter-seven