



Changing Places facility West Mersea – Victoria Esplanade Car Park

West Mersea Town Council (WMTC) has secured funding to install a Changing Places (CP) accessible toileting facility on the Esplanade car park. It will provide a great benefit to local disabled people who want to spend time at our beach. It will also benefit the many visitors who come to our wonderful island.

Many locations around the country are now recognising the need for this type of facility. Once installed it will be included on the national scheme for Changing Places and highlighted on their maps. It will literally put Mersea on the map for being a welcoming and inclusive place to visit and live. Further information on Changing Places can be found at: <https://www.changing-places.org/>

WMTC has worked in conjunction with Colchester Borough Council to agree the location, size and style of building to house the facility. After much discussion, it was agreed that the most appropriate option is to remove the warden's hut at the entrance to Victoria Esplanade Car Park. The new facility will be installed in its place. With the current hut nearing the end of its lifespan, this is the most cost-effective, unobtrusive solution which also gives us easy access to utilities.

In the images below, image 1 shows the position where the facility will be going, and image 2 shows a typical design. It will be tailored as far as possible e.g. colour choices, to be sensitive to the area and surroundings.

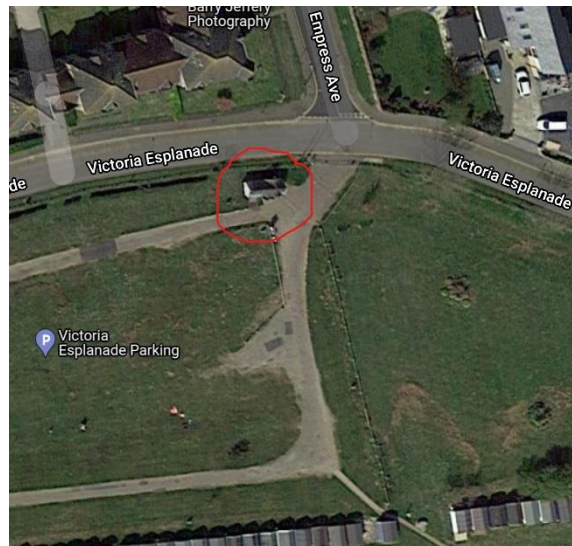


Image 1 – location



Image 2 – typical basic design

Over a 1/4 million people in the UK need Changing Places toilets to enable them to get out and about and enjoy the day-to-day activities which many of us take for granted. To use a toilet in safety and comfort, disabled people with more complex access needs, have to access a CP like facility, which allows space for two carers to assist and also the right equipment, including an adult sized height adjustable changing bench, a peninsular toilet and a ceiling hoist. Every resident should have the same right to access a toilet within their community and changing places allow residents and visitors the independence and dignity to feel part of their community or enjoy a day out without the worry of not having facilities they can use. With new legislation around changing places coming into force during 2021 WMTC are pleased to be part of the growing and much needed number of changing places found across the country.

WMTC has secured funds of £55,000 from Essex County Council's Short Breaks for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities capital program, which supports projects enabling disabled children and young people to have greater access to their community and days out with family and friends, such as seaside resorts, and so enjoy life on a more equal basis. In addition, the Council has applied for other grants and are hopeful of successful outcomes.

With the project being supported by Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Councils Short Breaks programme and Councillor John Jowers (Borough and County Councillor), I'm sure West Mersea residents will support, and find useful, this important initiative. If all goes to plan, we hope to be up and running in time for Easter.

To view the Certificate of Lawful Use link 213122: [click here](#)

If you have any queries or comments, please contact Councillor Sophie Weaver at: cllr.weaver@westmersea.org

Cllr Sophie Weaver
West Mersea Town Council