

# 10 steps to give visually impaired people and people who aren't online access to your virtual church services

By a member of SCDG



A local church has devised a new way under lockdown of letting its members listen to its church services. By providing this option, the church is including someone who is visually impaired, and others who don't use the internet.

The church administrator kindly told me the story. I'd like to share it with you here because although churches may already be catering for these groups of people, this way might be more user-friendly and more sustainable.

SCDG is about disability inclusion, not inclusion in general. But I'm including information here on people who are not on the internet because some people who are disabled also don't have access to the internet at home.

I've paraphrased the story in the emboldened bullet points. The unemboldened text is by the church administrator and gives the details.

**1) The church applied for some funding from its local council. It received £250, which it put towards [USB players](#) and memory sticks**

'At the beginning of the Covid lockdown our local council invited application for small community grants. We were fortunate to receive £250 that we put toward buying 3 of the [Sonic 2 USB players](#).'

**2) The church chose this model of player because it is easy to use and is suitable for people with visual impairment**

'These were chosen as they are the models used by the Talking Newspaper organization, so have simple to use, high contrast buttons. Users only have to insert the USB stick and it plays automatically. (We also purchased a supply of USB sticks with the grant money).'

**3) The church identified its members who weren't able to access its church services in the ways it was offering (online and in hard copy transcript)**

'We have a few members of the congregation who do not use any technology so this seemed like a simple solution to include them in the recorded Sunday Service. One member is also visually impaired so could

not access the hard copy which we sent out to those not able to access online.'

**4) The minister sends the church administrator the sound recording in MP3 format and the administrator copies this onto memory stick**

'Our minister sends me the sound recording of the audio version of the service she posts online and I simply copy this onto the stick - aided by the fact that she sends it in MP3 file format.'

**5) The church administrator also records news items on her mobile phone and copies these onto a separate memory stick**

'I have also recorded some news bits and pieces on my phone and put these onto a separate memory stick - having converted the file to MP3 format using a sound converter software (easier than it sounds!) For ease of use I only put one recording on each stick.'

**6) The administrator labels the memory sticks with tags using large print**

'I label the sticks with tags using large print particularly for the lady with visual impairment.' (You can get memory sticks with holes at the end which you can tie a tag to [such as this one](#)).

**7) The administrator hand delivers the sticks and collects last week's, then deletes the data from last week's and re-uses them for the next week**

'I generally hand deliver the sticks to some people and that also helps people to stay connected! And they can return memory sticks at that time. I then wipe the sticks clean ready for re-use.'

**8) The only people using these players and sticks are people who wouldn't be able to access the church services otherwise**

'The use of the Sonic 2 and memory sticks are only for people who would not be able to access information using a laptop / tablet / smartphone [or in traditional print format].'

**9) It works well!**

'All the feedback we have received has been very positive - mainly because of the ease of use!'

**10) I think one of the best things about this method is that when the person inserts the memory stick into the player, the audio file plays automatically**

This eradicates any potential difficulty in getting the file to play.

What things could your church start or continue to do to include disabled people? You can share tips or ideas by contacting SCDG on [facebook](#) or email at [info@scdg.org.uk](mailto:info@scdg.org.uk).

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