

Sheffield Park and Garden Access Statement

Contact details

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Introduction

We welcome all visitors to this beautiful grade I listed Garden. If you have particular needs, please let us know so that we can do all we can to make your visit memorable. Our staff and volunteers are always willing to help.

General Points to Note

1. A map of the Garden and Parkland showing options for routes is available from Visitor Reception.
2. Mobile phone reception is patchy. Depending on the nature of the problem or emergency we suggest you contact Visitor Reception on 01825 790231.
3. There are five manual wheelchairs and three double powered mobility vehicles available on loan. The wheelchairs are available without booking, but pre-booking is advised for the powered mobility vehicles.
4. Visitors may use their own mobility vehicles in the Garden and Tearoom
5. Users of wheelchairs or mobility vehicles will be provided with a map showing the routes that are appropriately surfaced for their use.
6. There is safe storage available for personal wheelchairs and walking frames for visitors borrowing the mobility vehicles.
7. There are no gates in the Garden, but in order to access the Parkland visitors must pass through metal gates; these vary from a kissing gate and standard pedestrian gates to wide vehicle access gates.
8. Adjacent to the Garden is a very large area of Parkland, open to the public even when the Garden is closed. The hilly terrain (gradient 4% at best to 15% from the hill top down to the River Ouse), and lack of formal pathways, may prove difficult for visitors with mobility issues. It is not advisable to attempt this terrain with a wheelchair or mobility vehicle.
9. Assistance dogs are welcome across the entire estate (other dogs are welcome on leads on the Parkland at any time and on lead in the garden after 1.30pm). A bowl of water is available outside the main entrance to Visitor Reception, in the plant sale area just inside the garden and two bowls are available at the Tearoom.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

1. The site is easy to find being located midway between East Grinstead and Lewes, 5 miles north-west of Uckfield, on the east side of A275 (between A272 and A22). Brown signs point the way from the A272 and the A22. Details of public transport (available

weekends and bank holidays March – October) and the Bluebell Railway can be found on our website www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sheffield-park-and-garden/

2. The main car park has a firm, but natural or gravel surface which is uneven in places. It is either level or gently sloping (gradient 0.5%)
3. There are 15 designated accessible parking spaces at the closest point to the Visitor Reception building - between 25 and 45 metres away. There are also 3 designated accessible parking spaces approximately 35 metres from the Tearoom.
4. Although we have no transfer vehicles to take visitors the short distance to the Visitor Reception area, we can provide wheelchairs if requested.
5. At busy times, our car park does become full. On such occasions we often direct visitors to our overflow car park. This is on the adjacent Parkland which will entail a short walk across a field.
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7. It is possible to arrange to drop off visitors if all the designated car park spaces are full.
8. There is a designated coach parking area. This is situated about 50 metres along a level path from the Tearoom and about 150 metres up a minimally sloping (gradient 0.5%) path to the Visitor Reception building.

Toilets

1. Toilets are located inside the Garden near Visitor Reception and in the Tearoom; 2 accessible toilets and a parent and child toilet are available near Visitor Reception and 1 accessible toilet in the Tearoom.
2. The accessible toilets measure 1.95m x 2.15m and offer either left or right hand fixed and moveable transfers. The entry doors to each accessible toilet measures 0.88m.
3. There is an alarm cord in each accessible toilet. Reset buttons are located inside the two accessible toilets at reception and outside the one located in the tearoom.
4. There is no adult changing facility.
5. There are baby-changing facilities in a separate designated toilet in the toilet block
6. All toilets are lit by fluorescent lighting.
7. All toilets (both accessible and non-accessible) have automatic hand driers.
8. Visitors should note that there are no other toilets in the garden and that they may find themselves a twenty to thirty minute walk away from the nearest facilities.

Visitor Reception and Main Shop

1. Visitor Reception is located in a wooden building with a stone floor. It opens into the retail area which has a laminate wooden floor. There is minimal echo in these areas.
2. There is a concrete slope (4% gradient) down from the car park to Visitor Reception.
3. The entrance is through double doors with a width of 1.4m.
4. The entrance doors are manual opening and open inwards and outwards. Members of staff/volunteers will be pleased to assist with opening the doors if required.
5. The height of the reception desk is 0.9m and has no lower section, however members of staff/volunteers will always come round to talk to someone who cannot see over or reach up to the desk. There are two adjacent tables, height 0.73m, should visitors need to write.
6. There are 6 chairs available, 2 with armrests.

7. Visitor Reception is lit by fluorescent lighting and the retail area by spot lights.
8. There are induction loops available at all till points in both the Visitor Reception and Tearoom buildings; at the reception welcome desk, shop sales desks and tearoom servery.
9. There is circulation space of at least 1.2m between most display stands in the shop, but not all.
10. Members of staff are happy to assist in reaching down items to view if they cannot be reached by customers.
11. There is a plant sale area just on the garden side of Visitor Reception. If visitors wish to purchase a plant but experience difficulty in carrying it, members of staff or volunteers will always be willing to help.

Garden

1. The Garden slopes gently down to a series of lakes and is generally suitable for all abilities. Visitors should be aware that they will be walking gently uphill (gradient 0.4%) when returning to the Garden exit.
2. The four main lakes are a central feature of the Garden. These include a cascade which generates a high volume of sound. Also, there are two waterfalls. One, which is little more than a trickle, responds to the water levels in the lake above it. The other waterfall, the Pulham Falls, is more vigorous and only operates on Tuesdays and Fridays between 12-1pm.
3. There are many possible visitor routes, but a simple route encompassing views of the four main lakes is approximately 1.2km (about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile) and travels over compacted gravel paths including across two bridges where the paths are 2.95m and 2.7m wide.
4. Other routes travel over a variety of surfaces including, flint, cobble, tarmac, concrete, wooden bridges and grass.
5. All routes wind throughout the Garden and most are level with some slopes (gradient 4%). For the more adventurous, Queen's Walk takes in some uneven ground, steeper slopes and uneven steps without handrails.
6. The Sheffield Park cricket pitch, famous for its historic links with visiting Australian teams, is accessible from Queen's Walk, but only by way of some steep uneven steps.
7. There are benches located at irregular intervals around the Garden.
8. The Garden is very peaceful, and those with sight impairment may gain much pleasure from listening to the many sounds that add to making Sheffield Park such a special place - bird song, breeze through the trees, water movement and so on.
9. There is no artificial lighting in the Garden. The large number of trees and large shrubs in the Garden mean that in certain lighting conditions visibility in some parts of the Garden may prove difficult for some visitors. Changes in light levels are fundamental to the atmosphere and experience in the Garden, but more vulnerable visitors should take care.
10. The lakes are surrounded by grass with no safety barriers. Visitors are advised to be cautious and to be aware that the beauty of the lakes can still be appreciated by standing back from the banks.
11. Guided tours of the Garden are often available; please ask.

Parkland

1. In order to access the Parkland visitors must pass through metal gates; these vary from a kissing gate and standard pedestrian gates (width of 1.8m) to wide vehicle access gates.
2. The Parkland is open to the public even when the Garden is closed.
3. The hilly terrain (gradient 4% at best to 15% from the hill top down to the River Ouse) and lack of formal pathways may prove difficult for visitors with mobility issues.
4. The Parkland is not suitable for mobility vehicles unless they are specifically designed to be used on rough terrain.
5. There are no toilet facilities on the Parkland.
6. There are a small number of benches on the Parkland.
7. There is a picnic area at the beginning of the Parkland accessed by two metal gates. One is a kissing gate with a width of 1.8m and the other is a standard gate, width 1.27m.
8. The picnic area has nine tables and benches. 4 are specifically designed for wheelchair users. There are a further 5 of the same design in and around the car park area.

Tearoom

1. The Coach House Tearoom is brick built and located approximately 200 metres to the north west of Visitor Reception just outside the Garden.
2. There is a slight slope (gradient 0.5%) down from the car park to the Tearoom using mainly a natural but firm path and some tarmac.
3. There are a further 3 accessible parking spaces close to the Tearoom.
4. The Tearoom comprises three rooms. The main room and circulation ways have wood effect laminate flooring while Oak Hall and the Garden Room both have wooden floors. There is a small amount of echo in the all three rooms, but this diminishes when there are reasonable numbers of visitors.
5. There are three entrances to the Tearoom, all through double doors, with widths of 1.12m, 1.12m and 0.95m. To enter Oak Hall, there is a ramp or steps and double doors with a width of 1.2m. The Garden Room is accessed through Oak Hall and then through double doors with a width of 1.23m.
6. The entrance doors referred to are manual opening inwards. Other doors referred to also open outwards apart from the second internal door entering Oak Hall, which opens inwards. Members of staff/volunteers will be pleased to assist with opening doors if required.
7. The main room is lit by fluorescent lights, Oak Hall by spot lights and the Garden Room by light bulbs.
8. There is adequate space through the centre of the seating area for wheelchairs having at least 1.2m of circulation space. Where space adjacent to each table is limited, it may be possible for tables to be repositioned in order to make access better.
9. High chairs are available for very young children.
10. The height of servery is 0.9m and has no lower section, however members of staff/volunteers will always be willing to assist.

11. Once ordered, hot meals are brought to the tables. Please ask for assistance for carrying trays for any other meals and refreshments.
12. There are many chairs and tables (height 0.76m) available. There are no chairs with armrests.
13. Visitors may borrow one of the five manual wheelchairs located at Visitor Reception when visiting the Tearoom. We ask that they be returned to Visitor Reception when your visit comes to an end.
14. The Tearoom is accessible to mobility vehicles, but we do not permit our own powered mobility vehicles to be taken out of the Garden.
15. In addition to the Tearoom, a mobile catering point is available in the Garden at weekends. Please enquire at Visitor Reception for more details.
16. Menus are not available in large print or Braille. Staff will be able to explain the menu if required.
17. Straws are available, however there are no large handled cutlery or double handled mugs.

Bookshop and Tearoom Shop

1. There is a shop and second-hand bookshop in the main entrance to the Tearoom.
2. Points 1 to 7 under 'Tearoom' apply here also.
3. There is circulation space of at least 1.2m between most display stands in the shop, but not all.

Date: 24th October 2016