



ACCESS STATEMENT FOR SEVENOAKS



WELCOME TO SEVENOAKS WILDLIFE RESERVE

The Reserve is situated on the A25 between Bat & Ball and Riverhead. It is a site of Special Scientific Interest consisting of five lakes, a mixture of habitats including ponds, reed beds and woodland. It is also a spectacular site for birds, and the diverse habitat supports a community of plants, fungi and animals. There is a sensory garden located to the left of the Visitor Centre where visitors may touch, feel and smell the different varieties of plants. The whole site is flat with good pathways suitable for wheelchair users. Accessible toilet facilities are available outside the Visitor Centre building.

Pre-Arrival

There are two railway stations close to the Reserve, Bat & Ball and Sevenoaks; both are within 15–20 minutes walking distance. Both routes have roadside walkways; however the route from Bat & Ball would not be suitable for wheelchair users as it is not very even. Sevenoaks Station train service is more frequent than Bat & Ball and has a taxi rank with accessible vehicles outside the station. (Streamline Taxis 01732-459990). Taxis are not usually available at Bat & Ball Station. There are a number of bus routes which stop at the entrance to the Reserve. Arriva (Kent & Sussex) bus



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route **431** operates from Orpington to Sevenoaks via Bat & Ball stopping opposite the reserve entrance. Also Arriva operates bus route **402** from Tunbridge Wells – Bromley stopping at Sevenoaks Station and Knole Academy, a short distance from the Reserve entrance (Arriva (Kent & Sussex) Tel: 01892 520221). There is also an accessible circular bus route **No 8** operated by Sevenoaks Town Council in partnership with Go Coach (01732 469800 – contact email info@gocoach.co.uk). This service operates from Monday – Saturday only. A bus sign can be found at the reserve entrance but the driver needs to be alerted to stop. At the entrance track down to the Reserve you will find Bradbourne Riding Stables on your right and then continue onwards for approx. 500 metres. There is a 10mph speed limit to the Visitor centre with two speed bumps before reaching the Reserve entrance. Signage directing you to the Visitor Centre is displayed at the gate. Visitors on foot, visually impaired persons and wheelchairs users will find the track a little uneven in places and need to take care whilst using it.

Car Parking Facilities and Arrival



The car park holds approx.40 cars and is a 75 metre walk to the Visitor Centre. There is also a small overflow car park near the main entrance to the Reserve. In addition there are 3 Blue Badge spaces immediately to the left of the Visitor Centre building.

The first section of the car park is unmade with gravel/grass but as you near the Visitor Centre the car park area is firm and tarmacked with a slight gradient towards the building. It is an open air car park and visibility is weather dependent. Visitors may be dropped off at the Visitor Centre but no parking is allowed immediately outside the building except for Blue Badge Holders. All parking is free of charge.



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Dogs

Due to the sensitivity of the site we regret dogs are not allowed on the Reserve or in the Visitor Centre but can be walked on a lead in the car park area. Water is available at the Visitor Centre. Assistance dogs are allowed full access under supervision. Assistance dogs in training will also be allowed on site with prior permission of the Visitor Centre Manager. It is the owners' responsibility to remove any fouling from the site.

Visitor Centre Entrance



There are no steps or handrails at the Visitor Centre entrance. The glass double doors with metal frames open outwards measuring 160cm in total with a small threshold 15 mm in height. Accessible toilet facilities are available on the left hand side before you enter the building.

Visitor Centre opening hours are:-

Spring/Summer	3 April 17 – 1 October 17 plus Bank Holidays, Open 7 days a week, 10am – 5pm.
Autumn/Winter	5 October 17 – Easter 2018 Thursday to Sunday, 10.00am – 4pm.

The reserve and its nature trails are open daily from dawn to dusk.

There is no entrance fee but as a charity we welcome donations. Donation boxes



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can be found in the Visitor Centre, on the side door of the building and at the entrance onto to the Reserve.

The Visitor Centre consists of an interesting gift shop, small café, Exhibition Hall and Museum. The area is on one level except for a small gallery in the Exhibition Hall which is accessed by a staircase. The staircase treads are highlighted for better visual access. The flooring consists of vinyl tiles throughout with a carpeted area in the entrance hall. Lighting is good in the Exhibition Hall with spotlights and Velux roof windows. The display cases in the Museum are lit by strip lights covered with perspex to protect the exhibits and are not as bright but spotlights are also used to illuminate the exhibits. A Fire Exit door is located at far end of the Museum Hall.

The Hideout Café



Refreshments are available at the Café during Visitor Centre opening hours with seating in the Hideout Café and picnic benches outside the building. There is a serving hatch to the right of the building and access to the Hideout Café is via the main entrance. The café floor is level throughout and sufficient space is available for wheelchair users to manoeuvre. The café is well lit with spotlights and the flooring is vinyl tiles. The Hideout café offers table and chairs available to use for refreshments. Our crockery is white and contrasts with the tablecloths



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Table height clearance is 68.5cm. A large wall mounted screen displaying photos of bird species and plants taken by visitors found at the reserve. Magnifying glasses are free to use to look at the insect displays in detail and a bird box webcam is also available to monitor breeding activity in the Spring. All the information display boards in the Visitor Centre are in a clear print format.

Visitor Centre Shop



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The shop offers a range of interesting gifts and greetings cards for all ages. FSC Guides for bird, animal and plant identification are available together with bird feeders, nesting boxes and bird food from Vine House Foods. Binocular hire is also available. In the shop area there is low shelving with gifts to buy next to the till, height 91.5cm, and further shelving measuring 137cm high on the other side of the entrance. Other shelving in the Centre is slightly higher but a member of staff is always on hand to help, if needed.

Additional Information

Visitor Centre staff have attended Welcome All and are committed to the objectives of Welcome to Excellence, England's Regional Tourist Board's quality customer service training for the tourist industry.

Kent Wildlife Trust publishes a quarterly events leaflet full of information on what is on around the county which is available at our Visitor Centres and can also be accessed online via our website www.kentwildlife.org.uk.

Outside the Visitor Centre

Accessible Toilet

There are two toilets outside the Visitor Centre, to the left of the building, which remain unlocked. The ladies toilet is accessible. There is a slight ramp into the toilet for ease of access. The height of the toilet from floor to seat is 43cm and the space between the toilet and wall is 124.5cm. There are horizontal grab rails at either side and at the back of the toilet for assistance. The toilets are lit by electric light and the surface of the floor is vinyl floor tiles. The height of the wash basin is 86.5cm and the cold water tap is operated by a push mechanism.



In the event of an emergency A Gas Horn or Fire Bell will be sounded. Visitors should go immediately to the Assembly Point opposite the Visitor Centre Building.



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Viewing facilities



The Elemental Garden situated at the side of the Visitor Centre is a sensory garden funded by Ibstock Cory and created by Volunteers. It allows visitors of all ages to enjoy the different sights, sounds and smells this lovely garden has to offer. The area has a grass surface and a gated access. At the far end of the garden there you will find a viewing screen, a story telling area for children, animal homes, three stages of composting and much more to discover.

Picnic Area

The picnic area situated to the left of the Visitor Centre has 5 wooden picnic tables, 2 are wheelchair friendly, and 3 benches and 2 picnic tables undercover by the café serving hatch. Umbrellas are available during hot & sunny weather. At the far end of the Elemental Garden there are a further 5 picnic tables and 4 benches. You may bring your own food and drink to eat in both these areas.



Out on the Reserve



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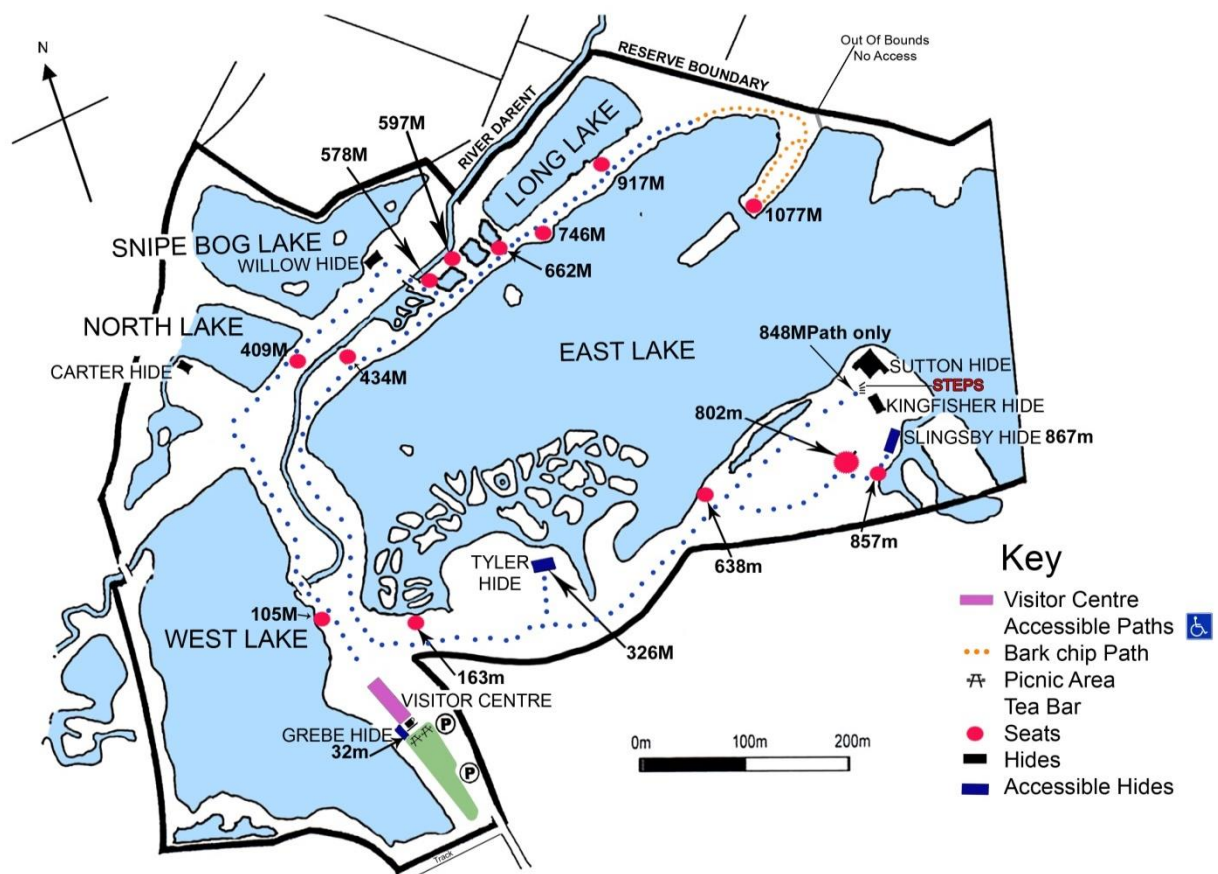


Nature Trails

The Kingfisher Trail provides an accessible and family friendly trail around the reserve. If your mobile device has a QR scanner look out for the 10 different posts with QR codes. These will take you to our site and introduce you to all the creatures and plants that can be found. The nature trail will take approximately 45mins – 1 hour. A map of the Reserve in large print can be pre-ordered before your visit.

Most paths are firm and even but some can be muddy after bad weather. Trails are clearly signposted, Most paths are wide enough for 2 wheelchair users/pushchairs to pass and board walks are anti-slip. There are no gates and stiles on the trails. Wooden benches are available at viewpoints. **See map below for distances.** Information boards are mainly on wooden posts and clearly visible. When the Visitor Centre is closed, maps of the reserve are available in a wooden and perspex box on the side door by the main entrance. Before your visit it is possible to download a map from our website www.kentwildlife.org.uk Staff are happy to help with any information you might need when the Visitor Centre is open.

Accessible Map of the Reserve



MAP SHOWS DISTANCES FROM THE VISITOR CENTRE

Accessible Hides



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There are four hides that are accessible, three of them Grebe, Tyler, and Slingsby hides have lowered windows for wheelchair users. Sutton Hide whilst it can be accessed by wheelchair users, the sills are a standard height 90cm and the height from the ground to the door handle is 100cm. The measurements for Grebe, Tyler and Slingsby Hides are given below.

The Grebe Hide



The Grebe Hide which is nearest to the Visitor Centre overlooks the West Lake. The walkway to the hide has hand rails on either side with a door width of 91cm. The door has a twist knob and opens outwards. Inside there is a non-slip wooden ramp, shown in the photo, measuring 87.5cm wide. The ramp does not have a wide turning circle and wheelchair users should take extra care when using it.

There are seed feeders located on the right outside the hide and can be viewed through the lookout windows. The feeders attract a range of interesting birds and wildlife for you to watch closely whilst they enjoy their food.



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Tyler Hide



The Tyler Hide has an open door way, as shown in the photo, making it very easy to access. Inside the hide there is an accessible area with a lowered sill 99cm wide and a height of 73.75cm for you to enjoy the views across the East Lake.



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Slingsby Hide



The Slingsby Hide has a concrete path leading to the hide. The height of the door handle is 123cm from the ground and the door width is 91.5cm. The door opens inwards. Inside there are two accessible viewing points both with sills measuring 180.5cm wide, height 73.5cm and depth 63.5cm. See photo above.

There are a further 4 hides to visit on the reserve, Carter, Willow, Sutton and Kingfisher hides. The pathways are accessible but the hides are not wheelchair accessible. All have level access. The Carter Hide's door latch is 95cm from the ground with a door width of 88cm. The shelf inside the hide measures 95cm from the floor and the window 103cm also from floor level. The Willow Hide door latch is 100cm from the ground with a door width of 78cm. The shelf inside the hide measures 82cm from the floor and the window 105cm also from floor level. The Sutton Hide can be accessed by a wheelchair user but the viewing window height is not at an accessible height regrettably. The door width on the Sutton Hide is 90cm and the height from the ground to the door handle is 100cm. The Kingfisher Hide which is not wheelchair accessible can be reached via 14 low steps and along a path, 85metres from the Sutton Hide. The door width measures 90cm and the height of the door handle from the ground measures 100cm.



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Educational Centre/ Classrooms

The Education Centre to the right of the Visitor Centre is being upgraded and refurbished. It is anticipated the works will be completed in 2017. Once completed it promises to be a state of the art space for children's education and development.

Future Plans

It is Kent Wildlife Trust's wish to revamp and modernise the Visitor Centre during 2018/2019 making the building more accessible for all. The funding will need to be raised in the meantime to make these exciting plans possible. If you would like to give us your views on how you would like the new Visitor Centre to look and the facilities you would most like to be included, please either email us at info@kentwildlife.co.uk or drop us a line. We very much welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Contact information

Visitor Centre Manager Amanda Hedges

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Grid Ref: TQ5191 5665

Opening hours: **Visitor Centre**

Spring/Summer 3 April 17 – 1 October 17 plus Bank Holidays,
Open 7 days a week, 10am – 5pm.

Autumn/Winter 5 October 17 – Easter 2018

Reserve

The reserve and its nature trails are open daily from dawn to dusk

Local Access Taxi: Streamline Taxis – 01732 459990

Local Public Transport: Buses No 402, 431 and No 8

If you should have any further questions please do get in touch by phoning 01622-377879 and speaking to Amanda Hedges, Visitor Centre Manager at Sevenoaks.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to our very special Reserve.



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