

Dunstable Downs & The Whipsnade Estate Access Statement

Chiltern Gateway Centre, Whipsnade Road, Bedfordshire, LU6 2GY

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Sheep in the shade of a Beech tree at Dunstable Downs.

Introduction

- Dunstable Downs & The Whipsnade Estate is open countryside with chalk grassland, wild flower meadows, the Whipsnade Tree Cathedral and a small woodland set within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- The Downs mark the highest point in Bedfordshire and are a mixture of flat open spaces and very steep hills.
- Mobile phone reception is poor across some parts of the estate.
- Dogs are welcome across the estate on leads and under close control. From March to July please take extra care to not disturb ground nesting skylarks and live stock in fenced locations.
- All dogs on leads are welcome throughout the estate and National Trust shop and café .

Arrival & Parking Facilities

- The site is easy to find, please follow the brown signs from Dunstable, Whipsnade, Kensworth or from the A5.
- There are five accessible parking spaces for blue badge holders in the main visitor centre carpark. These spaces are tarmacked and situated around 10 metres away from the visitor centre reception, toilets and catering hatch.
- The car park surface is firm with a thin layer of loose gravel.
- The surfaces in all overflow carparks are grass or deep gravel.
- The site does not have a transfer vehicle.
- There is a temporary drop off area by the bus stop at the top of the visitor centre car park

WCs - opening hours only

- There is an accessible toilet at the Visitor Centre. *(This toilet does not require a radar key to access the facility)*
- The accessible toilet is 1.5m x 2.2m and has an emergency alarm fitted.
- The accessible toilet is right hand transfer and has hand rails attached to the wall on the left and right side of the toilet. The area is brightly lit with artificial light.
- There is no adult changing facility or hoist.
- The toilets have hand dryers fitted.
- Baby change facilities are available.



Visitors enjoying the view near to the Chiltern Gateway Centre

Visitor Reception

- The Chiltern Gateway Centre has been designed to be as accessible as possible.
- The building and courtyard are open plan with large entrances and exits with level flooring throughout and good turning spaces for wheelchairs.
- The entrance is well lit with a large pale brown mat.
- The visitor centre is fitted with a non slip pale green flooring and is level and even.
- The visitor centre doors are automatic doors which can open to a 2m width.
- The height of the reception desk and till points are 1m high.
- Staff are on hand to assist visitors if needed.
- Chairs are available inside the visitor centre and some have arm rests.
- All tills have induction loops available.
- There is a manual wheelchair available, please check availability before you visit.

Mobility Vehicles

There are two Tramper all-terrain mobility vehicles available to use across the site. They can be reserved in advance and/or booked on the day. Booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

Catering

- The View Café is open plan and visitors can order at the till.
- If visitors need assistance, café staff are happy to help carry trays to tables.
- There is enough space for wheel chairs to manoeuvre in the café. Staff are happy to remove chairs if required.
- Seating without arms are available in the cafe.
- An induction loop system is available at the till point.
- The View Café menu is not available in braille.
- Straws are available in the café.

The Countryside

- There is a map of the estate with walking routes located in each car park and next to the visitor centre courtyard.
- A map and walking routes is available on our website.
- There are three permanent marked routes available.
- There is a hard surfaced, multiuser path.



View across the valley to Ivinghoe Beacon- The red walking route

- **Red Route – Hilly Walk**
- The red route starts on the multiuser path, which provides a good walking surface for all users.
- The route continues along:
 - Several narrow footpaths with a steep gradient.
 - A bridal way at the base of the hillside.
 - A large set of steep steps that can be very muddy. The steps do not have any handrails.
 - There are several gates along this route.
 - There are sheep grazing.
 - There is currently no audio tour available.
 - There are some benches along the multiuser path and back along the hedgerow towards the end of this walk.



View across pascombe pit / red walking route.

- **Blue Route**

- The blue route takes you along a footpaths and bridal ways.
 - Pathways can become muddy and may have loose large flints in the soil.
 - All paths on this route cover the top of the hill and are relatively flat with no steep gradients
 - The path surface may be uneven.
 - There are no steps.
 - There are several gates.
 - There is some interpretation but no audio tour available.
 - There are a few benches spaced far apart.

- **Purple Route**

- The Purple route takes you along footpaths and bridal ways.
 - Pathways can become muddy and may have loose large flints in the soil.
 - All paths on this route cover the top of the hill and are relatively flat with no steep gradients.
 - The path surface may be uneven.
 - There are no steps.
 - There are several gates.
 - There is some interpretation but no audio tour available.
 - There are a few benches spaced far apart.



A family enjoying the multiuser path at Dunstable Downs.

- **The Multiuser path**
- The Multi user path is a hard surfaced 1.1m wide path that is suitable for all users.
 - There is a slight decline at the start of the route.
 - The path does not provide a circular route.
 - There are no steps or gates.
 - There are several benches with good views.
 - The route is exposed and may not be suitable on windy days.

Contact details for more information

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