

Chartwell Access Statement

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Introduction

- Chartwell was the family home of Sir Winston Churchill set in 87 acres of Garden and Parkland. The site is set on the side of a steep valley, which offers stunning views but has steep slopes and steps through the Garden and up to the entrance of the House.
- Mobile signal is weak across most of the site, in an emergency visitors can call 07917 271 362.
- A Duty Manager has responsibility for the site each day and assesses the site at the beginning of each day to ensure safe operation. The duty manager informs the site team of weather conditions and the admissions team on the day will advise visitors of any areas that may be affected due to weather.
- Assistance dogs are welcome. Dogs may be walked in the Garden on a short lead, and in the surrounding woodland off the lead, there are dog drinking bowls available outside many buildings across site.
- Entry to the House is by timed ticket. These are available at the Visitor Centre when the House is advertised as open. This system allows us to regulate footfall through the house to ensure a comfortable experience, help with the conservation of the house and collection, and ensures fire regulations are adhered to. Light levels inside the House are kept low to prevent light damage to the collection.
- The peak periods for Chartwell are through the school holidays – the busiest day during the week is Sunday. The quietest day is Tuesday. The afternoons are also often quieter.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

- There are brown signs on the motorway (M25), and local A roads (A21, A22 and A25). The entrance to the main car park is signed from either direction of Mapleton Road.
- There are eighteen designated disabled visitor car parking bays across two lanes of the hard surfaced car park. All are clearly marked and towards the end of each lane to be near as possible to the visitor centre.
- If a visitor is going to the café and shop only, we would advise that the top lane disabled parking bays are used as this offers a level tarmac surface to the café. The furthest distance to walk is 40 metres to the café and 50 metres to the shop.
- There are 15 disabled parking bays which have a hard tarmac surface, and the lanes are marked by white lines. The bays are 3.7 metres wide and 4 metres long.
- The main car park is mostly hard tarmac embedded gravel surfaces, with some parking areas being gravel. The parking bays are marked out with chestnut spacers in total there are 168. On

the banks the surface is re-enforced plastic where the grass grows through; these areas are slippery in the wet weather.

- When available, a minibus can take passengers with limited mobility to the entrance of the house. Visitors using a non-electric wheelchair can also use the minibus service. Visitors using electric wheelchairs can either use the accessible route to the House, however it is not step free as there are low steps up to the front of the house or can use the vehicle, they arrive in to be dropped at the entrance of the House. We can also offer a limited number of parking spaces outside of the house if driver needs assistance. The minibus only operates when the house is open (March through to October) and is run by volunteers subject to availability, we would recommend calling our office on 01732868381 before travelling.
- The first overflow car park has a surface of sand which can be uneven due to water flow. The parking bays marked out with small white lines.
- The second overflow car park is grass and is on a steep hill. If the weather has been wet for a considerable time, we do not open the grass surface car park.
- The car park is Pay and Display for paying visitors (National Trust members are free), there are three ticket pay units; two of the ticket pay units on the middle lane are on level ground and are accessible. The third is in the centre of the overflow car park. Disabled parking is free with a valid pass. Members should scan their membership cards at the pay and display units.
- The distance from the car park to the house and formal garden is a quarter of a mile, depending on where you are parked.
- While the mobility minibus is not running, or the disabled parking bays are full, the visitor centre can arrange for visitors to use the drive at the front of the house as a drop off point.

WCs

We have the following toilets available at the 'commercial' end of the site:

- An accessible toilet adjacent to the visitor centre, 1.6m by 2.6m in size. There is a fixed handrail on the right-hand side of the toilet and a pull-down rail on the left-hand side of the toilet. The toilet is lit by fluorescent lighting and has an automatic hand dryer and an emergency alarm. The door opens outwards and is 0.97m wide.
- An accessible toilet on the first floor of the café, accessed by a lift which has a safe working load of 400kg. The toilet is 1.53m by 2.2m in size, there are rails to the left (fixed) and right (drop down) of the toilet, an automatic dryer, and an emergency alarm. The door opens outwards and is 0.97m wide.
- There are no adult changing facilities.
- There is a baby changing area next to the accessible toilet at the visitor centre. This is a separate room without a toilet. It is lit by fluorescent lighting, the door opens outwards, and the width is 0.708m.
- There is also another baby changing facility in one of the garden toilets. This also has a toilet inside.
- Separate male and female toilet blocks are situated behind the shop.
- Lockers for bags and personal items are situated beside the toilet blocks.

Garden

- There is a toilet block near the entrance to the house which houses two unisex toilets and an accessible toilet. There is a water fountain next to this toilet block.

House

There are no toilets in the house.

Catering

- It is about 25 metres from the visitor centre to the front door of the café.
- There is ramped and stepped access to the café from the top parking lane. Depending on where you have parked it is up to a 50-metre walk on a hard, flat surface. The step free route is in front of the café to ramped access by the side entrance. You can also take the covered area walk to double doors, which are manual and would need to be opened by staff, each door is 730mm wide.
- To access with a wheelchair there is a slope on either the far right or far left-hand side near the shop opposite the visitor centre.
- You can access the building via a ramp. The entrance has double doors, and each is held open.
- The entrance to the café is a large open area, with queuing to the left-hand side. A wheelchair would be able to undertake a full 1500mm turn in this area. Trays are provided for self-service food and bottled drinks. Hot beverages are served at the till area. There is seating in the café area; the tables are 740mm high. The chairs do not have arms. Wheelchair users would be able to sit at some of the outer tables.
- All the counters are 940mm high. The till points have induction loops. The self-service area of cakes is accessible.
- Access to the Lady Soames room is through a passageway and two sets of double doors where there are extra tables and chairs, the chairs do not have arms, the tables are 770mm high.
- In the passageway between the self-service area and the Lady Soames room (both areas have double doors which are kept open on busy days) is where the lift is situated to take disabled visitors to the first floor and the accessible toilet. A member of staff can assist in the operation of the lift if required.
- There is a lower-level counter height at the end of the Café counter which is suitable for wheelchair users. However, this area does not have the card machine. We can use a portable card machine if the fixed terminal is not within reach. The fixed terminal is more than 850mm.
- There is limited circulation space around tables.
- Straws and large handed cutlery are available, please ask at till point.
- The light level is low in the café and the colours are dull and not bright. There is a black mat on entrance into the café.
- There are many hard surfaces that can cause an echo within the space.
- The peak period for café noise is between 11:00 – 14:00 daily.
- There is an outside terrace area, with a wooden decking floor, the tables are 735mm high, the chairs do not have arms; the decking area can be slippery in wet weather.

- If a visitor is at risk from a person they are with, and/or would like to seek support regarding safeguarding they should ask for Angela at the till point.

Retail

- The shop is approximately 25m from the visitor centre.
- To access the shop there are two step free entrances. The closest to the car park is from the outside of the café, the second is heading towards the edge of the building round the side and to the back of the main toilet block. The shop is situated next to the café and 55 meters to walk from the top lane disabled parking bays. There is a route past the café and outside seating area that can be crowded on busy days.
- There is circulation space within the shop however the entrance to the shop is a single standard door. A double buggy or customised wheelchair may not be able to enter the shop. However, if there is a particular item that a visitor would like or have seen online a member of the retail team can bring the item to the visitor and a PDQ machine if they wish to pay by card.
- All till points have induction loops
- Staff can assist by reaching an item and storing it for a visitor.
- The counter is 925 mm high, with a lower shelf of 760mm high. Staff will assist in reaching down items to view and with telling visitors the prices of items.
- The garden annex which houses the plant benches is not wheelchair accessible, but wheelchairs can go through it to the toilets. The plant area at the front of the shop has enough space for wheelchairs to move between tables and plant display areas.
- The second-hand bookshop is wheelchair accessible.
- If a visitor is at risk from a person they are with, and/or would like to seek support regarding safeguarding they should ask for Angela at the till point.

Visitor Centre (VC)

- The Visitor Centre is a wooden building with lots of windows for natural light. It has a sloping step-free concrete area outside, with a low wooden shelf containing leaflets for walks. The slope is 1 in 4.
- Entrance to the building is through two narrow doors that can both be opened for wheelchair and buggy access. These doors open into the building. Each single door is 0.6m, offering a 1.2m width when both are opened. The doors are kept open in the warmer weather. The entrance and exit doors are secured by hooking back. If the doors are closed, staff are available to open the doors and assist visitors.
- The reception desk is 0.9m high and has a lower area 0.75m high. There is a separate membership area with 2 tables and 9 chairs without armrests. There is space for a 1.5m diameter turning circle.
- Half of the floor is stone tiles which is in the membership area and the entrance half is carpeted. The lights are halogen. The building is not sound proofed and can be noisy at busy times.
- There is an induction loop at the reception desk.

- There are three manual wheelchairs that can be borrowed on a first come first served basis. Visitors can reserve wheelchairs in advance of their visit.
- There is a large print guide, a braille guide, and an easy-read guide available to our visitors, please ask for these at the tills in the visitor centre.
- There are audio guides available to borrow from the visitor centre, these help you explore the outdoors, garden, and landscape at Chartwell. They are free with admission or membership.
- We also have ear defenders and tactile resources available to borrow from the Visitor Centre. Should you or someone you are with need these, please speak to staff for assistance.
- If a visitor is at risk from a person they are with, and/or would like to seek support regarding safeguarding they should ask for Angela at the till point.

House

- It is approximately 400m from the visitor centre to the front door of the house.
- The paths are level concrete with areas of pathing slabs.
- The entrance door to the mansion is 150cm wide. Entrance to the house is by ramp or two steps. The front door is manually opened, and the doors open inwards. The doors are currently kept open for visitors from 11.00am to 16:00.
- We are unable to accept mobility scooters within the house – this is due to the turning circle of the scooters.
- We can only accept electric wheelchairs within the first room of the house due to turning circles of the wheelchair.
- There is a touch tour available upon request to help engage with the house and its collection – please call our main line on 01732 868381 to guarantee that we can have it available on the day.
- There is a virtual tour of the house at request. British Sign language is available on our virtual tour as well as subtitles.
- There is a Portable Induction Hearing Loop for our tour guides to wear to help those with hard of hearing, please let us know if you require this on the front door.
- To access the house, there is a minibus service which can take visitors to the front of the house from the car park. This service is run by volunteers and is subject to availability, please call our main line on 01732 868 381 to check availability.
- There are wheelchairs available at the visitor centre on a first come first served basis for the ground floor of the house. Visitors will need to transfer themselves into the wheelchair. To visit the upstairs, you would need to transfer to another wheelchair on the first floor of the house after climbing stairs.
- From the entrance to the house there is a right turn into the wheelchair accessible sitting room where a virtual tour is situated. Due to limited accessibility to upstairs and downstairs, the virtual tour includes information and pictures of all the showrooms that are not accessible. One wheelchair user at a time can watch the tour.
- In the centre of the sitting room is a table that allows for a 1.5m turning circle for wheelchairs but this can be significantly reduced on busy days. The front door volunteers

- monitor the number of visitors in the sitting room as it can become quite cramped on busy days.
- There is one-way flow through the house, with visitors following a specific route.
- From the sitting room there is access to a hall with a mixture of wooden and tile flooring with some carpet. Access to the drawing room is on the right followed quickly by a sharp left and then right turn of 750mm wide.
- For greater access to the drawing room are double French glass and wooden doors to an inner hall that can be opened. As you enter the inner hall there is a side table to the right which narrows the route to 850mm. There is then a 900mm turn to the right, against visitor flow, for entrance into the drawing room.
- To exit the Drawing Room and to return to the inner halls requires a full circle turn in a wheelchair. On quiet days there is a 1m space to do so.
- From the inner hall and opposite the entrance to the dining room there is a narrow doorway of less than 900mm into the library.
- Exit from the library for wheelchair users is through the same door which on a quiet day allows a 1m full circle turn against the flow of visitors.
- The exhibition room does not have soft furnishings and can have echoes in the space.
- The uniform room has bright colours but is dimly lit.
- There are two steps in the inner hall leading to the staircase and the upper floor.
- Exit for visitors in wheelchairs from the house is via the entrance. From the inner hall this is through the French glass and wooden doors back into the main hall past the 850mm space with side table and against visitor flow. Exit is then via the main entrance doors and down the ramp.
- Due to the nature of the building and the extensions to it, there are steps between some rooms on the ground floor. There is a main staircase with banister on the right up to the first floor; the stairs are wooden with no floor covering. There is a wheelchair on the first floor and a seating area in the museum room.
- The main visitor exit is down the main stairs to the dining room, kitchen, and exhibition room.
- Group guided tours, pre-booked by groups, are delivered by volunteers for groups of fifteen plus on Mondays only.

Studio

- It is a 500m walk from the visitor centre to the Studio. It is 50 metres from the Marlborough Pavilion past the back of the house to the Studio sign.
- From the terrace at the far end past the house there is a sign to the Studio which takes visitors down a solid surface path (1 in 4 gradient) through the orchard; this is a 50-metre walk. At the bottom of the path is a left turn past some cottages on the right which takes visitors to the door of the studio. The path is flat, and concrete paved with a seating bench.
- The doorway to the Studio is 900mm wide, there is a lip 75mm over into the lobby area and another door into the Studio. There is space for a 1500mm turn in the studio so visitors in wheelchairs can enter and exit through the front door.

- There is an annex to the studio down several steps from the main room leading to a door; this is a fire exit.
- The Studio can get busy and crowded in the summer months.

Garden

- A welcome map is available showing key features of the site and the hard paths to the house from the visitor centre.
- The main path into the gardens has three benches along the way. The hard paths are steep in areas with up to a 1 in 3 gradient. The 24 shallow steps up to the house have a handrail on the left-hand side. The hard paths are a gravelled tarmac surface; the steps up to the house are paving stones.
- On the walk up to the house there are large ponds (open water) on the right-hand side. The grass areas slope down to the lakes (open water) and are a 1 in 4 gradient. The ponds and lakes are open and not fenced off. We have signs warning about our swans and asking visitors not to feed them.
- The area outside the house is a large, open, flat gravelled tarmac surface with a grass sloped area (gradient 1 in 3) up to some seated benches.
- The terraced garden to the back of the house has an accessible entry (via a ramp through the gate) which takes visitors through the Marlborough Pavilion to the flat grassed area. There is a path made of concrete paving stones around the edge of the grass close to the house.
- The formal rose garden area is only accessible by steps. Page 7 of 9
- All steps in the garden are accompanied by handrails apart from the steps into the kitchen/walled garden.
- All gates to public areas in the garden will be opened by gardeners before the site opens to the public.
- There is interpretation across the garden. The main area being the butterfly house which is located to the right of the main house. Throughout the garden there are blackboards with seasonal interpretation.

Walled Garden

- The Walled Garden houses the Marycot, Golden Rose Avenue, and cut flower beds.
- The Walled Garden can be found by taking the same route through the orchard towards the Studio but turning right and heading towards a brick archway through to the walled garden; this is a 20-metre walk.
- This area is flat with concrete paved tiles but some paths in the garden have a slight increase in gradient up to 70 metres. In the middle of the garden is the Golden Rose Avenue which has bench seating and a concrete tile path up through the rose lined walk.
- The Marycot is a brick-built playhouse with steps down to its entrance which makes it inaccessible for wheelchairs.
- There are 47 flagstone steps that lead to a terrace overlooking the kitchen garden.
- The terrace has 3 benches for seating.

Woodland

- Access to the woodland from the gardens is via the pathways to the right and left of the lakes. The lefthand route is down a steep path left of the pond, past the first swings and through 2 sets of gates, going up and across a field and then following very steep paths into the woodland. Here visitors can access the woodland walks, Old Quarry, and Canadian Camp.
- Walking further up from the fingerpost sign is a short steep hill with 30 steps and a banister, and up onto a bark chipping footpath of approximately 80 metres visitors can access the Bomb Crater play area and the Tree house.
- If there has been heavy rain, the paths across the field and in the woods can be very muddy and become inaccessible.
- If there are high winds warning of Level 3 visitors are not allowed in the woods.
- The woodland is a Grade 2 Ancient Woodland so the National Trust is restricted as to the interventions it can make to give full access to the disabled. Consideration has been given to how access to the woodland could be made available to visitors with mobility issues but there are no short-term solutions to this. The mobility bus is a hire vehicle and not suitable for off-road terrain. In the long term, providing an alternative route using the gate entrance next to Hosey Common Lane could be explored but would require significant funding and resourcing as it would need to be booked in advance to ensure staff could be available to open the gate. No car can park in this area due to emergency access and weather conditions.

Tree house

- The tree house is a newly built structure made from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) pine, plywood, and maple tiles. This structure was inspired by the first tree house Winston Churchill built for his children in 1923. From the Hosey Common Lane side there is a clear marked path with logs (on either side) and bark chippings down to the Tree house site of 50 metres. The pathway starts flat then drops to become steep. From the Bomb Crater it is a walk up a steep pathway, estimated 30 metres, up to the tree house site. Visitors with buggies need to be confident that the tyres are suitable for muddy pathways.
- The tree house is surrounded by a surface of bark chippings. Access up to the first floor is up 2 wide wooden stairs cases estimated 290 cm long, 79cm wide with grips on wood steps and wood bannisters on either side. The first floor is at a height of 195cm.
- There is a stainless-steel metal slide with safety wings 145cm high, 300cm long, 50cm wide for children to play on depending on the weather conditions. There are 2 safety bars (one metal and one wood) to encourage children to sit before going down the slide and prevent pushing from behind.
- The two doorways on the first floor are 94cm wide and 167cm high. To get to the second-floor children must climb a ladder 175cm high by 55cm wide using 2 handrails. Tall visitors will have to watch their heads at the start of the ladder and to get into the second-floor hatchway, which is 98cm high by 77cm wide.
- There is interpretation on the outside and inside the tree house highlighting the story of the first tree house built by Churchill. The interpretation is carved in wood and lighted in white to enable reading in grey/dark weather.

- There are signs near the treehouse warning parents of risky play and the need to keep an eye on their children.
- There are 2 flat wood benches on the Tree House site.

Bomb Crater

- The bomb crater is near the treehouse and is a crater estimated four meters deep, created by the bombs that allegedly fell on the estate at Chartwell as the planes left London. The crater has ropes for children to climb.

Canadian Camp

- Canadians camped out here in the woods at Chartwell during the Second World War and the camp is now another area for children to play in. The camp includes hammocks, and seating areas and shelters made of wood.

Old Quarry

- The Old Quarry is a play area for children that houses swings, see-saws, balancing beams, and a replica caravan with a seating area. The quarry is on a steep slope. The caravan has step free access to a narrow door and a window hatch that is secured open.

Contact details for more information

T: 01732 868 381

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Map

