

Hardcastle Crag – Access Statement

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Introduction

- This document describes in detail the site's terrain, routes and facilities, so that all visitors, regardless of their access requirements, can plan their visit and enjoy our beautiful site in advance.
- This property is located near Hebden Bridge in the South Pennines and consists of 294 acres of woodland in the steep-sided valleys of Hebden Dale and Crimsworth Dean.
- All our trails lead to Gibson Mill at the centre of our site. This industrial revolution era cotton mill is now our main visitor hub and includes a café, exhibition space, second- hand book shop and toilets.
- Mobile phone reception is extremely poor across the property but can generally be obtained within both Midgehole and Clough Hole car parks. The phone numbers for the property are 01422 844518 (Office) and 01422 846236 (Gibson Mill).
- Dogs are welcome in all areas of the property including Gibson Mill and the Weaving Shed Cafe.
- Hardcastle Crag has 2 car parks, Midgehole and Clough Hole (arrival information below). The most accessible walk to Gibson Mill starts from Midgehole. All car parks have several accessible parking spaces for those wishing to use any of the 1-2 mile trails.
- Those wishing to use the 2 bookable accessible parking spaces at Gibson Mill, should go to Midgehole, where they will be signposted along our Estate Track (1 mile) – more info below.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

Hardcastle Craggs has 2 car parks, Midgehole and Clough Hole.

Midgehole Road Entrance

- The entrance to Midgehole car park is accessible along Midgehole Road, via the A6033. There are brown signs (a) from Hebden Bridge and prior to the Midgehole Road turn off (b). Midgehole Road is a long narrow road which often has cars parked along it. Frustratingly SAT NAV users are often taken to the wrong side of the valley, which can be frustrating, and so it is advised to search for Midgehole Road and picking up the National Trust directional signs (c) from there.



a



b



c

Lower Midgehole Car Park

- Immediately as you cross through our property threshold (just past the Welcome to Hardcastle Craggs sign), you will see a small car park on the right. We call this the lower Midgehole car park. This is our smallest car park and this always fills up quickly. In this car park there are 3 accessible parking bays (d). There is a pay and display machine (blue badge holders park for free), as well as a large orientation panel displaying the property map, including descriptions of all the routes, terrain, distances, and potential obstacles (e). The panels also outline hazards and points of interest.

- The car park surface is firm but is not tarmac and so there can be some loose material on its surface. There is a slope up to the hardstand standing area in front of the orientation panel area. There is a step up to the pay and display machine (blue badge holders park for free).



d



e

- The route from the lower Midgehole car park to the start of the Estate Track (most accessible walk to Gibson Mill) is a right turn out of the car park, at which point there is an incline along the tarmaced road.

Upper Midgehole Car Park

- If the lower Midgehole car park is full, then visitors are signposted past it, to our much larger upper Midgehole car park. This is up an incline and round a right turn in the road (follow the tarmac road). A 1-way system is active in this area which requires all visitors to turn right first. This car park has 5 times as many spaces as the lower Midgehole car park, including 2 accessible parking spaces (f) (next to the pay and display machine and orientation panels) which you will come to by following the 1-way system (blue badge

holders park for free). The pay and display and orientation panels in this car park displays the property map, including descriptions of all the routes, terrain, distances, and potential obstacles. The panels also outline hazards and points of interest (g).



f

- The surface is firm but is not tarmac and so there can be some loose material on its surface. There are no steps, in this car park.
- The route from the upper Midgehole car park to the start of the Estate Track (most accessible walk to Gibson Mill) is down the tarmaced road (we advise caution here as this is used by vehicles and there is no pavement)(h), and a right turn on the Estate Track.

*There is a safer way down to the Estate Track away from the road, however, this is steep footpath, with steep steps (i), and loose gravel, which may not be suitable for all visitors.

g



h



i



Clough Hole Car Park

- Alternative parking is available at Clough Hole car park on the Widdop Road. This is a 5-mile round trip from Midgehole car park via Hebden Bridge in the car. There are over 60 spaces in this car park including 2 accessible spaces next to the pay and display machine and orientation panel (blue badge holders park for free). This is our least used car park, and is rarely completely full.
- The car park surface is firm, but a loose gravel covers the surface to aid flood alleviation. There is a gradual slope from the front of the car park to the back. Access from this car park to the visitor facilities at Gibson Mill is along a rough waymarked track down a steep hillside (about 1 mile). As well as rough surfaces, this route has a set of steps, several gates, cobbles, and stile.

Accessible Parking at Gibson Mill

- For those who wish to access the Gibson Mill facilities without travelling the mile along any of the waymarked walks (info below), there are two accessible parking spaces at Gibson Mill (j) that can be booked in advance by calling 01422 841 023 (Estate Office) or 01422 846236 (Gibson Mill). Alternatively, visitors can speak to a member of staff in the car park at Midgehole Road who can then check if there is a space available.

j



- Once you have had confirmation that there is an available space, either by a member of staff on the day, or by pre booking, then you can drive down the Estate Track and follow the signs to Gibson Mill. There is a sign at the start of the Estate Track, stating that no unauthorised vehicles can access this route, however, those with permission to use the accessible spaces can ignore this and head through the gates. The track is just over 1 mile long, and while it is hard standing, it can be bumpy, and drivers are advised to go slow. Please take extra care as

children and dogs are usually running around. When you eventually get to Gibson Mill, go straight past the courtyard turn off and carry on along the track for another 50m, where you will find 2 signposted accessible spaces on the left, in front of the Mill Pond.

- The short route from the accessible parking spaces to Gibson Mill, via the courtyard is stepless, however, there is a slight hill into the courtyard. For more information about the courtyard surfacing and Gibson Mill access see sections below.

Toilets

- The main visitor toilets at Gibson Mill are across the bridge and not accessible due to wooden stairs in the old building. There are three cubicles and two waterless urinals; the facilities are unisex.
- There is a separate accessible toilet and baby change facility in the Gibson Mill courtyard. There is level access from the courtyard and the room can accommodate a wheelchair. There is an emergency alarm and handrail next to the toilet (l). This door can be unlocked with a RADAR key (m) if you have one, or by requesting a key from staff in the café or mill. Due to the off grid nature of Gibson Mill, this toilet is a composting toilet which must be used sat down by everyone. It is emptied daily, instructions for use are next to the toilet.

k



l



m



- There is another set of National Trust owned toilets, 25m outside the front entrance, at the Midgehole car park (n). This toilet block has two separate unisex toilets, both have baby change facilities and are equipped with handrails (o). There is no emergency alarm in this location. The interior locks on these doors are less than 1 metre from the floor. Both doors are 90cm in width, with lots of room for a wheelchair inside. A ramp has been added to the right-hand toilet for wheelchair users.

n



o

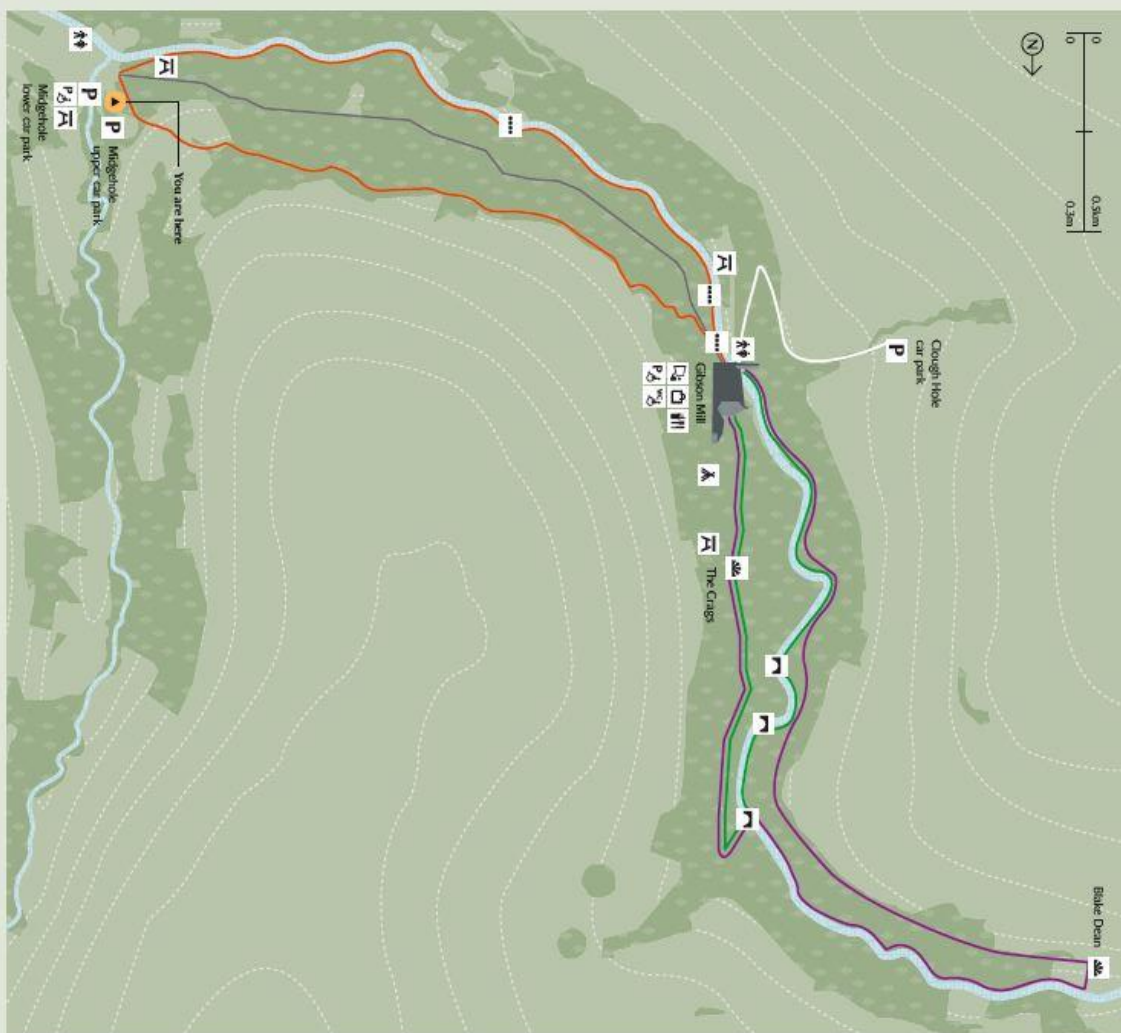


Waymarked Trails

| Key |
|--------------------|
| Car park |
| Disabled parking |
| Viewpoint |
| Toilet |
| Disabled toilet |
| Shop |
| Cafe |
| Picnic area |
| Stepping stones |
| Exhibition space |
| Bridge |
| Diet building area |
| Your location |

Escape Track
1 mile (2km or about 3000 steps)
Follow grey waymarkers from Midgehole car park.
The most direct route from Midgehole car park to Gibson Mill. This wide unfenced path is mostly even underfoot with a slight incline and decline along the way. Wheelchair and pushchair accessible.

Craggs Constifunctional
2 miles (3 km or about 4500 steps)
Follow green waymarkers from Gibson Mill.
A chance to explore a quieter part of the river, with ponds, waterfalls and lush woods where you should watch out for slippery, jagged and uneven ground. The route is on a stony path which is very uneven in places. Parts of the riverside section are likely to be muddy especially after rain.



Railway Trail
3 1/2 miles (5 1/2 km or about 10,000 steps)
Follow purple waymarkers from Gibson Mill.
The route follows the river through woodland and includes several steep uphill and descending sections with great views along the higher slopes. A challenging walk that includes a crossing over water, uneven stone steps, and a long steep flight of wooden steps.

The Craggs
1/4 mile (0 1/2 km or about 1000 steps)
Amazing views of the tree canopy from the top of this short but steep climb. The first part of route is on a path with several flights of steps, but the second section is very uneven in places.

Mill Walk (riverside)
1 1/2 miles (2 1/2 km or about 4000 steps)
Follow red waymarkers from Midgehole lower car park.
You can see how the river changes along the route, spot the waterfalls here and try out the stepping stones. There are several very uneven, rocky sections, sets of steps, and parts can be muddy after rain.

Mill Walk (upper woodland)
1 1/2 miles (2 1/2 km or about 4000 steps)
Follow red waymarkers from Midgehole upper car park.
The route goes through a stand of pines to take in views over the Hebbden Valley, especially from the rocky outcrop called Sturning Rock. The route is a long steep climb up ancient causey stones, undulating through uneven woodland paths, finishing with a steep (often slippery) descent to Gibson Mill.

Estate Track – Grey Waymarkers

Length and time

About 1.2 miles (2km or 3000 steps)

Highlights

This wide treelined path is a great way to feel immersed in the woodland. Expect to see beech, pine and oak, swathes of bluebells in the spring, and the occasional northern hairy wood ant hill.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- The Estate Track is the only route From the Midgehole car parks to Gibson Mill which is stepless.
- While the track is mostly flat and firm, it is not tarmac and as such there are occasional ruts, potholes and some loose gravel.
- The track has a marginal incline all the way to the halfway point and then a decline to Gibson Mill (p)
- There are several walls and a benches along the route at which to rest.
- To help manage flooding in our steep sided valley, there are about 20 concrete cross drains running across the track (q). They are mostly shallow (between 2 and 5cm deep) but we recognise that this is an obstacle and so we are working on creating flat crossing areas to facilitate safer access.
- This route is occasionally used by vehicles (property staff, deliveries to Gibson Mill), but speed is restricted to 20mph, and passing places have been installed to improve safety for pedestrians.

p



q



Mill Walk (Riverside) – Red Waymarkers

Length and time

1¼ miles (2km or about 3-4000 steps)

Highlights

You can see how the stream changes all along the route, spot the weirs, the occasional Heron and have a chance to try out the stepping stones.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- There are a couple of steep flights of steps
- The route is maintained, but there are several very uneven, rocky sections where visitors must navigate boulders and steep gradients.
(r) (s)
- The nature of the woodland means that after rain whole sections of the route are muddy and rocks and tree roots are slippery.

r



s



Mill Walk (Upper Woodland) – Red Waymarkers

Length and time

1¼ miles (2km or about 3-4000 steps)

Highlights

There are some great views over the Hebden Valley, especially from the spectacular rocky outcrop called Slurring Rock. The route goes through a wonderful stand of pines and you should watch out for some of the local wildlife on this quieter part of the Craggs.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- The first section is quite a long steep climb up to Slurring Rock (t), up a long set of steps, followed by a set of ancient causey stones. An undulating section follows and then a very steep descent to Gibson Mill.
- The route is on clear, mainly woodland paths. Many sections of the path are very uneven. Parts can also be slippery or muddy after rain. There are narrow areas where the path drops away to one side.
- There are several sets of rough stone steps (u).

t



u



Crags Constitutional – Green Waymarkers

Length and time

2 miles (3 km or about 4500 steps)

Highlights

A chance to explore a quieter part of the stream with dramatic cliffs, waterfalls and lovely beech woods. The route starts along the edge of a lovely mill dam and then stays very close to the stream where you should watch out for Dippers, Wagtails and Herons.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- There are several sets of rough steps on the route.
- There is a water crossing over very uneven rocks at the waterfall near Gibson Mill (v).
- The route is on a stony path which is very uneven in several places. Parts of the riverside section are likely to be muddy especially after rain. Return is on a wider broad track.
- The outward section is a level riverside path returning by a steady climb up a track and then a gradual descent back to Gibson Mill where the track is quite rough with loose stones.

v



Railway Walk – Purple Waymarkers**Length and time**

3½ miles (5½ km or about 10,000 steps)

Highlights

A varied walk through woods, alongside the stream and dams with great views along the higher slopes. Watch out for bluebells in the Spring. Part of this route follows the old railway that was used to build the reservoirs on the tops.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- This is the most challenging route in terms of distance and access.
- The route includes several steepish uphill and descending sections, as well as two relatively flat stretches of riverside path. The final section is a gradual climb and descent on a track to Gibson Mill, where the track is quite rough with loose stones.
- The route is mainly on woodland paths. Parts are likely to be wet, especially after rain. Some sections of the path are on a very uneven stony surfaces.
- There are several sets of uneven stone steps, and a long steep flight of wooden steps at Widdop Gate.
- There is a water crossing over very uneven rocks at the waterfall near Gibson Mill.

The Craggs – Lookout Point

Length and time

Up to the top and back down is about ¼ mile (½ km or about 1000 steps)

Highlights

This An amazing view of the tree canopy from the top.

Accessibility (Gradient, terrain, and obstacles)

- This route is not suitable for wheel chairs or push buggies
- There is an uphill gradient from Gibson Mill along the Estate Track to the foot of the Craggs.
- The route to the top of the lookout is a steep climb up to the top along a long flight of steps, and then an uneven, narrow, rocky path.

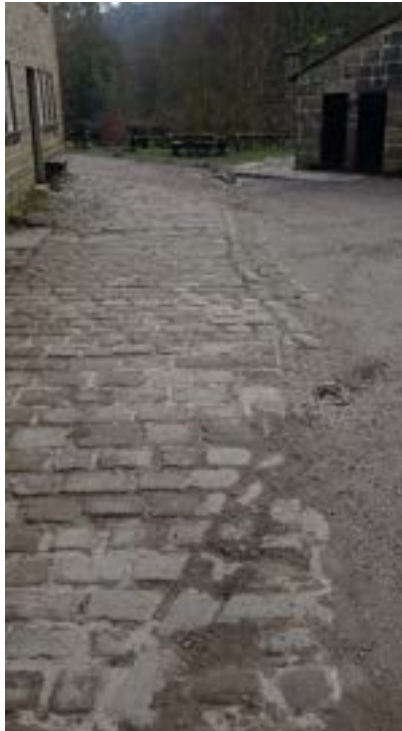


Gibson Mill

Courtyard

All woodland trails lead to Gibson Mill, which is the main hub of our site. Here you will find the café, visitor toilets (including accessible toilets), exhibition space and second hand book shop. Both main doors to Gibson Mill are propped open all day during opening hours.

There is flat access from the Estate Track (the most accessible trail) into both doors of Gibson Mill, via the courtyard area. The surface of the courtyard is a mixture of stone set cobbles, and a compacted flat material that has some occasional loose or uneven gravel on top of it. There is also an area covered in large flat flags of York stone. While there are no steps in the courtyard, there is an incline on to the humpback bridge, which some wheelchair users may struggle with.



In the courtyard there are several outdoor seating options, including simple benches, and wheelchair accessible picnic tables.



Weaving Shed Café

There are a set of double doors, which swing both ways to enter the café space. There are usually propped open during most of the year but can be closed during the coldest months of the year.

Visitors are invited to work their way around the counter space choosing their food and drinks. This is not a self-service space and a member of staff will make the items available at the till for collection. Trays can be made available, as well as bags and cup holders. If assistance is needed to take purchases over to any of the eating areas (inside or out) then a member of the café team would be happy to help.

There is an induction loop installed at the till point in the café, for users to tune into the T channel.

Tables in the café are spaced with at least 1.5m apart to aid visitor access circulation.

Several of the café tables have been risen using blocks to ensure that they are all have 750mm height underneath for wheelchair access. We also have a wheelchair accessible picnic table in the courtyard.

The floor surface in the café is a stone flag, which is mostly flat but slightly uneven in places.

Plastic straws and large handled cutlery are available upon request.



Second-Hand Bookshop

Next to the Café there is a secondhand bookshop. This is accessible through the main café doors, and is a flat, stepless route. The doors to the bookshop are always open. Some of the bookshelves are high, but if you require any assistance, then please ask in the café and one of the team would be happy to help.

Gibson Mill Exhibition Areas

The exhibition space in Gibson Mill can be accessed via a separate door in the courtyard (to the right of the café door). This entrance is flat and stepless.

The Mill is made up of 3 levels. The ground floor 'Turbine Room' can be accessed through an immediate door to your left, however, there is a step here and a better stepless route is available by walking straight ahead through the double doors (always propped open) and turning left. The Turbine room houses our renewable energy infrastructure, as well as a film about the conservation and natural flood management work we undertake on site. The films have audio, as well as subtitles. Due to the historic nature of the Mill, the floor in this Turbine Room, is uneven in places. The original stone flags remain in place, and so care is needed in this area.



The Middle Floor of the Mill houses an exhibition about the history of Hardcastle Crag. This floor can be accessed via a wide set of wooden stairs, or via a lift from the ground floor.

Due to the off grid nature of Hardcastle Crag, and its dependence on renewable energy, the lift in Gibson Mill is a manual lift with a pulley system. This lift can only be operated by National Trust staff, and so if you would like to visit the middle floor, and are not able to use the stairs, then please ask in the café and a member of the team will happily take you up and down (waiting for you until you are ready to return). Unfortunately the lift does not go to the top floor, but this is not a used exhibition space and is currently only used for events. If you would like to see the top floor, photographs can be made available by a member of our team.

There is an evac chair located on the middle floor and so, if in case of a fire, this can be used to evacuate, those unable to use the stairs. Staff are trained in the use of the evac chair every 6 months.



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