

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

## **Access Statement for Birling Gap**

**Last updated:** 23 August 2020

Birling Gap, East Dean, East Sussex, BN20 0AB

Telephone 01323 423197

Email: [birlinggap@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:birlinggap@nationaltrust.org.uk)

### **Introduction**

The award-winning beach at Birling Gap is MCS Recommended in the Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide. It has views of the famous Seven Sisters chalk cliffs and access to the South Downs.

The shingle beach is accessed down a staircase of 50 steps from the car park. Next to the car park, at the top of the cliff, there is a visitor centre with a shop and cafe and accessible toilet. There is an additional accessible toilet in the car park toilet block.

The car park has an uneven, rough tarmac and gravel surface. There are blue badge spaces outside the former hotel building. Rubber tiled walkways go from the car park to the shop entrance and the car park to the viewing platform at the top of the steps.

### **Pre-Arrival**

For full details and maps of how to get here please see the 'how to get here' page on our website. Alternatively, you can plan your journey by car or public transport using a journey planning website; simply enter your postcode and ours, which is BN20 0AB to get directions.

### **Car Parking and Arrival**

- The car park at Birling Gap is operated by the National Trust. There are 130 spaces including 8 spaces for blue badge holders and it is approximately 50m to the viewing platform and steps and 25m to the visitor centre entrance.

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- Parking is free for blue badge holders and National Trust members. Please contact us for current charges. Tickets will need to be purchased from car park machines or using the Pay By Phone app.
- The main car park is very well-worn tarmac and uneven. The overflow car park is chalk and grass.
- The car park is not lit at night
- An information board can be found outside the toilet block, shop and adjacent to the pay machine in the overflow car park.

## **Areas Adjacent to the Beach**

- The area around the car park on the cliff top is bordered by the visitor centre, shop and cafe on the western side and a terrace of 4 coastguard cottages on the eastern side.
- Beyond the buildings there are walks over the Seven Sisters and Lookout Hill. Both on chalk or grass up a fairly steep incline.
- A fairly level, out and back walk of about 1 mile across grass is available round the base of Lookout Hill (Belle Tout) towards Horseshoe Plantation.
- The bridleway from Birling Gap to Crowlink has easy open kissing gates and can be used by off-road motorised wheelchairs

## **Beach Access Point**



- There is an access point at the sea end of the car park to a single beach.
- The access from the car park to the steps is via a rubber tiled path which is 1220mm wide
- There are 50 steps in total down to the beach from the cliff top.
- The steps are solid wooden treads with gaps in between and have handrails on both sides
- There are 4 flights of steps with level landing areas between each one



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## On the Beach

- The beach is shingle with a small amount of sand at low tide and a chalk platform with many rockpools.
- Caution should be taken when near the cliffs, as there is a danger of rock falls.
- Tide times are listed at the top of the steps. The beach may be closed at short notice due to rough seas, incidents or on the advice of the emergency services.
- There are many small, secluded bays along the beach at the base of the cliff. Be aware the tide may cut you off from the main beach when in these areas.

## Countryside Toilets

- There are clearly signed toilets in the northern corner of the car park.
- Access is via a queuing system. Please access via the exit line if you are unable to queue.
- **There is a unisex accessible toilet, described below:**
- Entrance door 890mm wide with level entry
- 460mm transfer space to left of toilet, when facing the toilet.
- The toilet height is 530mm.
- There are vertical rails on both side of the basin
- There is a fold down rail and a vertical rail to the left of the toilet, when facing the toilet.
- The basin has a lever tap
- There is an automatic hand drier
- There are baby changing facilities.
- There is a local alarm which can be operated and reset with an emergency pull cord.
- Lighting is fluorescent with the addition of a small window.
- The floor is tiled.
- This toilet is open between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

## Food & Drink Outlets



- The Cafe at Birling Gap is situated within the former hotel building next to the car park.
- Access is via a queuing system near the beach steps.
- There is a one way system in place
- Face masks must be worn inside the cafe
- The cafe counter is 950mm high.
- There is currently no café seating area
- Outside picnic seating is available around the boundary of the site including tables with wheelchair spaces. There is a thin layer of gravel over the ground in this area.
- The cafe is counter service, take-away only. Assistance is available on request.
- A hearing loop is available at the till point
- Please discuss any dietary requirements with us and we will do our best to assist.
- Staff are happy to provide assistance if required.

## Shop

- The National Trust shop is located in the former hotel building next to the car park.
- It has level access, with a small (3cm high) trim running under the doorway.
- The main doors are power assisted, use the push button near the entrance to open.
- The counter is 970mm high
- A hearing loop is available at the till point



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- Staff and volunteers are happy to assist throughout the building if required.

## **Visitor Centre & Second-hand Bookshop**

- This area is currently closed to the public.

## **Additional Information**

- All dogs are welcome on a lead in the shop only
- Assistance dogs are welcome throughout.
- Dogs on a lead are allowed on the beach
- Dog walkers are encouraged to make use of the countryside, please keep your dog on a lead around wildlife and livestock.
- The nearest A&E unit is at Eastbourne District General Hospital 5 miles away.
- There is no mobile phone signal at Birling Gap. A BT pay phone is in the car park near the cottages.

## **Contact Information**

Address (Inc postcode):	National Trust Birling Gap East Dean East Sussex BN20 0AB
Telephone:	01323 423197
Minicom:	N/A
Email:	<a href="mailto:birlinggap@nationaltrust.org.uk">birlinggap@nationaltrust.org.uk</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birling-gap-and-the-seven-sisters/">http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birling-gap-and-the-seven-sisters/</a>
Grid Reference:	189:TV554961
Hours of Operation:	Beach & countryside: daylight hours, shop & cafe 10-4 with later opening in the Summer
Local Accessible Taxi:	720720 provide accessible taxis and minibuses



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01323 720720 Sussex Cars provide accessible private hire vehicles 01323 726726

Local Public Transport:

The nearest train station is Eastbourne (5 miles). Trains are operated by Southern. Contact the Southern assisted travel team on 0800 138 1016 for information and assistance. Buses are operated by the Brighton and Hove bus company. Service 12/12A/12X operates a daily service at 10 minutes intervals from Brighton or Eastbourne to the nearby village of East Dean (1 mile away). Service 13X operates on Sundays all year and weekdays during summer months and stops near the car park entrance. For up to date bus information visit [www.buses.co.uk](http://www.buses.co.uk). The bus stop is located on the grass verge with a drop of approximately 400mm to the road