



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**

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 visitor centre. Rubber tiled walkways go from the car park to the visitor centre entrance and the car park to the viewing platform at the top of the steps. The visitor centre has level access and contains examples of rockpools and interpretation materials for coastal and downland features.

The nearest train stations are Eastbourne (5 miles) and Seaford (6.6 miles). An accessible taxi service is available from Eastbourne Station. Buses run throughout the day (every 10-15 minutes) to the nearby village of East Dean (1.4 miles).

### **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.

The nearest railway station is Eastbourne, which is located in the town centre approximately 5 miles away. Taxis are available at the station. Both Eastbourne Taxis (01323 720720) and Sussex Cars (01323 726726) offer accessible taxis from Eastbourne station. Please contact taxi companies for details.

- For further information about local accessible services please contact Eastbourne Tourist Information Centre on 0871 6630031 (calls cost 10p per minute)

## **Car Parking and Arrival**

- The car park at Birling Gap is operated by the National Trust. There are 130 spaces including 4 spaces for blue badge holders and it is approximately 50m to the viewing platform and steps and 25m to the visitor centre entrance.
- Parking is free for blue badge holders and National Trust members. Parking is charged at £1 for 1 hour and £2 for up to 4 hours. Tickets will need to be purchased from car park machines.
- 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, detailed information is available from the visitor centre during opening hours.

## **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 building there are walks over the Seven Sisters and Belle Tout. Both on grass up a fairly steep incline.
- A level walk of about 1 mile across grass is available round the base of Belle Tout hill towards Horseshoe Plantation.

## **Beach Access Point**



- There is a single beach access point at the sea end of the car park.
- The access from the car park to the steps is via a tuber 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

## 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 in the vicinity of the cliffs, as there is danger of rock falls.
- Tide times are listed at the top of the steps. The beach may be closed for up to 2 hours before and after high tides.
- 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.

## Public Toilets

- There are clearly signed public toilets in the north-west corner of the car park.
- **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 24 hours a day although the site is not manned before 9am or after 5pm.
- 
- **In the cafe there is also an accessible toilet described below:**
- Entrance door 810mm wide with level entry
- 770mm transfer space to right 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 to the right of the toilet, when facing the toilet.
- The basin has an automatic tap
- There is an automatic hand drier
- There are baby changing facilities.
- There is an emergency pull cord alarm to alert a member of staff that assistance is needed. It has an internal reset button.
- Lighting is fluorescent with the addition of two sun vents.
- The floor is non-slip plastic.

## Food & Drink Outlets



- The Cafe at Birling Gap is situated within the visitor building next to the car park.
- Access is through the shop, which has power assisted doors operated by a push button nearby and a width of 1550mm.
- The door from the shop to the cafe is left open and has a width of 830mm.
- There is a ramp from the shop to the cafe with handrails on both sides
- The cafe counter is 950mm high.



- Café tables are a minimum of 62cm high up to 71cm high.
- Outside seating is available on the sea side of the building 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 service is available. Assistance is available on request.
- 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 visitor centre 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
- Staff and volunteers are happy to assist throughout the building if required.

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

- The visitor centre located next to the car park and is accessed through the shop
- The entrance is level, with a shallow trim under the entrance doors of up to 30mm in height
- It is on one level
- There are 4 chairs with arms and two benches without arms in the visitor centre
- The floor is a non-slip, textured concrete surface.
- There are a variety of text and image information panels as well as telephones with audio about the history and people's experiences of the area and a video showing how the cliff has eroded over time.
- Some of the interpretation items can be picked up and touched.
- The centre is well lit by overhead LED spotlights.
- The surfaces in the visitor centre are all hard, which can make it noisy.
- The second-hand book area is quieter with seating.



- The centre has direct access to the outdoors if needed

### **Additional Information**

- All dogs are welcome on a lead in the shop, visitor centre and selected areas of the cafe.
- Assistance dogs are welcome throughout.
- Dogs on a lead are allowed on the beach
- Dogs 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 located 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, visitor centre & cafe 10-4 with later opening in the Summer
Local Accessible Taxi:	720720 provide accessible taxis and minibuses 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 more 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