

Hatfield Forest Access Statement

Introduction

- Hatfield Forest is a woodland property at which visitors spend most of their time outdoors.
- Mobile phone reception is not good, especially away from the main visitor facilities.
- All well behaved dogs, including assistance dogs, are welcome. We ask all visitors to keep their dogs on a lead in the lake area and near to livestock, but away from these areas, you will encounter dogs off the lead.
- Throughout the Forest rides, paths and open areas can be very uneven and very often extremely muddy. The hard surfaces of the road, car park and lake area will always have on them a certain amount of mud, sticks and other debris transferred by visitors and animals that have been exploring further into the Forest.
- All gates on pedestrian routes in the Forest have at least 1000mm of space to pass through which usually self-close with a weight, spring or hydraulic oil ram.
- A manual wheelchair is available for loan. There is no charge, but to ensure availability, booking is essential. Please contact the Estate Office at least 24 hours before your visit. The number is included below.
- There are induction loop facilities at this property.

Arrival and Parking Facilities

- There are brown signs from the A120 and the B1256 Dunmow Road, Takeley.
- The main entrance is signposted. Please note there is also an entrance to the Estate Office, which is about 750m before the main visitor entrance (travelling south).
- The car park at the entrance is gravelled and has an uneven surface. There are marked access bays sufficient for four cars or two larger vehicles in this car park.
- Pedestrian access from this point is via a gate on hard surface, adjacent to our Entrance Kiosk, which is manned only when the vehicle gate is open. The kiosk is a wooden cabin with natural light and when the kiosk is open, there is a seat available for visitors.
- The pedestrian route to the main visitor facilities from the kiosk can be via the roadway, which is approximately 1.7km on hard surface with gravel, uneven in places, some moderate inclines and two gates. The main pedestrian route is via the roadway, then the 1500mm wide boardwalk, which can be slippery when wet and has a gate, then, adjacent to the lake, a footpath which is uneven in places and has a loose surface. This route is approximately 1km. Every day during gate opening hours, visitors can drive further into the property, following the roadway to two further parking areas. The roadway has multiple speed bumps and a 10 mph speed restriction.
- Elgins car park is a large grass area which is open to visitor vehicles when weather conditions are suitable and is situated about halfway along either pedestrian route. There are no marked bays or designated spaces in this car park. There is a metal gate on grass, between this car park and the board walk. There is a sensory board walk 2300mm wide, between this car park and the entrance road. It has a gate at the car park end.
- The Shell House car park is the closest to our main lake area visitor facilities. It has a hard tarmac surface and there are 6 designated access friendly spaces, each 3500mm wide. These can be identified by blue badge plaques attached to the car park perimeter fence. It is approximately 20m up a slight incline from these spaces to the gate into the

lake area and our Visitor Welcome Hub, then approximately 50m with a slight decline, to the main visitor facilities. There is no visitor vehicle access through this gate.

WCs

- The WCs are in a block adjacent to the cafe. The accessible WC is entered directly from the entrance lobby through an outward opening, 800mm door and includes a right hand transfer, accessible WC. The cubicle is 1450x1700mm, has 900mm diameter clear space to turn a wheelchair and has a low mirror, low sink with lever operated tap and low automatic hand drier.
- There are no adult changing facilities at this property.
- Baby changing facilities are available in an adjacent cubicle which is 750mm wide and the changing table and sink 900mm high.
- This WC block is well lit and the lights are fluorescent and automatic (on a sensor system).
- The non accessible WCs have an inward opening 650mm entrance door and the cubicles are 600mm wide with a 540mm door. Some cubicle doors open inward and some outward. There is hot and cold running water, automatic hand driers and ambient heating.
- The WC block has a tiled floor, plastered walls and an audible automatic extraction fan on a sensor system.

Visitor Welcome Hub and Lake Area

- There is a wooden cabin used as a Visitor Welcome Hub. It has windows all around and a veranda leading to double outward opening 670/680mm doors. There is a 200mm step up to the veranda and a ramp will be in place soon. It has tables and chairs that staff and visitors can use as an information facility. There is ample turning space for wheelchairs. It is open when volunteer and staff resources permit.
- There are a variety of surfaces on and off paths throughout this area, all of which can be uneven especially where different areas join.

The Shell House, Discovery Room and Classroom

- These are each, one part of the same building with separate access to each part.
- The **Shell House** entrance, to the front of the building, is off an area with a fine gravelled surface. There are 3 stone steps up to the entrance door and the room has a stone floor. There is a metal ramp available for wheelchair access to the Shell House on request. The 800mm door opens inwards. This room is usually only open to view when a volunteer is in attendance, so there will be help available to open the door if needed. The room contains artefacts and some furniture, with natural light and a low energy pendant light. There is ample space to turn a wheelchair. There are 2 chairs without arms available for visitor use.
- The **Discovery Room** entrance is to the rear of the building, off a hard surface path, through an outward opening 800mm door with just a small ridge between the external and internal floor surfaces. The room contains educational material that is designed to be touched and used. There is a bench seat, some floor cushions and a small chair, none have armrests. There is ample space to turn a wheel chair. The floor is vinyl and the walls are plastered, although mainly covered by educational material. There is

fluorescent lighting. This room is not usually manned. There may be floor cushions, and other material left on the floor by previous visitors.

- The external entrance to the **Classroom** is off the same hard surface path, via the Education Yard. The 750mm door is outward opening with a ridge between the external and internal floor surfaces. There is a vinyl floor, educational material around the edge of the room and on the walls and fluorescent lighting. There is ample space to turn a wheelchair. There are usually seats available (mostly small and no armrests). This room is usually only open to the public when planned activities are taking place. Gates to the yard, (adjacent to the Discovery Room entrance plus adjacent to the WC block) will be held open if this is the case
- On some occasions, it is possible to pass between these areas via a small internal lobby. However the internal doors and corridor width are only 700mm, so for wheelchair users, exiting and re-entering the building may be more practical. The maximum distance between doors on hard surface is approximately 20m.

Catering

- The Cafe at Hatfield Forest is an outdoor counter, under cover, with tiled flooring in the immediate area. There is fluorescent lighting. The counter is at 1040mm and the menus are wall mounted around the counter area. There is plenty of space for wheelchairs to turn, however this area can become quite congested when busy.
- There can be queuing at busy times.
- Food is ordered at the counter and then issued from the counter when ready.
- Seating is all outdoors mainly on picnic tables but a small amount is available in an open fronted shelter that has a 30mm step to enter. The seats are all bench style and attached to the tables or floor. During the winter season, the seating is all on hard surface. During the summer months, some of it will be on reinforced grass. There is a space for wheel chairs at some of the picnic tables and at the larger tables in the shelter. This seating is available to all visitors and not just those purchasing food at the Cafe.
- Cutlery etc is all disposable and bins are provided in this area for visitor use. There is no table service. The plastic bins are 1200mm high and have a lightweight pest-proof lid to lift

Commercial Sales

- The office is occasionally open to the public by appointment and is used for sale of Forest produce, permits and licences. Parking in the Estate Yard is on flat gravel. The double doors to the office 140° inwards and can be secured open. The floor is tiled and just a small ridge between external and internal floor surfaces. Staff will help those who are unable to venture far into the premises or have mobility issues

Contact details

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Map



Boardwalk, road and access track coloured tan above