

Bodiam Castle and Grounds Access Statement

Contact details

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Points to note

1. There is level access to the castle courtyard area only. The towers are reached by steep spiral staircases. The risers range from approximately 26 to 32 cms in height and up to a maximum of 56 steps to the top of the tower. The stairs are lit but the internal rooms are by natural daylight only.
2. There is very limited mobile phone reception across the whole site.
3. Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the property. Other dogs are welcome in the castle grounds only and must be kept on leads at all times. There is a tethering point and water bowl outside Castle Cottage, the building opposite the castle entrance. This is refilled regularly or can be refilled upon request.
4. There are several areas of water in the grounds, a moat, ponds and the River Rother which can be high and fast flowing in winter. The pathways are gravel throughout the property.
5. There are two manual wheelchairs available for loan, one at Ticket Office, the other at Castle Cottages. Visitors are also welcome to use their own electric buggies in the castle and grounds.
6. There are induction loops in Visitor Reception, Retail and Food & Beverage areas.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

1. There are brown signs directing visitors to Bodiam Castle however these are fairly limited and are better from the Sussex than Kent direction.
2. The main car park is gravelled. There are 7 designated disabled parking bays to the right of the main car park machine and opposite the Ticket Office.
3. The far east end of the main car park is grassed area and there is an overflow car park further east past the main car park, also grass surface and 250 meters from the Ticket Office.
4. A transfer vehicle which can take 4 people is available throughout the day during the main season and runs regularly between the car park and the castle entrance. This also stops at Castle Cottage. Unfortunately this is not accessible for people who cannot transfer from their wheelchair.

WCs

1. An accessible toilet is located next to the main visitor toilets at the entrance to the car park. This is 1.6 x 2.2 metres in size and has a right hand transfer including a seat for small children to keep them safe whilst the facility is being used.
2. There is a designated baby changing room next to the accessible toilet, baby changing facilities are also available in main visitor toilets. There is no adult changing facility on site.

3. The accessible toilet is lit by fluorescent lighting as are the main visitor toilets. The main visitor toilets have automatic hand driers.
4. There are ladies and gents portaloos available to the left of castle cottage opposite the castle. These are accessed via 3 metal stairs with a handrail. They do not have automatic hand driers and have fluorescent lighting.

Ticket Office

1. This building is located on the right as you enter the visitor car park, 20 meters beyond the tea room and adjoining the gift shop. It is made of general caravan materials with a wooden floor covering upon which there is a large mat to absorb both dirt and noise.
2. The building is accessed and exited either via metal ramps with gradients of 8% and 9% respectively or 3 steps all of which have timber handrails.
3. The two glass entry doors with vinyl markers are inward opening, each measuring 87cms in width with a 9cm bar in the middle. The doors are manual opening however there is a member of staff on hand to assist if this is required.
4. The reception desk is 72cms high with a lower counter 58 cms high for wheelchair users.
5. Full length glass doors and window provide natural light. LED lighting and halogen spot lights are also used.
6. There is a fixed seating area and moveable chairs available, one of which has armrests.
7. There is a fixed induction loop facility.
8. One manual wheelchair is available for visitors to use. Another is at Castle Cottage. These can be booked in advance however this isn't necessary.

Castle

1. The castle is reached by a gravel footpath with a slight incline. There are benches along the route. There is a level grass area between Castle Cottage and the castle entrance.
2. It is 440 metres from the ticket office to the head of the bridge and a further 70 metres to reach the castle gatehouse and entrance,
3. A mobility buggy is available to transfer visitors between the car park, visitor reception and castle during the main season.
4. Visitors enter the castle via a wooden footbridge across the castle moat followed by a short distance of level gravel pathway. There is a wooden handrail on both sides of the slatted footbridge.
5. Both of the large wooden castle entrance doors are permanently open during visitor hours for ease of access in to the castle courtyard. These are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and buggies. During the winter one door may be shut. With one door it is wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and buggies. The other door can be manually opened by a member of staff should this be required.
6. There is level access in the castle courtyard only, the towers being reached by steep spiral staircases.
7. A hipseat baby carrier is available upon request.
8. A tactile booklet of the floorplan, front elevation and details of the castle is available upon request.
9. Large print images of the floorplan, front elevation and details of the castle is available upon request.
10. Braille guides (SEB and VEB versions) to Bodiam Castle are available upon request.

11. Access to the undercroft is via a steep gravel slope with a 12% gradient, unfortunately there is no wheelchair access to this area during the winter months.
12. The story of Bodiam DVD giving an introduction to the castle is shown in two rooms. One is reached via a gravel slope with a 6% gradient, the other via a flat gravel path. Both contain subtitles. A transcript of the video is available upon request.
13. None of the castle rooms contain any soft furnishings, the walls being of sandstone and the flooring either wooden, stone or gravel with grass in the courtyard area.
14. The castle is lit by natural daylight with low energy light bulbs on the stairwells and in some of the tower rooms.
15. Benches are available in various locations in both the courtyard and DVD room. A few of these have arm and back rests with the majority being simple plank style benches.
16. A member of staff is always available inside the castle should a visitor require any further assistance.
17. There are ladies and gents portaloos available to the left of castle cottage opposite the castle. These are accessed via 3 metal stairs with a handrail. The only accessible toilets are located in the visitor car park.
18. Powered wheelchairs and powered mobility vehicles can be used in the castle courtyard area.
19. Benches are available in various locations in the castle grounds, with views to the castle.

Castle cottage

1. The castle cottage containing the Story of Bodiam exhibition, conservation suite and castle view cafe is located directly opposite the entrance to the castle and can be reached via a gravel pathway and a concrete paved area in to the cottage itself.
2. There is level access in to the building with two doors 90 cms wide. These are manually operated however during visitor opening hours they are held open. The entrance to the conservation suite is via 2 steps with a wooden handrail.
3. The building is brick construction with timber cladding and concrete pavers. In addition to natural daylight there are sodium floodlit bulbs.
4. There are two bench seats inside the exhibition space and eight picnic benches to the right of castle cottage. The patio area also has a water bowl and tethering point for dogs.
5. The catering outlet here serves hot and cold drinks, light snacks and ice creams. This seats 15 visitors and has wooden chairs and tables. The tables are approximately 76cms high. There are also 3 bar stools available along a higher wooden table.

Catering

1. The Wharf Tea Room is located next to the visitor toilets to the right of the entrance to the main visitor car park. It is distance of 20 mtrs from here to the ticket office.
2. There is level access via gravel and then a concrete slabs directly in front of the tea room itself.
3. The two entry swing doors are 67 cms in width opening in both directions. They are manual opening, but a member of the Catering team is on hand to assist if required.
4. There is some outdoor seating with tables both at the front and back of the tea room which can accommodate wheelchairs.
5. The counter varies in height from 86.5 cms to a maximum of 91.5 cms. Catering team members are also on hand to assist with service and carrying trays.
6. There is adequate circulation space for wheelchairs.

7. A fixed induction loop is available at the main counter.
8. The menus are handwritten on large chalkboards. Paper straws are available upon request.
9. The tea-room is of a wooden structure with wooden flooring. In addition to natural daylight, there is additional lighting via LED bulbs. The furniture is also of wood with rubber stoppers on the bottom of the chair legs. The tables are 75cms high.

Retail

1. The Castle Gift Shop is located next to the Wharf Tea Room in the main visitor car park and to the left of the ticket office.
2. There are two entrances to the shop. One has level access via a paved area and two non-power operated swing doors each 68 cms in width. The opposite door is accessed via 5 concrete steps with a handrail on both sides. This is 105 cms wide and opens inwards. A member of the retail team is on hand to assist if required.
3. The floor is wooden and in addition to natural daylight, there are internal spot lights and an external floodlight.
4. There is adequate circulation space for a wheelchair user between all display stands and there is an induction loop at the till point.
5. The counter is 900 mms high however retail staff are on hand to assist visitors with service here or lifting and carrying goods if required. Staff are also able to help with any pricing enquiries.
6. A second-hand bookshop is located in the patio area at the back of the Wharf Tea Room and opposite the accessible entrance into the gift shop. This has level access from the patio with double doors giving ample space for a wheelchair or buggy.

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