

Wicken Fen Nature Reserve Access Statement

The country's oldest nature reserve,

Contact details

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Points to note

- There is intermittent mobile phone reception across most of the site.
- Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the property. There is a water bowl outside the visitor centre and cafe building which is refilled regularly or can be filled on request.
- There are 2 manual wheelchairs available for loan from the visitor centre
- Wicken Fen was highly recommended in the 2010 Rough Guide to Accessible Britain
- There are lots of ditches and areas of open water.
- Braille and large print guides are available

Arrival & Parking Facilities

- There are brown signs from Stretham and Soham, as well as at the end of Lode Lane. The main car park is half way down this narrow one car lane.
- There are 2 designated disabled car parking spaces right in front of the visitor centre at the end of Lode Lane, on a firm surface. These spaces are the shortest distance from the Visitor Reception.
- There are 6 additional spaces in the main car park. The visitor centre and entrance is 250m away from the main car park along a surfaced road.
- Cycle racks are available outside the Visitor Centre.
- Areas of the main car park are occasionally roped off for coach parking.
- There is an overflow car park to the rear of the main car park. This is flat, partially surfaced, and partially grassed area.

WCs

- There are WCs next to the main car park, including a right-hand transfer accessible WC with space to turn a wheelchair through 1500mm diameter circle. There are no adult changing facilities but baby changing facilities are available in the main toilets (up a small step). All the WCs have automatic hand driers, stone floors and brick walls surfaces, with fluorescent lights.
- There are more WCs behind the cafe, including a right-hand transfer accessible WC with space to turn a wheelchair through 1500mm diameter circle.

Visitor Reception and Retail

- This wooden building is at the end of Lode Lane, across a 1200mm wide even wooden bridge and with a boardwalk surface to the door. The single entrance door is non-power operated, approx 1250mm wide, opens inwards to about 90 degrees; this door is always pinned back when we are open. There is a second set of non-assisted double doors into

the visitor centre 1500 wide, one door is often open to 90 degrees. Staff and volunteers can assist with opening the doors if required.

- The floor is tiled, with ceiling windows and large windows to provide natural light. Additional lighting is used in the winter.
- The reception desk is over 950mm high. There is space for a 1500mm diameter turning circle in front of the reception desk and space of >1000mm to browse retail. There are seats if required.
- There is an induction loop at the desk



The Fen and Bird Hides

- There is boardwalk access around the fen made of recycled plastic. It is an even surface, 1200mm wide with edges. Suitable for wheelchairs, motorised buggies and prams. There are passing places. It provides access around the fen in a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile loop taking in a range of habitats and passing the wind pump. There are occasional gentle, short slopes.
- The boardwalk is accessible from the visitor centre through 1250mm automatic doors.
- There are two bird hides accessible from the boardwalk. The Roger Clarke hide; accessible by a small ramp, door width 1000mm and wheelchair viewing points. The boardwalk hide; accessible by a ramp (length 21m, gradient 1:7, door 1000mm width) and has wheelchair viewing points.
- The Woodland Walk is accessible via an extension of the boardwalk behind the Roger Clarke hide, and the path around the Woodland Walk, including the 50 things area, is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- The Summer Nature Trail, and Adventurers' Trail are un-surfaced paths which are uneven and often muddy underfoot even in summer. The Nature Trail leads to two tower hides. The new tower hide has steps up to it and the older tower hide has steep steps to climb up. Plans to build a more accessible elevated viewing platform connected to the Boardwalk are likely to have been impacted by COVID-19, and subject to delay.
- The Adventurers' Trail leads to four bird hides, 3 with steps to the entrances, and Baker's Fen Hide which has ramped access.
- The initial section of the Adventurers Trail is more widely accessible - see Lodes Way section.



The Lodes Way

- There is a cycle path with a solid, even breedon-gravel surface suitable for wheelchairs and push chairs. This can be used to access Baker's Fen, a 2 mile out and back route. There are cattle grids / gates to negotiate where the grazing animals cross between areas.
- To cross to Burwell Fen however there is a concrete footbridge with no ramp, cycles must be carried over.
- If you can cross Burwell Lode Bridge the cycle route is total of 8 miles long to Anglesey Abbey, a combination of surfaced cycle path and on road sections, with two more bridges, both of which can be ridden straight over.
- Alternatively, there is a small car park next to Reach Lode Bridge from which access to the Lodes Way over Burwell Fen is possible.



Fen Cottage

- The entrance to the Cottage is opposite the Visitor Centre. There is a gate (1050mm usually open) into the garden along an uneven brick path (850mm).

- There is one step up into the cottage through a door (700mm wide).
- Limited assisted access is possible by arrangement
- The doors and ceilings are low; spaces are small, and floors uneven.
- There are uneven boardwalks and a muddy surface to the Fenman's Workshop area.



Food and Beverage - the Docky Hut Cafe

- The cafe has a boardwalk path to the entrance and has level access apart from a small raised lip across the doorway.
- The doorway is 800mm wide. This is usually open to at least 90 degrees and is non-power assisted. The door opens outwards. Team members can assist if required.
- The rear door of the café is wider than the front door, is generally open in summer, and can be opened if required at other times.
- There is outdoor seating with tables which can accommodate wheelchair users.
- The counter is over 850mm high. Catering team members are available to assist with service and carrying trays.
- The width between the tables is approximately 1000mm.
- There is an induction loop at the counter.
- Members of visitor groups can sit at tables if queuing is difficult and one member of the group can ask catering staff for assistance.
- Menus are available in standard print
- The floor and wall surfaces are stone and brick and the lighting is LED.
- If the café is full food can be taken to the visitor centre

Boat

- Boat trips run from Easter to October 4 times at weekend and holidays and 2 times on weekdays.
- The first trip of the day runs from our nearby jetty made of solid level boardwalk.. This is accessible from the visitor centre along the boardwalk, about 250m away.
- The boat is level with the jetty, then there are two steps down into it. Our Boat Rangers are happy to assist passengers with boarding and disembarking.

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- The trips then return and depart from our second jetty (to minimise the impact of boat travel on the lode wildlife). This is a floating jetty which is less stable and further away, it is 5 minute walk along the boardwalk from the visitor centre.
- At request trips can depart and return to the closer, fixed jetty.

Cycle Hire

- We have a range of cycles available to hire, male, female and children, as well as a tag-along, trailers, children's seats and disability tricycles. Please enquire if you have specific needs.
- Trailers and disability cycles are challenging to carry over Burwell Lode bridge – see Lodes Way.

