



Access Statement for Wildwood Trust

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.

Introduction

Wildwood Trust is Kent's best British wildlife park where visitors can see and learn about British wildlife past and present, all housed in near-natural enclosures set in 40 acres of beautiful ancient woodland. Wildwood is situated on the main road between Canterbury and Herne Bay, Kent. Access to the attraction is through a small industrial/retail complex.

We open at 10 am daily. Our closing time varies with last admission at 3 pm, 4 pm or 5 pm (depending on season), closing an hour later than last admission. We are open every day except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day. You should allow a couple of hours to go around the park, taking in the animal talks which are held throughout the day during weekends and school holidays.

Gold and Silver memberships are available for special needs groups. We also have a 'carer goes free' policy for each visitor requiring a carer. No dogs, including guide dogs, are allowed in the park owing to the nature of our business. If you are visually impaired and use a guide dog please contact the Wildwood office prior to your visit so we can make alternate arrangements. Unfortunately your dog will not be allowed in the park, however we can provide a staff member or volunteer to escort you during your visit. Please make your own arrangements for your dog while visiting the park. They should not be left in a vehicle in the car park.

Wildwood received a 'very good' quality experience rating and fully merits the award of VisitEngland's accreditation of 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction'.

Please read through the following information for full details. If you have any queries or require any assistance please call 01227 712111 or email info@wildwoodtrust.org. We look forward to welcoming you.

Facilities at Wildwood include:

Woodland - enjoy walking through our ancient semi-natural woodland.

Mobility scooters - are available to Wildwood customers with walking difficulties and a donation towards the maintenance is appreciated. If you wish to borrow a scooter please contact the Wildwood Shop prior to your visit on 01227 712111 to arrange. Please note that there is a 21 stone (133 kg) weight restriction on the scooters. You will be required to sign the scooter in and out. 24 hours' notice is required and we have limited availability so book early to avoid disappointment. A wheelchair is also available to borrow free of charge and also needs to be booked in advance following the same process as above.

Animal enclosures - the park has large low-level viewing windows and ramps at enclosures where necessary, making it suitable for wheelchair users.

Accessible toilet facilities - available just through the main entrance to the park. There are also basic adult change facilities available on request. Please contact us in advance by phoning us on 01227 712111 if you would like to have the change facilities readily available during your visit.

Play area - separate play areas for under 5's and bigger children.

Restaurant / cafe and shop - selling a range of food and souvenirs. Single story buildings with step free access, accessible pathways or ramps.

Parking - space for coaches and extensive car parking, including a large Blue Badge parking area.

Pre-Arrival

- For full details and maps of how to reach us please see the 'Visitor Information', 'How to get here' section of our website. Alternatively you can plan your journey by car or public transport using www.transportdirect.info; simply enter your postcode and ours, which is CT6 7LQ, to get directions.
- The nearest railway stations are Herne Bay (10 minutes' drive to the north) and Sturry (2.1 miles to the south). If you require an accessible taxi you can book this in advance. There are many options available but one is Kent Wheelchair Taxi Service on 07710 378 396.

- The nearest bus stop is Herne Common, Wildwood. Ask the driver for the Wildwood stop. The entrance is about a one minute walk. There are no seats or shelter at this stop.
- Kent International airport is 12.8 miles away.

Satellite Navigation Systems

- Please note that some Satellite Navigation systems can misdirect travelers to Wildwood. If you are using Sat Nav to visit the park please bear in mind that we are situated on the A291 between Canterbury and Herne Bay. Our postcode is CT6 7LQ.

Car Parking and Arrival

- The spacious gravel car park is well laid out with lanes and spaces clearly marked, herringbone-style, with white painted wooden poles. 14 clearly marked Blue Badge parking spaces are between 50-100 metres from the main entrance. It may be possible to park directly outside the entrance gates at certain times, by prior arrangement, if deemed necessary.
- There are no ticket/payment machines; on-site parking is free of charge.
- The on-site car park surface is gravel on compacted mud.
- The path to the attraction entrance is clearly marked with good signage.
- Access through the entrance and the shop is suitable for wheelchairs.
- There is no lighting in the car park however our opening hours adjust with the seasons and therefore with daylight hours accordingly.

Main Entrance, Reception and Ticketing Area

- The main entrance and ticket area is a single story building with a concrete ramp up to the door.
- The door is an inward opening, light door with a clear door opening width of 950mm.
- There are some picnic tables just outside the entrance where any queue forms.
- The floor surface is lino through admissions and carpeted through the shop. There is step free, level access throughout.

- The area is evenly and well lit with overhead lighting from fluorescent lights.
- There is a lowered section of the welcome/ticketing desk with a counter height of 910mm.
- The pay booths have glass screens that are fully opened to aid lip reading and visitors with a visual impairment.
- Mobility scooters are available. We require 24 hours' notice and have limited availability so book early by contacting the Wildwood Shop on 01227 712111. There is a weight restriction of 21 stone (133 kg) on the scooters. A donation towards maintenance is appreciated. You will be required to sign the scooter in and out.
- A small number of wheelchairs are also available to borrow free of charge. Please follow the above procedure to book a wheelchair.
- A pen and pad of paper are available on request to aid communication.
- There is a complimentary ticket policy for carers.
- Signage showing the opening hours and ticket price information are clearly visible.

Attraction (displays, exhibits, rides etc.)

- Animal talks are spread throughout the day, delivered by our enthusiastic and knowledgeable educators during peak times (weekends and school holidays).
- Also during these times roaming educators can be found, usually with an article such as antlers for visitors to touch.
- Interpretation boards with illustrations feature throughout the park.
- The majority of the attractions are outdoors, with only a few providing a sheltered building. The lighting in these buildings is often dim to create the animals' preferred environment. The beaver building is dark with 1 metre wide entry/exit doors. The nocturnal house is dimly lit with red light, has a 2 metre wide corridor running throughout with soft plastic drapes at the entrance and exit. The rat barn has a low level of natural light and has an uneven, cracked, concrete floor, with 1 metre wide entry/exit doors.
- The woodland paths are natural and therefore uneven, often with exposed tree roots and/or muddy.
- Picnic benches are scattered throughout the park which can provide occasional rest stops.

Visitor Toilets

- Visitor toilets are in a separate, single story building (through the main entrance and to the left), with level access or small ramps (there are no steps).
- There is an accessible toilet in the ladies toilet block and also a unisex accessible toilet to the left of this building. These toilets are not locked during park opening hours.
- There are also basic adult change facilities available on request. Please contact us in advance by phoning us on 01227 712111 if you would like to have the change facilities readily available during your visit.
- There is a light, easy open door on both accessible toilets with a minimum clear door width of 730mm.
- There is ample transfer space to the right of the toilets, when facing the toilet.
- The toilet height is 430mm in the ladies accessible toilet and 400mm in the unisex accessible toilet.
- There are vertical rails to the right of the toilets.
- There is a horizontal (diagonal) rail on the side wall adjacent to both toilets.
- The toilets are well lit with a fluorescent light with a low level pull cord switch.
- The flooring is non-slip laminate.
- There are lever taps on the sinks.
- In the case of an emergency, such as a fire, a megaphone with siren will be used to notify and instruct visitors. Wildwood staff will evacuate the premises, including the facilities, ensuring all visitors are located and escorted to an assembly point.

Catering

- The cafe is situated approximately 75 metres from the main entrance.
- It is a single story building and has step free access from the entrance. It is level throughout with a small ramp onto the deck and into the cafe.
- The double entrance doors to the cafe open outwards and are 175 cm wide when both opened.

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- Tables in the cafe are spaced apart (and not fixed) with a clear height from the floor of 66 cm, with wooden chairs without arms. Space is more restricted during school holidays and weekends.
- Lighting in all areas is natural daylight with overhead lighting also used.
- The flooring in the cafe is wood-look laminate.
- There is no background music playing.
- We do our best to cater for any dietary requirements.
- Cafe food is ordered at the counter and then delivered to your table. The counter height is 91 cm.
- Staff are happy to assist in any way on request.
- All staff can assist by running through menus, specials and any blackboard signs.
- The nearest visitor toilet with an accessible WC is located near the main entrance approximately 100 metres from the cafe.

Shop

- The shop stocks a range of wildlife themed souvenirs and forms part of the main entrance building (to the right of the admissions entrance when entering the park).
- It is a single story building and has step free access into the building (concrete ramp) and is level throughout.
- The door into the shop from the outside is an outward opening, manual but light door; they are usually propped open.
- The clear door opening width is 90 cm.
- The counter is low, being 90 cm from floor to counter.
- There is sufficient room within the shop for a wheelchair to manoeuvre, however space is more restricted during peak times such as weekends and school holidays.
- Staff can offer assistance if required.
- There are some tall display racks, but also many low tables accessible from a seated position.
- There is no background music playing, however the shop can be very noisy during peak times (with customers and staff interacting).

Grounds and Gardens

- The woodland trail, which is the main route around the park, is a mostly wide, unobstructed path. Small gravel stones sit on compacted mud to form the substrate. The path narrows to 2m in width in some places.
- Some of the woodland trail consists of wooden plank walkways/bridges covered with wire mesh. There are no steps and ramps are used in the few areas where there is a change in level.
- Paths are covered in natural debris e.g. pine cones, leaves, twigs and stones. They are naturally undulating and have areas of exposed tree roots, pot holes, puddles and mud.
- There are low viewing windows and post fencing used, enabling good viewing from a seated position.
- Picnic tables and benches are placed at regular intervals around the park.
- There is a walk-through aviary which consists of a set of double gates at each end. These gates are light weight with low, easy grasp handles. There is ample room to manoeuvre between the double entry gates.
- Helpful 'shortcut to exit' signs occur around the park, showing the fastest route out if you need to leave suddenly or in the case of an emergency.
- Every effort has been made to make all areas accessible; however the walk-through enclosure to the right after the otters is not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs owing to the steps on the bridge. Signage on the gates will indicate this prior to entering the enclosure. Not entering this enclosure does not preclude you from viewing the animals and will not prevent you from following the usual route around the park.

Additional Information

- We are used to adapting our activities to appeal to special needs groups, whether these needs arise from behavioural or learning difficulties, sensory, mental or physical disabilities. We offer Gold and Silver memberships for these special needs groups.
- Evacuation maps are scattered throughout the park, however our emergency procedures include staff escorting visitors to these evacuation points. Assistance will be provided where required.

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- We have many bee hives on site (in one area of the park). This area is clearly marked advising people not to enter if they are allergic to bee stings or have a heart condition.
- Unfortunately, given that we are a wildlife park, assistance dogs are not permitted in the park. However, we can offer an assisted visit by providing a staff member/volunteer to escort you around the park instead of your dog, who unfortunately will not be able to enter the park. Please contact us in advance to give us time to arrange a staff member/volunteer to escort you. Please make your own arrangements for your dog while visiting the park. They should not be left in a vehicle in the car park.

Future Plans

- We are regularly reviewing and updating our interpretation boards around the park. The information panels are gradually being replaced with large print, high colour contrast text and images.
- We are looking into upgrading our adult changing facilities.
- We are planning a review of our website which will include making it more accessible; your comments are welcomed to assist us with this project.

Contact Information

Address (Inc postcode): Wildwood Trust , Herne Common,
Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 7LQ

Telephone: 01227 712 111

Email: info@wildwoodtrust.org

Website: www.wildwoodtrust.org

Hours Of Operation: Open daily (363 days per year) including public/bank holidays (except Christmas Day and Boxing day). Open 10 am, closes 4-6pm depending on season (4 pm in winter, 6 pm in Summer). Last admission 1 hour before closing.

Local Equipment Hire: Herne Bay Mobility, www.hernebaymobility.co.uk

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(located on the Wealdon Forest Park complex, which is where Wildwood is located). Scooters can be borrowed directly from the Wildwood shop, please book in advance by calling 01227 712 111.

Local Accessible Taxi: Kent Wheelchair Taxi Service - covering Sevenaoks, Tonbridge, Tonbridge Wells and surrounding villages - phone: 07710 378 396

Local Public Transport: Wildwood is on the bus route between Canterbury and Herne Bay. You will need either the number 4 or the number 6 bus depending on the direction of travel. Ask the bus driver for the Wildwood stop. If you have a bus pass, ask your driver for a travel ticket as proof of travel. We want everyone to reduce their environmental impact and travel by bus. Therefore we offer 50% off our standard tickets to those who come to Wildwood by Bus or Train. A valid ticket for the day of travel will be required.