

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Spotlighting Inclusivity in Gloucestershire



Improvements

Access to the Visitor Centre at Batsford has been specially designed to be inclusive, the entrance, garden, shops, Terrace Café and accessible toilets are all located on one level. The Arboretum boasts two gender-neutral, baby-changing equipped disabled toilets. Details such as picnic benches on the café balcony have been thoughtfully designed with overhangs making space for wheelchair users at the table. The Arboretum has an Access Map, available at reception or from the website which details important accessibility information such as steps and steeper gradients to reassure people when planning a visit.

Challenges

To overcome the accessibility challenges of being nestled on a hill in 2011, the Arboretum visitor centre and surrounding planting areas underwent a transformative renovation, focused on accessibility. Part of the brief for the renovation was to ensure that all paths or walkways were designed to 1:20 maximum gradient (20 units of horizontal length by 1 unit of vertical length). The Arboretum's hilltop location presented limited opportunity for parking near the entrance building so a purpose-built car park has been introduced above the buildings, with a ramp connecting the car park to the entrance. There is also a drop-off and pick-up area near the entrance.



Transport

A 5-minute Bus service brings visitors from the nearest town, Moreton, and drops passengers at the end of the Arboretum drive. But the mile-long driveway from the road to the entrance can prove a challenge. The construction of a smooth path down the long driveway is being explored.

Mobilising

To enable all visitors to access most of the Arboretum grounds, all-terrain Trampler vehicles have been introduced to help visitors with limited mobility traverse the park's various paths. These vehicles, rented from Countryside Mobility, are available, with a small fee covering insurance. This initiative has brought real joy to visitors who can now explore areas that were previously inaccessible. In the rare event of a breakdown, users can contact staff via mobile phone, (the park has good mobile coverage) for assistance and transport back to the visitor centre.

Brilliant attraction with fabulous wheelchair access.

“Batsford Arboretum is one of the most satisfying places it is possible to visit in a wheelchair. Until recently it was satisfying but quite hard work with reasonable access limited to most of the many hard surfaced paths, but since the availability of electric 'Tramper' wheelchairs for cheap hire, was provided, practically the whole, constantly changing and spectacular, arboretum is now easily accessible, including 99% of the rough and previously inaccessible tracks which the Tramper copes with admirably. From designated disabled parking bays close to the main entrance on your arrival, right through to the fully accessible restaurant and toilets during or after your visit, the whole day is a very pleasurable and horizon expanding experience. Thoroughly recommended, and I will very soon be going back for my tenth visit.”