



British Wildlife Centre - Access Statement

Introduction

The British Wildlife Centre (BWC) is the best place in the south east to see and learn all about Britain's own wonderful wildlife. Our philosophy is *Conservation through Education* and our aim is to educate visitors about native wildlife, in the hope that they too will want to help to protect and conserve it for future generations to enjoy.

- Over forty wild native species in large natural enclosures, including many species rarely seen in the wild.
- Most animals can be seen whatever the weather and much of the Centre is outdoors.
- The undercover Barn and Hedgerow house the smaller mammals.
- The Coffee Shop seats 90, plus two picnic areas.
- Wildlife-themed Gift Shop.
- Lecture Theatre, with cushioned benches.
- Half-hourly Keeper Talks.
- 60-acre Wetlands Nature Reserve with boardwalk for viewing.
- Deer park.
- Pip's Corner: young children's activity area (high season only)
- All main buildings are on the ground floor with step free access.

Pre-arrival information

- A clearly worded leaflet is available describing the main facilities, attractions, directions, opening times and prices. The leaflet includes our contact number and website address and is widely distributed to tourist venues, hotels, guest houses, caravan parks, libraries, supermarkets and Tourist Information Centres across the south-east.
- Full details about the BWC can be found on our website www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk including events and facilities available when we are closed to the public (e.g. school visits, photography days).
- We open every weekend of the year (excluding 24, 25 & 26 December) and daily during school holidays (these tie in with state school holidays in the south east). Opening times are 10am to 5pm from February to October, and 10am to 4pm November to January, with last admissions 1 hour before closing. Visitors should allow at least 3 hours for a visit.

Location & travel

- The BWC is easily accessible by car. We are located on the A22 at Newchapel, near Lingfield, Surrey, just 10 minutes south of the M25 junction 6 (Godstone), and 10 minutes north of East Grinstead.
- There are large brown roadside signs 200m/100m from the entrance in both directions.
- For satellite navigation systems our post code is RH7 6LF.
- Unfortunately, there are no scheduled bus services past our door. The nearest train station is Lingfield on the London Victoria to East Grinstead line. From there you'll need a taxi, which will cost about £7. Note: there is no taxi rank at Lingfield so it is advisable to pre-book a taxi (numbers for local firms can be found on our website on the 'Find us' page). There is a taxi rank at East Grinstead station, two stops along from Lingfield.

Arrival & car parking facilities

- Current admission charges, opening dates and times are displayed at the entrance.
- We have a large main car park and overflow car park with a total of spaces for approximately 200 cars on all-weather tarmac and hardstanding. This includes 3 designated disabled spaces close to the Visitor Centre.
- Coaches should use the overflow car park at all times.
- Car parking is free
- The Centre is a no smoking visitor attraction, both inside and outside. Smoking is only permitted in the car park.

Accessibility for wheelchair users

- **Car Park:** The main car park includes 3 designated disabled bays located 30m (32 yards) from the Visitor Centre entrance. The pathway from these bays to the Visitor Centre is on tarmac.
- **Visitor Centre Access:** The Visitor Centre (which houses the admission desk, coffee shop and gift shop) is on the ground floor. The entrance is by double doors, with a ramped threshold and no steps.
- **Essential Carer Concession:** A carer assisting a wheelchair user is admitted free of charge. Other essential carers are admitted free on production of a letter or card proving registered carer status.
- **Wheelchair Use:** Visitors are welcome to bring their own wheelchairs and electric buggies for use at the Centre. We have one manual wheelchair which you may borrow. Use of the wheelchair is free of charge, but please call in advance to ensure it is available. Booking is on a first come, first served basis and cannot be guaranteed.
- **Internal Areas:** All internal areas (Visitor Centre, The Barn, The Hedgerow and Lecture Theatre) are on ground level with step free access.

- **External Areas:** Outdoor areas of the Centre are step free. Paths are smooth tarmac plus two wooden boardwalks. The areas immediately surrounding the animal enclosures are gravel, but good views of the animals are afforded from the tarmac path. The two picnic areas are on grass. The picnic area in front of the Visitor Centre has a steep access gravel path and is inaccessible by wheelchair.
- **Toilet:** There is a unisex accessible toilet located outside the Coffee Shop with a ramped access. This has a horizontal handrail to the left of the toilet and a vertical handrail to the right. Vertical handrails are provided to the right of the basin and the hand towel dispenser. This toilet includes a baby changing unit.

Visitor Centre & Admission

- The admission desk, coffee shop and gift shop are all housed in the Visitor Centre.
- Current prices are displayed at the admission desk;
 - Senior Citizens (age 65+) are charged a concessionary fee.
 - Children aged under 3 are free of charge.
 - Essential carers of disabled visitors are admitted free.
 - A 10% discount is available for groups of 15 or more.
- Entrance stickers are issued to every visitor and must be displayed at all times during the visit. If you need to return to your car, the sticker will allow you access back into the Centre.

Coffee Shop, Gift Shop & Toilets

- The Coffee Shop has seating for 90 and is cafeteria style. Food is ordered at the counter.
- The Coffee Shop serves hot and cold drinks, a selection of hot food, sandwiches, wraps, cakes, crisps, ice creams and confectionery.
- High chairs are available.
- Our gift shop offers a range of wildlife related items to suit all budgets, including toys, stationery, greetings cards, books, jewellery, ornaments, gifts and art/photographic prints. All items are clearly priced.
- There are two toilet areas; one immediately outside the Coffee Shop and one just beyond this area.
- Baby changing facilities are located within the disabled toilet, just outside the Coffee Shop.
- Hand-washing facilities are in all toilets and to the front of the toilets outside the Coffee Shop.

Outside: Animal Enclosures, Keeper Talks, Picnic Areas & Pip's Corner

- The British Wildlife Centre is a wild animal collection, allowing the visitor to get close-up to a variety of native species, many of them rarely seen in the wild. We are not a petting zoo and, for visitor and animal safety, feeding and touching the animals is not permitted.
- To get the best from your visit it is advisable to attend our Keeper Talks which take place every hour through the day at various animal enclosures. The talks, which last between 10 and 15 minutes, give visitors the best chance of seeing the animals up close and learning more about them. A visitor map which includes a list of Keeper Talk times is handed to visitors at the admission desk.
- Numerous benches are provided along the pathways between the animal enclosures, where we encourage visitors to sit and observe the scene.
- There are two picnic areas. Our main outdoor picnic area is just outside the Visitor Centre, where you can relax under the shade of low trees. There is also a picnic area next to 'Pip's Corner', a children's activity area. You are welcome to bring your own picnic lunch and in wet weather you may consume it in the Coffee Shop.
- Pip's Corner (open during high season only), next to our Deer Park, is an activity area for young children with wildlife related activities such as climbing frames, stepping stones, heron's nest building, jumping pit, slides and more. All activities are suitable for children age 3 to 6. Children must always be supervised by a responsible adult. The ground surfaces are grass and bark chippings.

Additional Information

- There is no smoking within any indoor or outdoor areas of the main Centre. Smoking is only permitted in the car park.
- We regret that, due to the type of species we have on display, we cannot allow any dogs or other pets into the Centre.
- First Aid facilities are located at the Admissions Desk in the Main Entrance or by contacting any member of staff.

Contact Information

- Address: British Wildlife Centre, Eastbourne Road (A22), Newchapel, LINGFIELD, Surrey RH7 6LF
- Telephone: 01342 834658
- Fax: 01343 834669
- Email: info@britishwildlifecentre.co.uk
- Website: www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve the facilities and services we offer. If you have any comments please do telephone or email us.