

Access Statement for Rufford Abbey Country Park

Welcome!

Rufford Abbey Country Park is a 150 acre public park, open every day except Christmas day. It's owned and managed by Nottinghamshire County Council. Rufford was once part of Sherwood Forest and the north Nottinghamshire "Dukeries."

The Abbey ruins are all that remain of what was once a medieval monastery and later country house estate owned by the aristocratic Savile family.

Facilities for modern visitors include shops, cafe, restaurant and teashop, a lake, the remains of a 12th century Cistercian monastery, and a small exhibition of the life of the medieval monks.

Apart from the Abbey ruins and some areas of rough ground out in the woodland, the site is flat and easy to get around. All public buildings can be accessed by wheelchair / mobility scooter. Mobility scooters are available for hire at the Visitor Information Office and there are wheelchairs for free loan, including two light self propel chairs for teens.

Much of the site is outdoors. Many visitors come to enjoy the woodland and lakeside paths, to see the birds on the lake, or to explore the historic landscape features in the park.

Allow approximately 2-3 hours for your visit. Admission is free but a parking charge of £3 applies to all cars, including Blue Badge holders.

For help and advice please ring our Tourist Information Office on 01623 821338 / 824545. Email sherwoodtic@nsdc.info or our Visitor Services Manager, Linda Hardy on 01623 821328, linda.hardy@nottsc.gov.uk

Pre-Arrival

A map showing the most accessible routes around the park can be downloaded from the Nottinghamshire County Council website
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/ruffordcp

Our website page has details of opening hours for the various park facilities, and the dates when car park charges apply. The County Council's website supports a text to talk facility.

A Tourist Information Centre on site is run by Newark & Sherwood District Council. Staff can give information about Rufford Abbey, and other local tourist attractions. They have tourism brochures many other areas too. Open daily 10.30am to 4.30pm, tel. 01623 821338 / 824545. Email sherwoodtic@nsdc.info

We have a printed leaflet about the country park. It can be mailed to you on request. If you need information in large print, this can be sent to you. Please email us: sherwoodtic@nsdc.info or linda.hardy@nottsc.gov.uk

Arrival by Bus

The park can be accessed by bus. The Sherwood Arrow service run by Stagecoach travels between Nottingham and Worksop, calling at Rufford Abbey. If it's your first visit to Rufford, we recommend asking the driver to alert you where to alight.

The bus stop is close to the historic Western Gates and a small wooden shelter provides protection in bad weather.

Please note that there is a distance of some 500 yards between the bus stop and the main visitor facilities.

Pedestrian access into park is via a gravel path through woodland. Some visitors may prefer to go along the grass verge in front of the ornate "Western Gates" to access the park via the tarmac surface of the main drive.

Arrival by Car

This is a "park of two halves." There is a main entrance and a secondary one.

Main visitor facilities - including car parking, Tourist Information Office, cafe and shops - are located at the **Abbey**. The main visitor entrance off the A614 leads into this southern end of the park. We recommend this as the most convenient for first time visitors and those interested in the medieval abbey remains.

The northern entrance is at **Rufford Mill**, accessed off Rufford Lane (follow signs towards Rufford Mills Golf Course, turn right before the ford.) This entrance is handiest for those seeking lakeside views, or if attending a wedding or conference at the Talbot Suite.

Car Parks

There are car parks at both Rufford Abbey and Rufford Mill entrance, including a number of blue badge spaces. The main Abbey car park has 19 designated spaces for disabled drivers. These are available on a first come first served basis.

Please be aware that because Rufford includes a large area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the park is restricted in how much space it can use for car parking. At peak times overflow car parking on a grassy meadow is utilized to accommodate high visitor numbers.

Bank Holidays are usually busy times with high demand for car parking.

Visitors who need to avoid large numbers of people, noise and busy car park situations (for example, parents of some children with autism) may prefer to plan their trip outside peak times to ensure a more relaxing visit. If visiting on popular days, coming early (before 11am) or a little later than the peak arrival time (e.g. 4pm) may help.

Groups are welcome, and for minibuses over 12 seats or coaches, there is no parking charge.

There are parking spaces for coaches. In peak season it is usually best to book a coach parking space in advance. Tel. 01623 821338.

Car Park Fees

A car parking fee of £3 (including blue badge holders) applies daily through the main season – Easter to end October. Outside this main season it applies at weekends, school holidays and Bank Holidays only. See www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/ruffordcp for a calendar of exactly when car park charges apply.

The fee is manually collected by a car park attendant at entry.

Main Park Entrance, Reception and Ticketing Area

The main visitor information / reception point is the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) office, at the Abbey. It is located on the left as visitors enter the Stables Courtyard from the Abbey car park.

This office has a range of local tourism leaflets, park information and maps. Mobility scooters and wheelchairs including teen wheelchairs can be hired and booked here.

There is a small ramp into the TIC from the courtyard. The Stables courtyard is a historic range of buildings and retains its original cobbles.

There is a portable hearing loop available on the TIC counter. Pen and paper also available.

One of our park wardens – Stephanie Toole - can sign. We also have a staff member on another site who is qualified in British Sign language. If you are planning a visit and know you will need the help of a signer, please let us know so we can try to have assistance there for you.

The TIC is fairly small but accessible for one wheelchair user. The counter is low enough for wheelchair users.

Lighting is fairly even.

Attractions (displays, exhibits etc.)

The Abbey ruins are only partially accessible due to the limitations of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Entry into the vaulted stone Undercroft (monastic Parlour and exhibition on the life of the medieval monks) is at the rear of the building. A shallow wooden ramp gives wheelchair access to the Undercroft.

Stone floors inside the Undercroft are uneven and there are some shallow ledges which are marked by white nosings.

Lighting in this area has to be kept dim, because it is a registered bat roost.

The Stables Courtyard and Coach House near the Abbey contain shops and catering outlets, which are all ground floor and accessible.

Public Toilets

In an archway in the Stables Courtyard (Abbey end of park) there is an accessible toilet, locked with a RADAR key to keep it clean.

RADAR key can be borrowed from nearby shop, cafe and Tourist Information Office.

Changing Places style toilet also available. This has a hoist, adjustable height changing bed, and adjustable height hand basin. It has a Clos O Mat loo with clean / flush facility, and a privacy screen on wheels. Please bring your own sling for hoist.

At the Rufford Mill end of the park there is one accessible toilet (as well as regular toilets) on the ground floor near the Outdoor Living Shop.

There are toilets at the Savile Restaurant also, one of which is accessible, but it is small in size. Wheelchair users may prefer to use the accessible loo in the Stables Courtyard.

Catering

There are three different public catering outlets - all located in ground floor premises, accessible to wheelchair users. Food can be brought to tables if customers have difficulty standing at the counter / carrying a tray. Just ask a staff member.

The Coach House Cafe - in one of the large courtyards near the Abbey ruins and Stables Block. This serves hot and cold snacks and beverages. There is outdoor and indoor seating. Lit by a mixture of natural light and fluorescent lighting.

The Mill Tea Shop - in the courtyard at the north end of the park near the Lake. A small sized outlet with a few tables inside, more outside, and takeaway service. Drinks, ice creams and cold snacks sold. Mostly natural lighting.

The Savile Restaurant - adjoining the medieval Abbey ruins, in the old Abbey kitchen. Carvery style service and seating at wooden tables in the old Abbey kitchen, which has a fairly even flagstone floor. Booking is advisable in the restaurant. The outlet is some distance from the main Abbey car park so there is a "drop off" point for mobility impaired customers nearer the restaurant. Lit by daylight and overhead incandescent bulbs.

Accessing the Restaurant for Disabled Drivers & Carers

The Savile Restaurant is a popular spot for family and friends to meet for lunch.

There is a drop off point for mobility impaired customers outside the Savile Restaurant, which is some distance from the main car park.

Barriers and bollards designed to prevent unauthorized vehicle access can be opened prior to your visit.

We can also arrange for a mobility scooter to assist in getting from the car park to the Restaurant if this better suits your needs.

Please discuss with staff when booking your restaurant table on 01623 821310 / 821350.

Shops

There are a number of shops within the park. At the Abbey site you'll find the Book Shop (general souvenirs) and the Craft Shop (local pottery and other craft items.) At the Mill is the Outdoor Living Shop, selling fleeces and country clothing, plus gift items.

The Book Shop (Stables Block courtyard)

- Large hinged wooden door at entrance - 45 ½ inches wide.
- Counter is 36 ½ inches high
- Aisles are a minimum of 45 inches wide
- Lighting is a mixture of natural light and ceiling spotlights.

Craft Shop (Stables Block courtyard)

- There are two hinged wooden doors each 25 Inches wide
- The counter is 37 inches high, with a lower section 30 inches high
- There is a lift in the corner of the shop, giving access to the gallery upstairs.
- It is an open plan shop with ample space to get around.
- Lighting is a mixture of natural daylight and ceiling spotlights.

The Outdoor Living Shop (Rufford Mill)

- Entrance through double glass doors into a lobby (lift and stairs here to the Talbot Suite above, plus male and female toilets and an accessible toilet.) The shop is straight ahead, on ground floor.
- Lighting is a mixture of natural light and spotlights.

Grounds and Gardens

- Rufford Abbey has an attractive mixture of grounds and gardens surrounding the Abbey ruins. They include:
- The Formal Gardens, including several interesting items of modern sculpture.
- The Abbey Meadow - an informal grassland area where grass is left long in places for insects and butterflies.
- The Lake. Circled by a path of crushed limestone. Most of this circuit is flat, but there is one incline near "Scotland Bank" (indicated on the site access map) which may be a challenge to some wheelchair users.
- The Reg Hookway Arboretum - running down to the Children's Play Village, and featuring some unusual varieties of birch.
- The Wilderness Woodland – a woodland area, crossed by a number of informal crushed limestone paths. This is a shady area (bluebells in spring) and path edges are partially obscured by leaves during autumn and winter.
- The Abbey Lawn & The Sheep Meadow - mown grassland, fairly flat, where younger visitors can let off steam. Picnics welcome. Family picnic tables provided in section nearest lake path.
- The Lime Tree Avenue - a historic avenue of limes leading from the ornate Western Gates to the Abbey's west front.
- The Play Village - a play zone for younger children. Includes a dragon gateway and sound sculpture ("The Singing Stone") designed to add sensory play. Children may also enjoy the textures of the "Steel Tree" and sounds made by striking the black cube of the "stone harp" in an adjoining garden section.
- The Abbot's Maze - a maze consisting of wooden posts set into the ground in a wheel design. Wide enough for most wheelchairs.

Additional Information

- One of our park wardens can sign for the deaf.
- Mobility scooters are available for hire at £2 per hour (max 2 hour session so everyone gets chance to use them) from Tourist Information. Advance booking advised, telephone (01623) 821338.
- Wheelchairs available for free loan, including specially light 'self propel' chairs for children and teens, from Tourist Information Centre.
- Rufford Abbey Country Park is easily combined with Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, Edwinstowe (3 miles away) to make a full day's visit for tourists touring the Sherwood Forest / Dukeries area.

- The Tourist Information Office in Rufford Abbey Stables Block courtyard stocks a range of leaflets about more things to visit in our area, including bus timetables and places to stay locally. Tel. 01623 821338, email sherwoodtic@nsdc.info

Contact Information

Address:	Rufford Abbey Country Park Ollerton Nottinghamshire NG22 9DF
Telephone:	01623 821338
Email:	sherwoodtic@nsdc.info for general park information linda.hardy@nottscc.gov.uk if you have any complaints or queries.
Website:	www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/ruffordcp
Grid Reference:	SK644647
Hours Of Operation:	10.00 am to 5 pm every day except Christmas Day 25th December.
Local Equipment Hire:	Mobility scooters available for loan from the Tourist Information Centre 01623 821338 please book in advance. £2 per hour.
Local Accessible Taxi:	AAA (Ollerton) 01623 835656 ACE ABC (Mansfield) 01623 654321 Abacus (Mansfield) 07789008811
Local Public Transport:	Please ring Travel Line on 08712 002 233 or Stagecoach 01522 580515

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. Last updated May 2016.