



RUFFORD ABBEY

C O U N T R Y P A R K

ACCESS STATEMENT



in partnership with



RUFFORD ABBEY COUNTRY PARK
OLLERTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, NG22 9DF

01623 821 338

WWW.RUFFORDABBHEY.COM





INTRODUCTION

Rufford Abbey Country Park is a 150 acre public park, open every day except Christmas day. It is owned by Nottinghamshire County Council, who look after the Abbey ruins in partnership with English Heritage. Parkwood Outdoors manage the car parks, shops, catering and events on behalf of the 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, woodland walks, gardens, children’s play areas, and a small exhibition on the life of the medieval monks.

GETTING AROUND

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.

PRE-ARRIVAL

A map showing the most accessible routes around the park can be downloaded from www.ruffordabbey.com

Our website page has details of opening hours for the various park facilities, and the dates when car park charges apply.

A Visitor Reception Point in the Stables Courtyard at Rufford Abbey has maps, information about Rufford Abbey and details of ‘what’s on’ at the park. We have a printed leaflet about the country park. It can be mailed to you on request. If you need information in large print or another format, this can be sent to you by emailing linda.hardy@parkwood-leisure.co.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 along a loose surfaced 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, but please take care of cars passing on the busy main road to your right.



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, the southern end of the park. We recommend this as the most convenient entrance for first time visitors and those interested in the medieval abbey remains.

The smaller 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 spaces for disabled drivers. 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 11 am) or a little later than the peak arrival time (e.g. 4pm or after) may help.

Groups are welcome, and for minibuses over 12 seats or coaches, there is no parking charge. In peak season it is usually best to book a coach parking space in advance.

CAR PARK FEES

A car parking fee of £3 applies to all cars (including blue badge holders) daily through the main season. Occasionally, if a major event is taking place (eg 1940s weekend) a higher Special Event Car Park charge may apply. Visitors are recommended to ring Visitor Information on 01623 821338 to check before travelling.

MAIN PARK ENTRANCE, RECEPTION AND TICKETING AREA

The main visitor information / reception point is Visitor Information, at the Abbey. It is located on the left as visitors enter the Stables Courtyard from the Abbey car park.

This office has park information and maps. Mobility scooters and (wheelchairs including teen wheelchairs) can be hired and booked here.

There is a small ramp into Visitor Information from the courtyard. The Stables courtyard is a historic range of buildings and retains its original cobbled floor. This can be traversed by scooters and wheelchairs, but is somewhat bumpy.

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

One of the park wardens - Stephanie Toole - can sign. The County Council also has 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.

Visitor Information 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 being 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.

Download the park map to see the location of each attraction.

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 Visitor 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 (Lord Savile’s Kitchen,) 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 take-away service. Drinks, ice creams and cold snacks sold. Mostly natural lighting.

The Savile Restaurant (Lord Savile's Kitchen) - adjoining the medieval Abbey ruins, in the former 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 and 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 by park staff prior to your visit. You need to let us know in advance so staff can do that. We can arrange for a mobility scooter to assist in getting from the car park to the Restaurant, if this better suits your needs.

Please discuss your access needs with staff when booking your restaurant table on 01623 821350.

SHOPS

There are three shops within the park - all in the Stables Courtyard.

The Courtyard Deli

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

Craft Shop

- 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 - First Floor over Craft Shop

- Can be accessed by either stairs or lift. Lift is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and carer.
- Counter height approx 36 inches. Aisles are wide enough to be navigated by a standard size wheelchair.
- Light - a mixture of natural light from windows 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 and 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

- Mobility scooters are available for hire at £2 per hour (max 2 hour session so everyone gets chance to use them) from Visitor Information. Advance booking advised, telephone (01623) 821338.
- Wheelchairs available for free loan, including specially light 'self propel' chairs for children and teens. Reserve at Visitor Information.
- 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 I Dukeries area.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address

Rufford Abbey Country Park Ollerton Nottinghamshire NG22 9DF

Telephone

01623 821338

Email

General park information:

ruffordabbey@parkwood-leisure.co.uk

Complaints or Queries

linda.hardy@parkwood-leisure.co.uk

GRID REFERENCE

SK644647

HOURS OF OPERATION

10:00 - 17:00 every day except Christmas Day 25 December

LOCAL EQUIPMENT HIRE

Mobility scooters available for loan from

Information 01623 821338 please book in advance. £2 per hour.

Two wheelchairs available for loan, plus a 'teen' wheelchair.

LOCAL ACCESSIBLE TAXI

- AAA (Ollerton) 01623 835656
- ACE ABC (Mansfield) 01623 654321
- Abacus (Mansfield) 07789 008811

LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Please ring:

- Travel Line: 08712 002233



- Stagecoach: 01522 580515

Access Statement revised 6th March 2017. L Hardy



RUFFORD ABBEY
COUNTRY PARK