



giving  
nature  
a home

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

## **Access Statement for RSPB Arne**

### **Introduction**

RSPB Arne offers a diverse and interesting landscape located on a peninsula in the south Dorset countryside, Arne's offers open heathland, woodland, salt marsh, estuarine mudflats and grassland. There are lots of wildlife to discover including Dartford warblers, nightjars, firecrest, and all 6 of Britain's reptile species. Some of the walking routes are natural and uneven ground and may include steep hills and sets of steps, tree roots and stony material;

There is ground level viewing screen, two hides, a view point, a rustic picnic area, and formal picnic benches with spaces for wheelchairs.

Two car parks are provided, one of which is a deeper into the reserve and dedicated for Blue Badge holders.

The alternative car park provides basic visitor facilities including toilets, a small Visitor Centre offering hot drinks for sale.

A Trampler buggy is available for hire by individuals with impaired mobility to improve access to the reserve, subject to training by staff.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 01929 553 360.

Further information is available on our website [www.rspb.org.uk/arne](http://www.rspb.org.uk/arne)

### **Pre-Arrival**

- For a map and directions on how to reach us please see the 'How to get here' section on our website, which has a link for sat navs. Alternatively you can plan your journey by public

- transport or car using [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) - simply enter your postcode and ours to get directions
- The nearest railway station is Wareham, about 4.5 miles away. If walking from the station: walk through Wareham and along the towpath on the south side of the river; walk through Ridge, and then along Arne Road (no pavement) until you reach the reserve.
  - Taxi services are available from Wareham train station
  - The nearest bus stop is in Stoborough. Catch the number 40 (Swanage to Poole) which leaves once an hour. Service details can be accessed via:01983 827005; [www.wdbus.co.uk](http://www.wdbus.co.uk)
  - The approach road is narrow single tarmac lane
  - Daily opening times are from 8:30am until dusk
  - Entry is free, although there is a parking fee for non RSPB members
  - Dogs on leads are welcome.

### **Car Parking Facilities and Arrival**

- Parking is available at two locations on the site, and is free to members. Non-members must purchase a ticket from the machine in the main car park.
- The main car park is located just inside the reserve entrance next to the Visitor Centre, and is comprised of 61 spaces. Two of these spaces are reserved for Blue Badge holders. The surface of the car park is firm flat bare ground.
- An additional dedicated Blue Badge car park 4 spaces is located beside Arne's Shipstal trail. A day's permit to use the car park can be obtained from the Visitor Centre.

## **Visitor Centre**

- Entry to the Visitor Centre is by a shallow ramp to open doors or by two low steps which go up to a narrower door at the side of the building.
- Level, laminate floor throughout the Centre
- Well lit building, with ceiling spot lights and large windows
- Staff available on hand to provide assistance and advice
- Information panels are in clear print
- Information is provided about recent wildlife sightings, daily tide charts and events
- Trail maps with accessible routes shown are available
- Binoculars available free for hire
- Six picnic benches with space for wheelchairs are located behind the Visitor Centre and at the end of the car park. Each bench can accommodate three wheelchairs.

## **Nature Trails**

Five trails of different lengths take you around the reserve. Trails are signposted with coloured bands painted onto oak posts, and trail maps which include the access trail are freely available from the Visitor Centre. Benches are distributed throughout the reserve; at present, they are all without arms and back support.

### **Coombe Heath Trail**

- From the main visitor car park, the trail is about 1.2km long and takes between 45 minutes to an hour to complete.
- This path is unimproved and has a stony, uneven surface, which may be sandy and waterlogged with occasional bumpy tree roots along the way. The path is over 2 metres wide, there are two steep hills on this route.
- Two wide access gates are located in the first field near the start of the route, with latch closing mechanisms.
- A small 50cm-wide path with vegetation flanking each side, leads off from the main to a wildlife pond and bench.

- Keeping to the main trail there are two further benches set about 10 minutes apart.
- A hide can be reached down a narrow path (1 metre in places).
- Alternatively a viewing point has moveable benches, and the 'windows' are set at variable heights but access to it is steep, stony and at times slippery.

### Shipstal Point 'Easy Access' Trail

- The circular 'Easy Access' Trail starts at the Blue Badge car park and is 2.5 km long taking about 30 minutes to complete. Three benches are provided and a hide is on the north-east stretch of trail, located within a short walking distance of each other.
- The path leads through birch woodland is gravel-surfaced, level, even and wide.
- It becomes raised after passing the hide and the first bench. This section of path is 1.5 metres wide, approximately 180 metres long, and at every 50 metres there are 3 metres-wide passing points.
- At the next bench a junction in the path gives the option of looping back towards the disabled car park or continuing further along the access trail. The path continues through an area of ponds
- The last stretch of path leading back to the Blue Badge car park is bridleway. The bridleway is wide, gravel-surfaced, and fairly even.

### Short North Trail

- This circular trail starts from the Visitor Centre, covers 3 km, and can takes about 50 minutes to complete. Five benches, a view point and a hide are provided
- The route heads off up a hill along a wide tarmac minor road with grass verges on either side.
- Past Arne Farm, an access gateway opens up on to a long uneven stretch of grass track. This track is 2 metres wide and can be steep in places.

- After the first bench there are 3 small steps and leads to the second bench. From here the path is narrower (60cm – 100cm wide).
- Passing the hide and is trail's third bench, the path becomes raised. This section of path is 1.5 metres wide, approximately 180 metres long, and there are 3 metres-wide passing points at every 50 metres. The raised path continues through an area of ponds
- The last stretch of path leading back on to the road towards the Visitor Centre is bridleway. The bridleway is wide, gravel-surfaced, and fairly even.

### Short South Trail

- The trail starts from the Visitor Centre, covers 3 km and takes up to one hour depending which of the various routes are followed. Seven benches and a rustic picnic area are provided
- Behind the Visitor Centre the trail is bare earth, and leads up 33 wide flats steps on a steep hillside. At the top of the hill is a rustic picnic area on level flat ground.
- The path continues through woodland on uneven ground, to later turn into a stretch of wood and chicken-wire boardwalk. The boardwalk is 92cm wide. The trail then continues as rough uneven ground.
- After passing three benches in close proximity there is an optional route of 22 steps which lead down to Shipstal beach. Two benches plus an information panel
- A view point atop a hill is next on the trail, which has three benches and an information panel set flat atop a waist-height stone plinth. Two sets of steps fork off from the view point:
  - 28 steps lead right, down towards Shipstal beach
  - 42 steps lead left and join on to a long stretch of bridleway, which is wide, gravel-surfaced, and fairly even. The bridleway passes Arne's Blue Badge car park, and leads on to a minor public road.

- The final part of the trail back to the Visitor Centre is a short downhill stretch along a road. The road is wide and tarmac, with grass verges on either side.

## Long Trail

- This circular trail starts from the Visitor Centre, is 3.75 km long, and can take about 80 minutes to complete. Twelve benches, a hide and a view point are on the route, along with a rustic picnic area.
- The route heads off up a hill along a wide tarmac minor road, with grass verges on either side. Past Arne Farm, an access gateway opens up on to a long uneven stretch of grass track. This track is 2 metres wide and can be steep in places.
- After the first bench there are 3 small steps. From here the path narrows (60cm – 100cm wide). Just past the hide, the route turns into a raised stone-topped path. This section of path is 1.5 metres wide, approximately 180 metres long, and there are 3 metres-wide passing points at every 50 metres.
- The raised path continues through an area of ponds. After the ponds the path changes is unimproved and uneven. 42 steps lead up a steep hillside to a view point. At the view point are three benches and an interpretation panel set flat atop a waist-height stone plinth.
- The rough unimproved trail shortly leads to a further bench, past which is an optional route of 22 steps which lead down to Shipstal beach. Two benches plus an interpretation panel are there. Passing 3 benches, the rough track becomes a short stretch of wood and chicken-wire boardwalk. The boardwalk is 92cm wide.
- The path goes uphill to a rustic picnic area in a flat woodland glade, before heading down 33 wide flat steps on a steep hill, and back to the Visitor Centre.

## **Viewing Facilities**

Two hides, one view point and one viewing screen are provided

- Coombe Heath has a hide and a viewing screen at the southernmost point of the Coombe Heath trail. The hide is accessed down a path with five long 75cm wide steps, which are flanked by vertical heavy wooden panels. Three narrow steps lead up into Coombe hide. The hide door is 80cm wide, and opens inwards by a lever handle 84cm high. Inner benches are 58cm high, 22cm wide, and are fixed. A gap of 56cm is between two of the benches. Windows are 120cm high, open upwards, and are latch fastened. Information is displayed in clear print with a matt finish.
- Coombe Viewing Screen can be accessed by a wide sloping path which has a gravel surface. The viewing screen has 6 open 'windows': 2 are set 100cm high; 2 are set 125cm high; 2 are set 155cm high. Backless benches there can be repositioned.

### Shipstal Point

- A hide and a view point can be accessed on all but one of the Shipstal trails. The hide is 2 storeys high, with viewing screens flanking each side. Access to the hide is via a new raised path which is 1.5m wide. After every 50 metres of path, there are passing places 3m wide.
- Information panels inside are displayed in clear print with a matt finish. The ground floor can be accessed by 9 steps, with handrails. There is a 75cm wide doorway, which can be opened inwards with a lever handle which is 86cm high.
- Benches inside the hide are fixed and backless, 20cm wide and 58cm high. Windows are 125cm high, lightweight, and are secured open with ceiling latches.
- The top floor is accessed by 18 steps and 2 handrails. The stairway and door are 80cm wide, and the door can be opened inwards with a lever handle which is set at a 100cm height. Benches are fixed and backless, 20cm wide and 58cm high.
- Windows are double-panelled and heavy, and the window latches are high, necessitating the user to stand up whilst securing windows open.

## Shipstal Viewing Screen

- The viewing screen is made from 6 panels 110 – 120cm high. , and 2 moveable benches that are 47cm & 32cm wide.

## Shipstal Viewpoint

- There are 2 benches at the viewpoint, along with an interpretation board which is atop a waist height stone plinth.

## **Public Toilets**

No Accessible toilets are currently available. Standard single-sex toilets situated near the car park. Measurements are

- Level entry door width: 78cm wide
- WC floor to seat height: 40cm
- Light: motion-sensitive tungsten bulbs
- Floor: hard tile
- Taps: push taps
- The nearest Accessible public toilet is located 4 miles away just off the A351 north of Corfe Castle, at the Norden Park and Ride. This toilet can be accessed using a RADAR key. Opening and closing times are seasonal, and based around the local train timetable. For more information, contact: Purbeck District Council on 01929 557208

## **Catering**

- Self-service hot drinks available in the Visitor Centre. The drinks menu is displayed in clear print. Staff are present to read out the menu. The drinks machine can be operated from a seated height
- A range of pubs and cafes are located in the nearby town of Wareham, which is approximately 4 miles from the reserve.



## **Picnic Area**

- Six wheelchair accessible picnic benches are provided next to the Visitor Centre and car park.
- There is a rustic picnic area located at the top of a steep hill behind the Visitor Centre. This area can be accessed via 33 wide flat steps. Whilst there are no tables in this area, seating is available in the form of broad wooden logs.
- Visitors are welcome to bring their own food and drink

## **Additional Information**

- Walking trails are marked using coloured bands on oak posts. Colours used include red and green.

## **Future Plans**

Over the next 5 years the reserve aims to further improve the accessibility of the reserve by:

- Installing an accessible toilet
- Ensuring hides are accessible
- Removing boardwalk from the Shipstal trail
- Installing benches that have backs and arm rests onto the Easy Access trail
- Ensuring trails are waymarked suitable for people that are colourblind

## **Contact Information**

Address (Inc postcode): Arne RSPB Nature Reserve, Arne Road,  
Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5BJ

Telephone: 01929 553 360

Hours Of Operation: 09:00 - 17:00

Local Public Transport: West Dorset buses: 01983 827005  
[www.wdbus.co.uk](http://www.wdbus.co.uk)