



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 Belfast Lough Nature Reserve

### Introduction

Belfast's Window on Wildlife (WOW) Nature Reserve is situated in the industrial heartland of Belfast Harbour Estate. It is a wetland nature reserve that welcomes overwintering wildfowl from the Arctic region and terns during the summer months. During high tide on Belfast Lough, waders and wildfowl are pushed onto the reserve, and you are guaranteed close up views of these birds.

The visitor centre is level and step free. We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 028 9046 1458 or email [shelly.ovadia@rspb.org.uk](mailto:shelly.ovadia@rspb.org.uk) or [belfast.lough@rspb.org.uk](mailto:belfast.lough@rspb.org.uk).

### Pre-Arrival

- For a map and directions of how to reach us, search for 'Belfast Lough' and view the 'How to get here' section on our website where directions and satellite navigation information are provided.
- The nearest railway station is Titanic Quarter Station, almost two miles (3.5km) from the reserve. From here, a footpath follows the A2 which can be a very busy road. Holywood Station is about the same distance but you can follow the coastal path to the Harbour Estate and onto the reserve. On Sundays, there is no vehicular access from the Holywood Exchange end of Airport Road as the security gates are closed.
- The nearest bus stop is around 300m from the reserve – the "Portside" stop. The Metro 26 and 26A bus services come from Belfast city centre, just outside the Visit Belfast office approximately every half hour from 7.02am Mon-Fri with no bus service at this stop on Saturday and Sunday.
- Opening times – Belfast WOW is open between 10am - 4pm from 1 November - 28 February, and 10am - 5pm from 1 March - 31 October. It is closed on Tuesdays all year round.
- Entrance to the reserve is free for RSPB members. For non-members there is an admission charge of £3 for adults, £1.50 children, £2.00 students and free for under 5s and registered carers.
- Registered Assistance Dogs welcome in the visitor centre. (Please do not be offended if we ask for evidence of registration).

### Car Parking Facilities

- 12 car parking spaces are provided free of charge 45m from the reserve. There are also additional car parking spaces between the car park and hide one. There are also two dedicated accessible car parking spaces in the car park.
- The car park surface is tarmac.

- There is normal street lighting along the road.
- The car park is the only drop-off point.
- There are no steps between the car park and the visitor centre.
- There is a slight gradient on the path from the public footpath to the visitor centre. There are two doors into the visitor centre approximately one metre wide, there is no automatic opening.



*Figure 1 The path from the car park is tarmac and level, the path to the entrance is paved with a slight gradient*

## **Visitor Centre**

- Visitor centre is step free with a tiled surface.
- Seating consists of three sofas and movable chairs.
- The top of the counters are 80cm from the floor.
- The visitor centre is well lit with natural daylight and spotlight in the foyer.
- Telescopes, binoculars and books are available for use. There are several telescopes on bench clamps which are accessible to wheelchair users; they may need to be adjusted so please ask a member of staff or assistance.
- A TV screen in the observation room shows live footage from a tern island.
- There is information available for all the events at the reserve on the “What’s on at Belfast WOW” screen.
- A kids’ corner is available with interactive interpretation and colouring/games facilities.
- Bird-identifying interpretive boards are displayed on the benches which change seasonally, for example “summer visitors” display the birds likely to be seen in the summer months.
- A touch screen can be found in the visitor centre to browse and research wildlife. It is at 130cm to 157cm above the floor.
- The visitor centre is staffed with volunteers and staff to help within opening hours.

## Nature Trails

- No nature trails available.

## Viewing facilities



*Figure 2 The entrance to hide one is off the main road, it is paved down to the hide.*



*Figure 3 The path to hide one has a slight gradient.*

- There are two hides to visit, hide one and hide two.
- The facilities at hide two are the same as at hide one.
- Seating is provided in both hides.
- There is a general public area and a members' area in both hides.
- There are four large windows 150cm by 110cms.
- The window sills are 88cm from the ground.



*Figure 4 The members area is accessed by a code pad, 145cm from ground level.*

- The members' area is behind a door with a code pad to gain access, the height of the code pad is 145cm from the ground. (members who need assistance or require the code should contact the visitor centre during opening hours).
- Hide one is situated approx 200m from the visitor centre and a public footpath has a tarmac surface. The opening to the path that leads down to the hide is 150cm wide, with a slight gradient down to the hide.



*Figure 5 The track to hide 2 is uneven and can become muddy in wet weather*



- Hide two is 575m from the visitor centre. The hide is accessed via a track that leads from the main road. Depending on weather conditions the track can become quite muddy.

### **Toilets**

- In the visitor centre there are female, male and accessible WCs available.
- The accessible toilet has a shower.
- There is also a baby changing facility within the accessible toilet

### **Catering**

- There are coffee and tea facilities (suggested donation of £1.50) and a vending machine providing a range of cold drinks and snacks.
- Coffee station is at 115 cm height, and vending machine buttons are at 120cm. A volunteer or member of staff is there to assist with catering facilities.

### **Future Plans**

- The path to hide two is due to be changed, with the possibility that it could be more accessible.

### **Contact Information**

- Address: 100 Airport Road West, Belfast Harbour Estate, Belfast, BT3 9ED
- Telephone: 028 9046 1458
- Email: [shelly.ovadia@rspb.org.uk](mailto:shelly.ovadia@rspb.org.uk) / [belfast.lough@rspb.org.uk](mailto:belfast.lough@rspb.org.uk)
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