



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 Rainham Marshes nature reserve**

### **Introduction**

The reserve is situated on the banks of the River Thames with an award winning visitor centre cafe offering amazing views across this restored medieval marshland. There's something for everyone and is a favourite for birdwatchers, families, walkers and photographers.

You can explore the reserve throughout the year, and get close to some fantastic wildlife including breeding waders in spring and summer, and during the colder month's large flocks of wildfowl.



*Sunset at Rainham by Tony O'Brein*

The car park is flat, and leads to the visitor centre and reserve. There is a shop and accessible toilet on ground level. The first floor can be accessed by a ramp from the car park, or a set of stairs. The long gentle slope leads to the visitor centre, cafe, reserve and an additional

accessible toilet.

The main section of the reserve has over two miles of level trails, mainly flat and even, made up of boardwalk and hard pathways. All the hides offer wheelchair access. The viewing level in the Shooting Butts Hide has a platform lift.

There are accessible toilets half way around on the main section of the reserve that are accessed by a low gradient ramp.

The river wall section of the reserve (on which we allow dogs and bicycles) leads along the River Thames towards London. There are different paths that you can choose from a hard path to one that has loose stones.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 01708 899840 or email [rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk](mailto:rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk)

Further information about the reserve is on our website at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/rainham>

## **Pre-Arrival**

- A map and directions are available from the 'How to get here' section of our website including a link for satellite navigation. Alternatively, plan your journey by public transport or car using Google maps; simply enter our postcode RM19 1SZ to get directions.
- Purfleet Railway Station is closest on the C2C line from Fenchurch Street and a 15 minute walk to our reserve. Follow the brown pedestrian signs along the riverside path, turn right out of the station and then join the path at the Royal Pub. Follow the Riverside path and then cross the Mardyke Bridge to the Visitor Centre. This route has one slight incline from the station. Cars do sometimes park on the pavement which can make it narrow for wider wheelchairs. Taxis are readily available from the station.
- The nearest bus stop is on New Tank Hill Road close to the reserve entrance and used by the Ensignbus 44 bus running

between Lakeside and Orsett Hospital and Grays. The service runs every hour and up to 30 minutes during peak periods; operated by Ensignbus (01708 865656).

- The main road outside the reserve has no pavement and is 10m to our access road entrance. After an initial steep decline, a wide flat path about 100m long takes you to our visitor centre. By road we are on New Tank Hill Road (A1090) in Purfleet just off the A1306 between Rainham and Lakeside. Take the Aveley, Wennington and Purfleet junction off the A13 and J30/31 of the M25.
- The Visitor Centre, car park and reserve trails are open 9.30 am-4.30 pm from 1 November - 31 January and 9.30 am-5 pm from 1 February- 31 October; closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.
- Entry is free to RSPB members, carers and residents of Havering and Thurrock. Non-members pay £5 adult, £3 child. The car park is a voluntary £1 donation.
- Registered assistance dogs welcome (please do not be offended if we ask for evidence of registration)

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

- 4 Blue Badge spaces are signposted and have a loose gravel surface. A further 100 spaces are provided.
- These Blue Badge spaces have been relocated (in Spring of 2015) to make access to the step free entrance ramp easier. As you enter the car park turn left and the spaces are at the end of the first row on the left hand side. The step free access ramp is just past the bays. For the lower level toilets and shop carry on towards the building and follow the blue lines on the ground.



*Four blue badge bays*

- £1 donation at machine for parking. The car park is locked at 5pm (1 February-31 October), and 4.30pm (1 November-31 January).
- Blue Badge spaces are next to the long ramp (1:14 gradient) with partial handrails leading to the visitor centre. Alternatively there are 18 steps with hand rails on both sides, to first floor visitor centre.



*The access ramp to the visitor centre is just past the blue badge bays on the left after the bushes. Look out for the 'Welcome' pole.*



- Entrance to the visitor centre is across a bridge at the top of the



- Entrance to the centre through two sets of double doors which open outwards. Single opening is 810mm/32ins wide, both sets open 1620mm/64ins wide. Doors are heavy and power assisted. There is no threshold.



## Visitor Centre

- The entrance is on the first floor leading to our reception and cafe with step free, level access throughout and non-slip tiles.
- The reception counter has a lowered section - there will be an RSPB volunteer or member of staff at the reception desk to assist, show you where to go and tell you the wildlife that has been seen. Maps and information (minimum 12pt text size) are available from reception.



- The centre is evenly and well lit with overhead lighting from track lighting and natural light from roof cones and picture windows.
- Pen and paper are available at the reception and cafe counters.
- Staff and volunteers can provide assistance on request.
- Binoculars are available for hire (£3 or £5 for the day depending on the model i.e. quality).
- Events and activities throughout the year for all ages and abilities. Please feel free to contact us regarding accessibility if you have any questions.

## **Nature Trails**

- From the visitor centre, a short section of non-slip grill has a gradient that exceeds 1:20 due to subsidence. Beyond the ramp are 2 benches with back support and arms overlooking the Purfleet Scrape.
- A map of the trails is available at the reception desk or alternatively can be downloaded from [www.rspb.org.uk/rainham](http://www.rspb.org.uk/rainham)
- A mix of flat gravel surface paths and boardwalks are provided. Information boards have illustrations and minimum 18pt fonts.



*A section of hard path*





*A section of boardwalk on the reserve*

- Three trails are provided and most routes allow 2 wheelchairs to pass:
  - The Circular Walk (Red walk on the map) covers 2.2 miles and can take 60 to 150 mins to complete. A flat path with firm gravel and boardwalk. The boardwalk has anti-slip paint applied. Take care on unpainted sections by the Reed Bed Classroom.
  - The Woodland Walk (Green walk on the map) covers half a mile through our woodland area and through the Cordite Store. It can take 20 to 60 mins. A flat walk on firm gravel paths or boardwalk painted to reduce slips.
  - The Riverside Walk is 2 mile long and access from the reserve onto the permissive footpath is through a turnstile gate which is one way only. It leads to the permissive path along the River Thames. It takes 45–120 mins. Alternative to the turnstile is a gate opened with a key code which can be obtained from reception. Reserve paths are firm gravel or boardwalk painted to reduce slips. Access to the riverside is by a steep incline from the turnstile gate. The upper path is tarmac and rough with large stones. The lower Sustrans path is tarmac. There is one bench with arms 300m from the turnstile gate.

- A variety of seating is provided at intervals of about every 100m/328ft within 300m from the visitor centre. Beyond here, seating is every 300m. The woodland walk has perch seats at the Purfleet View point. Three benches with back support and arms are in the cordite store.
- On the circular walk there is a bench with back support and arms half way between the woodland feeding area and the Ken Barrett Hide. The Northern Boardwalk View Points have low wooden trunks, and there are additional low wooden trunks along the northern boardwalk. Beyond the Shooting Butts Hide here is a picnic area at the Reedbed Classroom which is available for public use at weekend and during school holidays. There are low wooden benches with no back support or arms along the southern trail every 150m.



*Some examples of seating on site*

## Viewing Facilities

- Four hides are provided on the Circular walk, the Purfleet Hide and Marshland Discovery Zone on the Riverside walk. No hides are provided on the Woodland walk.
- There is level entry to all hides and all doors entrances are 900mm/35.5ins wide, with a lever handle, except Ken Barrett hide which has a twist knob.
- The Purfleet Hide is a family friendly hide with floor to ceiling windows in the centre of the hide, to limit disturbance for the wildlife there is screening across the lower half of the window. Other windows are 750mm allowing viewing from a seated position opened and closed using a winding mechanism, though this can be stiff. The top section pushes out and can be difficult to open from a sitting position.
- Seating is with adjustable height stools that are unfixed. The upper level houses a gallery which is reached by 5 steps with a rail on both sides.



*The Purfleet Hide*



*Inside the Purfleet Hide*



*The window opening in the Purfleet Hide is with a winding mechanism which can be a bit stiff.*

- The Marshland Discovery Zone is a family friendly hide with large floor to ceiling window. There is fixed seating in the centre of the hide and wheelchair access to the whole window. There are drawing and craft materials in the hide and touch interpretation.



*The Marshland Discovery Zone Hide*





*Inside the Marshland Discovery Zone Hide*

- The Shooting Butts Hide has an open grill to the doors. There are 14 steps and an alternative platform lift to the viewing area. Seating is with adjustable height stools – some are fixed.
- Window height is 940mm. Other windows are 750mm allowing viewing from a seated position that are opened and closed using a winding mechanism, though this can be stiff. The top section pushes out and can be difficult to open from a sitting position.



*The Shooting Butts Hide*



*Inside the Shootings Butts Hide*



*Lift in the Shooting Butts Hide*

- The Ken Barrett Hide has level entry with a small threshold and space for 2 wheelchairs. Windows are 940mm above floor level and can be lifted and secured with a latch, which might be awkward from a seated position.



*The Ken Barrett Hide*

- Around the site there are a number of viewing platforms





*There are viewing areas with different height arm rails*



*There are viewing platforms overlooking some of the ditches – this one is accessed by a grassy bank, there are others accessed by a low gradient ramp*

## Public Toilets

- A unisex accessible toilet is on the ground floor of the Visitor Centre with level access with:
  - A light, easy open door 900mm/35.5ins wide.
  - 980mm/38.5ins transfer space to the left of the toilet, when facing the toilet.
  - Toilet height is 400mm/15.7ins.
  - Vertical rail on the wall behind the toilet with a pull down horizontal rail on the opposite side
  - Handrails, toilet and washbasin are white.
  - An emergency alarm pull cord.
  - Well lit with automatic overhead lighting.
  - Non-slip tile flooring.
  - Lever mixer tap on the sink



*The accessible toilets are on the ground floor, past the shop next to the stairs.*

- An additional unisex accessible toilet is first floor outside the reception/cafe. Exit the main entrance and it is off the veranda. Measurements as above with a baby changing table.
  
- Half way around the reserve, we have a small block with accessible toilets. These toilets are located between the Shooting Butts and the Shooting Butts hide and near the Reedbed Discovery Zone. These toilets are with:
  - A low gradient ramp leading up to the toilets - usually toilet number three (which is accessible) is open (toilet number 1 is kept closed for the school groups) feel free to check with staff or volunteers when you arrive.
  - An easy open door with a lever handle, 1000mm/39.37 ins wide. The door opens outward and opens 180 degrees.
  - Vertical rail on the wall to the right of the toilet with a pull down horizontal rail on the opposite side
  - Handrails, toilet and wall mounted hand sanitiser are white.
  - An emergency alarm pull cord - that sounds inside and outside the toilet block.
  - Well lit with automatic overhead lighting.





## Catering

- Situated on the first floor of the visitor centre, it is well lit by natural and overhead lighting.
- The flooring is non-slip tiles.
- Space between tables is tight, with a clear height from the floor of 735mm/29ins, with upright chairs without arms. Tables and chairs can be moved to create more space – please ask one of our staff.
- Where possible all our food produce is locally sourced. Smaller portions are available and we do our best to cater for any dietary requirements; please contact us in advance to check any specific requests you may have.
- The café is partly self-service; however, staff will always assist on request. Large print menus are available upon request and staff and volunteers can assist by running through menus with you.

- An accessible toilet and a baby change facility is on the veranda



## Shop

- Located on the ground floor of the building, the door is heavy though usually open. If the door is closed staff are willing to open it for you.
- On one level with step free entry and exit though there is a slope due to subsidence. The threshold has a lip of 10mm. The floor is non-slip tiles. There is step free, level access throughout.
- A range of gifts, bird food and books. Binoculars are sold from the first floor reception area
- Space is tight, although a standard wheelchair and pushchair should be able to maneuver within the shop.
- The area is evenly and well lit with overhead lighting from halogen ceiling and spotlights.
- There are some tall book/gift racks and low display units accessible from a seated position.
- A pen and pad of paper are available at the low level counter.
- Staff and volunteers can provide assistance.

- Loose seed bins are outside the shop. These can not be reached from a seated position. Staff and volunteers can provide assistance.



## Picnic Area

- One area is on ground level next to the Visitor Centre with all 5 tables providing wheelchair access. Some are on grass, but most are on a gravel surface.
- There is also a picnic table adjacent to the toddler's play area next to the centre, and two in the wildlife garden.
- There is a picnic bench in the adventure playground, 800m/900yds or about a 15min walk from the Visitor Centre.
- Sandwiches and drinks are available from the café; however, visitors are free to bring their own refreshments with them for picnics.



*The main picnic area by the visitor centre*



*There is a picnic bench by the toddlers play area, and two within the garden (the entrance is to the left of this picture).*

## Additional Information

- There is a wildlife garden with raised beds adjacent to the visitor centre.



*The wildlife garden – there are two picnic benches at the back of the garden.*

- An electric mobility scooter and a wheelchair are available to borrow. If you would like to book the mobility scooter to ensure that it is available during your visit please feel free to ring or email us.



## **Contact Information**

Address (Inc postcode): RSPB Rainham Marshes nature reserve  
New Tank Hill Road  
Purfleet  
Essex  
RM19 1SZ

Telephone: 01708 899840

Email: [rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk](mailto:rainham.marshes@rspb.org.uk)

Website: [www.rspb.org.uk/rainham](http://www.rspb.org.uk/rainham)

Grid Reference: TQ552792

Hours Of Operation: From 1 November to 31 January, we're open from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. From 1 February to 31 October, it's 9.30 am to 5 pm. We're closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Local Equipment Hire: Mobility scooter and wheelchair available to borrow. If you would like to book the scooter please feel free to contact us by phone or email to guarantee that it is available for your visit.

Binoculars can be borrowed for the day.

Family activity sheets can be borrowed from reception.

Local Public Transport: Purfleet Train Station Ensignbus Route 44