

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 Sandwell Valley

Pre-Arrival

- The nearest railway station is at Hamstead, 2 km away.
- The nearest bus stop, is Tanhouse Avenue, 600 m away (Service 16), or Bowstoke Road, 0.8 miles (1.3 km) away, number 5 or 46 service.
- By road, it has brown signposts from both directions, off the A4041 (Newton Rd) north of Hamstead. Take Hamstead Road (B4167), and after 1000 m turn right onto Tanhouse Lane. The entrance is then 300 m on your left.
- The trails are open daily dawn till dusk, except 25 December. The Visitor Centre is open from Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm from April-September, and from 10 am to 4 pm from October-March. It is closed on 25 December.
- Dogs on leads and assistance dogs are allowed on all of the reserve trails.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 0121 357 7395 or email sandwellvalley@rspb.org.uk.

Car Parking Facilities and Arrival

- The entrance for vehicles has large metal gates, open, when the reserve car park is open.
- Pedestrians can use the 1100 mm openings next to the entrance gate at any time and follow the road and walkway to the Visitor Centre. This route is mainly tarmac with some rolled gravel and slope of 1:11 for 10m. Pedestrians can stay on the tarmac road, if needed, but taking care as it is a road.
- There are 20 parking spaces immediately inside the gates, these are 300m from the main car park.
- The main car park is accessed via a 300m tarmac road, with 4 road humps, which have lowered gaps in the centre of them.
- The main car park has no height restrictions, is level, of rolled gravel and has 28 spaces.

- It costs £3 for non-members, free for members. Payment can be made in the Visitor Centre. Members are asked to leave their membership card displayed on their dashboard.
- There are 2 clearly signed blue badge, 3.6 m by 5.6, spaces situated 10m from the Visitor Centre entrance. They are on tarmac and are free to park in.
- The car parks are not lit at night
- Visitors can be dropped off and collected from outside the visitor centre, although caution is needed as delivery vehicles and pedestrians use this area.
- There are 6 cycle racks immediately outside the Visitor Centre.
- There is a large notice board in the car park which provides information about the opening times, nature trails and wildlife at the reserve.

Visitor Centre

- The main entrance and throughout the centre it is step free and is level. The main door is automatic and sliding, and opens to 1000mm.
- The centre has one main room with folding walls which are used to divide it when different activities are taking place. The doors open to 1200mm wide.
- The floor surface throughout is non-slip tiles.
- The area is evenly and well lit with overhead lighting from halogen spotlights. There are floor to ceiling windows facing south.
- There are several tables, at 750mm height, and upright chairs without arms, all of which can be moved. Some chairs are folding and others are non-folding.
- Reception is staffed during opening hours by friendly RSPB staff and volunteers, who can provide assistance if required.
- A hearing loop system is installed at the service counter.
- Information is available about the reserve, trails and events. There are leaflet holders, table displays and staff / volunteers are always available to assist.
- Items available for hire include binoculars and children's nature discovery kits.
- A bowl of water is available at the Visitor Centre main entrance for all dogs.
- There are emergency visual and audio alarms in all required areas. Emergency evacuation routes are all level exits and the meeting point is on the main car park.

Public Toilets

- Toilet facilities on the reserve are located in the Visitor Centre.
- Male and female toilets are in separate areas. Basins are 750 mm from floor level and have push operated taps. Paper towels and hot air hand driers are provided.
- In the male toilets there is one urinal at 500 mm and two at 600 mm from the floor, and 2 cubicles with inward opening doors.
- The ladies toilet has three cubicles, with inward opening doors.
- There is one unisex accessible toilet, 2200 mm by 1400 mm, which has level entry. The opening width of the door is 880 mm. It is left hand layout and height of the pan from floor to seat is 470 mm. There are horizontal and vertical grab rails.
- Drop down baby changing facilities are in the accessible toilet and in the ladies toilets.
- All toilet areas have audio and visual emergency alarms.

Catering

- Self-service hot and cold drinks, snacks and ice cream are available in the Visitor Centre.
- Hot drinks are dispensed from a machine with buttons at 1500 mm from floor level.
- Assistance is available from staff and volunteers if required.
- We try to provide for different dietary needs. Please ask about ingredients if you have any food allergies.
- There are 5 picnic tables outside in the garden area. One of these is an accessible table, 20 m from the Visitor Centre.
- Visitors may eat their own food in the Visitor Centre or at the picnic tables.

Events / Education / Meeting Areas

- The main room can be separated into two education / meeting areas. Each has a separate door which opens to 1200mm.
- There are several folding tables (clear height 725mm) and chairs, folding and non-folding, without armrests available.
- There are three large sinks at a height of 680mm.

- Coat hooks on the wall are at a height of 900mm and 1200mm.

Nature Trails

- There are two way-marked trails on the RSPB reserve of 350 m and 650 m each way from the Visitor Centre.
- They are surfaced with rolled gravel and in parts 'natural' surface, that can be muddy if there has been recent rain. The minimum width of the paths is 1000mm for short distances.
- There are no stiles, kissing gates, or barriers across the paths.
- The trails can be combined by continuing to follow the path around Forge Mill Lake (managed by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council) to make a circular walk of 1.6 miles
- Visitor Centre to the Lakeside hide:

The main path has a maximum gradient of 1:12 and has a minimum width of 1300 mm to the boundary of the reserve. The path to the hide, is 1000 mm wide in places.

There are two benches, without arms, after 40 m and 70 m, and are 600mm from ground level. They are set back from the main path, in the Minibeast Meadow, the first is 2 m off the main path and the second is 3 m off the path

There is also a viewpoint, off the main path, after 90 m with two wooden benches 500mm from ground level. This viewpoint is 20m off the main path down a stony path or along a level 'natural' path, after the viewpoint. There are no more seats along this route until the hide.

The last 20m of the trail is slightly raised, passing over a wet area, the surface is 1350mm wide, of rolled gravel and has a small incline at either end.
- Visitor Centre to South Bank:

The main path is 650 m long and has a rolled gravel surface. There is one section 10m long, just before the path to the Marsh Screen, that has a gradient of 1:10 with a cross fall of 1:12. The rest of the path has a maximum gradient of 1:12.

After 150 m, there is a set of 8 gravel steps to the Marsh Screen, with handrails both sides. Continuing on the main path a further 20m is a level access path to the Marsh Screen, both are signed posted. The Marsh Screen path is a minimum of 1100 mm wide and leads to an area with a multiple height viewing screens.

The main path continues level for a further 160 m and then there is a narrow, natural surface, path off to a viewpoint over the Lake. This path is 400mm wide and 70m long. There is a seat, without arms, with a 50 mm step to it. There are 7 gravel steps, with a handrail on the right, at the end,

that leads up to the main path.

The main path continues to the South Bank, a further 270 m which is the boundary of the reserve. There is a seat, at the boundary without arm rests, located just below the main path, overlooking the Lake.

Viewing Facilities

- The Lakeside hide opens when staff or volunteers are available. This is usually from Wednesday to Sunday, and from 10.30 am to 3.30 pm. Access to the hide is over a metal bridge 1350mm wide and is level.
- When closed, the gates to the hide path are also closed.
- The hide door is 900mm wide and relatively easy to open by pulling outwards. If any assistance is required please knock on the door.
- The floor is level, has a rubber floor and has a clear turning circle space of 1500 mm.
- The hide has glazed viewing flaps, which can be opened. These are 900mm from the floor allowing viewing from a seated position.
- A portable ramp is available should the viewing area be too high.
- There is movable bench seating at a height of 500 mm and all viewing points have a recessed area under the windows for wheelchair users.
- Binoculars may be borrowed for use in the hide.
- There is always a member of staff or a volunteer in the hide to assist, help identify wildlife and provide information.

Other Areas of Interest

- Wildflower Garden and Ponds

The garden is immediately outside the Visitor Centre and is 100 m long. The main paths are rolled gravel and the maximum gradient is 1:11. There are raised flower beds, bird feeders, insect homes and picnic tables.

There are 4 ponds on the reserve.

1) 50 m from the Visitor Centre, across the car park, are the 2 ponds. There are 5 benches ranging in height from 330 mm to 500 mm high. In front of each pond there is a paved area, 900 mm or 1200 mm deep and a 150 mm wooden upstand.

2) 30 m from the Visitor Centre along the rolled gravel path. It has a small wall 150 mm high.

3) 70 m from the Visitor Centre and is accessed by a rolled gravel path then a 3 m grassy path, 1000mm wide. In front of the pond is a 1200 mm

deep paved area and a 15 mm wooden upstand at the edge of the water.

- Storytelling corner

This area is 100m from the Visitor Centre, along the South Bank trail and then 10m along a natural surface path. It has tree trunk seats, and a bench seat, 430 mm high.

- Kingfisher Corner

From the Storytelling corner the rough natural surface path continues for 40 m down a 1:10 slope to the viewpoint over the river. Here there is a bench that is 530 mm high. The rough path then continues up a 1:9 slope for 30 m to the main path from the reserve entrance to the Visitor Centre.

Contact Information

Address

20 Tanhouse Avenue Great Barr Birmingham B43 5AG

Telephone: 0121 357 7395

Email: sandwellvalley@rspb.org.uk