

Alice Holt Access Statement April 2016

This access statement aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that are offered to staff, volunteers and visitors.

Introduction

Alice Holt comprises several areas of ancient forest, being just over 2000 acres in size. The Park Woodland, which is the main area for public access, is 610 acres and is located on the Dockenfield road just off the A325 between Farnham and Bordon. It is 5 miles from Farnham and 4 miles from Bordon.

The remainder of Alice Holt comprises the land surrounding the Forestry Commission Research Station and Abbots Wood. Both are accessible to the public and each has its own small car park. The car parks are unregulated and are accessed via a level gravelled track from the road.

The Visitor Centre was opened in 2013 and additional development with a new café will begin in 2016. Access into both car parks is via a tarmac drive. The car parks contain designated blue badge parking within walking distance of the Visitor Centre, cafe and bike shop. There is a tarmac path from both car parks to these facilities. All areas within the Visitor Centre are easily accessible as are the toilets.

The Education Centre is situated at the western end of the larger car park and is accessible on flat ground via a tarmac drive.

Alice Holt has numerous walking, running and cycling trails, adventure play areas, bike hire, Go-Ape and a full events programme throughout the year. Maps and information are provided at the Visitor Centre.

Alice Holt welcomes all visitors, and staff are happy to provide assistance if requested. Please call the Visitor Information Office on 0300 067 4622 to speak to a member of the Visitor Services Team.

Contact Information

Address – Alice Holt Visitor Centre, Bucks Horn Oak, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LS

Telephone – 0300 067 4622

e-mail – AliceHolt@forestry.gsi.gov.uk website – forestry.gov.uk/AliceHolt

Information Office hours 0900 to 1630 or 1830 in the summer months.

Site opening – daily except Christmas day 8am to dusk.

Location and Nearest Services

Alice Holt Forest	Road No. A325 Grid Ref: SU 811 417
Cash Point	Petrol Station opposite Halfway House
Bank	Farnham - most major banks Bordon - some banks
Post Office	Rowledge
General Store	Co – Op : Rowledge
Petrol Station	Opposite Halfway House Pub on A325
Public Telephone	Rowledge
Train Station	Bentley and Farnham (1/2 hour service to Waterloo)
Bus Stop	Halfway House on A325
Nearest Village	Rowledge Stores, Post Office,, pubs
Nearest Town	Farnham
Tourist Information Office	Farnham

Car Parking Facilities and Arrival

The clearly signed blue badge parking spaces are situated 50m from the Visitor Centre. Blue badge holders are expected to pay the normal parking charges and badges must be clearly displayed whilst on site. The exception is for Blue Badge minibuses where, instead of minibus charges, the standard parking charges for cars apply.

Pedestrian access to the Visitor Centre is via a level wide tarmac path that is lit in the evenings. There is one main entrance to the Visitor Centre on level ground. Access from the car park to the Visitor Centre is step free.

Payment for car parking can be made at four pay machines that are located in the car parks. Alternatively, payment can be made at the Visitor Centre. Cash and cards are accepted at both.

Toilets

There is a unisex accessible room that can be accessed from the central archway at the Visitors Centre. The room contains a lift, toilet and hand sink. Access is via a RADAR key and one can be borrowed from the Visitor Centre during opening hours. The tiling, sink and toilet are in white. The tap on the sink is a single easy to operate lever tap for hot and cold water. There is an emergency alarm pull cord.

Both the male and female toilets can be accessed via a level tarmac path with no steps.



Visitor Centre

There is step free level access throughout the Visitor Centre and toilets. Access to the Visitor Centre is via two glass and wood doors. There is also a fire exit door. All three doors can easily be opened with a lever handle. All buildings are well lit and have a flat, level floor surface.

The Visitor Centre and Information Office is easily accessible with no steps and the reception counter contains a lowered lifting section for ease of use.

The visitor centre is fitted with a hearing loop system.

There are a number of events and activities during the year and visitors are invited to call the Visitor Centre for further details regarding accessibility.



Café

The café is signed and easily accessible and there is good provision for less able visitors in and around the café. There is also plenty of external seating with a number of wheelchair accessible picnic tables.



Trails



From the Visitor Centre and car parks, there is hard core level access to all the trails. The Easy Access trail is specifically designed with wheelchairs and childrens' buggies in mind and is readily accessible to both.

All trails are relatively easy for walking although the Forest Lodge Trail does have the steeper inclines and is narrower than others. It would not be recommended for the less able.

Alice Holt offers several cycle trails as cycling is permitted throughout the forest. There is a specific Family Cycle Trail of some 5km in length and other trails all suitable for cycling. The 4km Lodge Pond Trail is hilly and narrow in places and only suitable for more adventurous mountain biking. Advice can be sought from the Cycle Centre or Visitor Centre staff if required.

Situated adjacent to the Visitor Centre, the Cycle Centre offers adapted bicycles for hire.

Visitors are also encouraged to walk around the various trails. The trails, paths and roads around the forest are a mixture of compacted and loose stone construction with some hard surfaced areas, and have a balance of level and hilly areas.

Seating is available at regular intervals around the forest trails.

Alice Holt Cycle Centre



Our 3 mile cycle trail is suitable for both children and adults, offering all the family a chance to explore further into the forest. We have a short, safe Beginners Track for those just starting out on two wheels.

The Alice Holt Cycle Centre is open 7 days a week from 9am till 4pm (closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), with a range of adult and children's bikes available.

Picnic Areas

Alice Holt has no designated picnic areas, but has many areas all around the site where visitors can picnic using their own equipment. Some areas have tables which are accessible for visitors with wheelchairs.

Alice Holt maintains 3 BBQs for hire, all being situated in the Timberline Meadow area. They are all accessible on level ground from the adjacent car park.



Lodge Pond

Play Areas

Alice Holt has a number of constructed play areas as well as numerous areas where informal play such as den building is encouraged. The play area adjacent to the Visitor Centre is readily accessible on a level path. The Timberline Play area is currently under refurbishment (Spring 2016) and is normally readily accessible from the Timberline Meadow or Timberline Trail. All of the play equipment is constructed of timber, with some rope elements. The play areas have numerous benches and picnic areas.

Dogs

Dogs are welcome at Alice Holt, but must be kept on a lead at the Visitor Centre, in the car parks and at the children's play areas.

Dogs can be walked off the lead in the Forest, but must be kept under control.

Assistance dogs are permitted in the visitor centre buildings, and in the café.

Water bowls and dedicated areas are readily available for dogs around the Visitor Centre.

Additional Information

Alice Holt staff are trained to receive all visitors and make them feel welcome. This includes disability awareness training.

Future Plans and Visitor Feedback

During the construction of the new café in 2016, we will unfortunately lose some of our current facilities in the construction area. We regret any inconvenience during this busy period. However, the current café and toilet facilities will remain open as normal.

All staff at Alice Holt welcome constructive feedback from visitors regarding any possible improvements to the visitor attraction and associated facilities. Please talk to a member of staff in the Visitor Centre.

Annual Visit England Audit

Alice Holt has an annual visitor audit conducted by VisitEngland called VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) and part of this audit covers accessibility.

Julian Williams

Alice Holt Visitor Centre Manager

April 2016