



RUFFORD ABBEY
COUNTRY PARK

ACCESS STATEMENT

RuffordAbbey.co.uk

01623 677688

RUFFORD ABBEY COUNTRY PARK
Ollerton, Nottinghamshire, NG22 9DF

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INTRODUCTION

Rufford Abbey Country Park is a 150 acre public park owned by Nottinghamshire County Council, managed in partnership with English Heritage and Parkwood Leisure.

Rufford Abbey was once part of Sherwood Forest and the north Nottinghamshire *Dukeries*. The history of the ruins span as far back as a 12th century medieval monastery and later an aristocratic country house estate.

Facilities for visitors include shops, cafe, ice cream parlour and teashop, a lake, woodland walks, gardens, children's play areas, and seasonal outdoor activities including Adventure Golf, Archery and Boating.

GETTING AROUND

Apart from the Abbey ruins and some areas of rough ground out in the woodland, the site is flat and easy to get around. All public buildings can be accessed by wheelchair or mobility scooter. Mobility scooters are available for hire at the Visitor Information Office and there are wheelchairs for free loan.

Much of the site is outdoors. Many visitors come to enjoy the woodland and lakeside paths, to see the birds on the lake, or to explore the historic landscape features in the park.

Allow approximately two to three hours for your visit. Admission is free but a parking charge of £5 applies to all cars, including Blue Badge holders.

PRE-ARRIVAL

A map showing the most accessible routes around the park can be downloaded from **RuffordAbbey.com**

Our website page has details of opening hours for the various park facilities, and the dates when car park charges apply. Maps, information about the park and details of what's on at the park can be found at the visitor reception point in the stables gift shop at Rufford Abbey.

ARRIVAL BY BUS

The park can be accessed by bus. The Sherwood Arrow service, run by Stagecoach, travels between Nottingham and Worksop, calling at Rufford Abbey. If it's your first visit to Rufford, we recommend asking the driver to alert you where to alight. The bus stop is close to the historic Western Gates and a small wooden shelter provides protection in bad weather.

Please note that there is a distance of some 500 yards, between the bus stop and the main visitor facilities, along a loose surfaced path through woodland. Some visitors may prefer to go along the grass verge in front of the ornate *Western Gates* to access the park via the tarmac surface of the main drive, but please take care of cars passing on the busy main road to your right.



ARRIVAL BY CAR

This is a park of two halves; there is a main entrance and a secondary one.

Main visitor facilities - including car parking, visitor information, cafe, and shop/ice cream parlour - are located at the Abbey. The main visitor entrance off the A614 leads into this, the southern end of the park. We recommend this as the most convenient entrance for first time visitors and those interested in the medieval abbey remains.

The smaller northern entrance is at Rufford Mill, accessed off Rufford Lane [follow signs towards Rufford Mills Golf Course, turn right before the ford.] This entrance is handiest for those seeking lakeside views, or if attending a wedding or conference at Rufford Mill.

CAR PARKS

There are car parks at both Rufford Abbey and Rufford Mill entrance, including a number of spaces for disabled drivers. The main Abbey car park has 19 designated spaces for disabled drivers. These are available on a first come first served basis.

Please be aware that because Rufford includes a large area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the park is restricted in how much space it can use for car parking. At peak times overflow car parking on a grassy meadow is utilized to accommodate high visitor numbers.

Bank Holidays are usually busy times with high demand for car parking.

Visitors who need to avoid large numbers of people, noise and busy car park situations [for example, parents of some children with autism] may prefer to plan their trip outside peak times to ensure a more relaxing visit. If visiting on popular days, coming early [before 11:00] or a little later than the peak arrival time [e.g. 15:00 or after] may help.

Groups are welcome, and for minibuses over 12 seats or coaches, there is no parking charge. In peak season it is usually best to book a coach parking space in advance.

CAR PARK FEES

A car parking fee of £5 applies to all cars [including blue badge holders] daily through the main season. Occasionally, if a major event is taking place [e.g. 1940s weekend] a higher Special Event Car Park charge may apply.

Visitors are recommended to ring Visitor Information on 01623 677688 to check before travelling.



THE GIFT SHOP

The main visitor information / reception point is at the Abbey. It is located on the Stables Courtyard from the Abbey car park.

This office has park information and maps. Mobility scooters and wheelchairs [including teen wheelchairs] can be hired and booked here.

There is a small ramp into Visitor Information from the courtyard. The Stables courtyard is a historic range of buildings and retains its original cobbled floor. This can be traversed by scooters and wheelchairs, but is somewhat bumpy.

ATTRACTIONS [DISPLAYS, EXHIBITS etc.]

The Abbey ruins are only partially accessible due to the limitations of being a Scheduled Ancient Monument and due to English Heritage concerns for safety. This attraction is closed.

Entry into the vaulted stone Undercroft [monastic parlour and exhibition on the life of the medieval monks) is at the rear of the building. A shallow wooden ramp gives wheelchair access to the Undercroft. This attraction is currently closed due to safety and conservation concerns.

Stone floors inside the Undercroft are uneven, and there are some shallow ledges which are marked by white nosings. Lighting in this area has to be kept dim, because it is a registered Bat Roost.

The Stables Courtyard and Coach House near the Abbey contain shops and catering outlets, which are all ground floor and accessible.

ABBAY TALES

Our brand new innovative, historical attraction that brings Ruffords rich history to life. Immerse yourself in a journey of discovery, where 800 years of Rufford's history is brought to life. You will walk through the interactive experience, encounter characters through the ages, hear stories from the past and even pick up on the smells and sounds from a time gone by. Tickets available from the gift shop, open daily from 10am.

Download the park map to see the location of each attraction.



PUBLIC TOILETS

In an archway in the Stables Courtyard [Abbey end of park] there is an accessible toilet, locked with a RADAR key to keep it clean.

RADAR key can be borrowed from nearby shop, cafe and Visitor Information Office. 'Changing Places' style toilet also available. This has a hoist, adjustable height changing bed, and adjustable height hand basin. It has a Clos 0 Mat loo with clean / flush facility, and a privacy screen on wheels. Please bring your own sling for hoist.

At the Rufford Mill end of the park there is one accessible toilet [as well as regular toilets] on the ground floor.

There are toilets at Barons also, one of which is accessible, but it is small in size. Wheelchair users may prefer to use the accessible loo in the Stables Courtyard.

CATERING

There are three different public catering outlets - all located in ground floor premises, accessible to wheelchair users. Food can be brought to tables if customers have difficulty standing at the counter/ carrying a tray. Just ask a staff member.

THE COACH HOUSE CAFE

Located in one of the large courtyards near the Abbey ruins and Stables Block. This serves hot and cold snacks and beverages. There is outdoor and indoor seating. Lit by a mixture of natural light and fluorescent lighting.

THE BOAT HOUSE

Located at the Mill end of the park, the Boat House is accessible from the car park or from the lake path via steps or ramp. The outlet is an old boating shed which has been converted into a catering outlet which serves soft scoop ice cream, pizzas and hot and cold drinks. The access is floor level and the lighting is mostly natural daylight, but supported with fluorescent overhead lights.

ROSE GARDEN TEA ROOM

Located in the Courtyard Gift Shop at the Abbey end of the park. Access is floor level with a seating maximum capacity of 12 people at any one time. Lighting is via overhead fluorescent lights. The Rose Garden Tea Room serves barista coffee, loose leaf tea, cakes and sandwiches which is a plated service.

THE MILL TEA SHOP

Located in the courtyard at the north end of the park near the Lake. A small sized outlet with a few tables inside, outside, and take-away service. Drinks, ice creams and cold snacks sold. Mostly natural lighting.



BARONS

Barons adjoins the medieval Abbey ruins, located in the former Abbey kitchen. The seating is at wooden tables in the old Abbey kitchen, which has a fairly even flagstone floor. The outlet is some distance from the main Abbey car park so there is a "drop off" point for mobility impaired customers nearer the restaurant. Lit by daylight and overhead incandescent bulbs. Open as a pop-up outlet.

ICE CREAM PARLOUR

Located in the stable courtyard the ice cream parlour offers an array of ice cream treats, including milkshakes, pancakes and waffles alongside hot and cold drinks.

Accessing the restaurant for disabled drivers and carers: Barons Restaurant is a pop-up restaurant for family and friends to meet for special events. There is a drop off point for mobility impaired customers outside Barons, which is some distance from the main car park.

Barriers and bollards designed to prevent unauthorised vehicle access can be opened by park staff prior to your visit. You need to let us know in advance so staff can do that. We can arrange for a mobility scooter to assist in getting from the car park to Barons, if this better suits your needs. Please discuss your access needs with staff when booking your restaurant table on 01623 677688.

SHOPS

There is one shop within the park - located in the Stables Courtyard.

The Courtyard Gift Shop

- There are two hinged wooden doors each 25 Inches wide.
- **The counter is 37 inches high, with a lower section 30 inches high.**
- There is a lift in the corner of the shop, giving access to Abbey Tales.
- It is an open plan shop with ample space to get around.
- Lighting is a mixture of natural daylight and ceiling spotlights.



GROUNDS AND GARDENS

Rufford Abbey has an attractive mixture of grounds and gardens surrounding the Abbey ruins.

- **The Formal Gardens**
Including several interesting items of modern sculpture.
- **The Abbey Meadow**
An informal grassland area where grass is left long in places for insects and butterflies.
- **The Lake**
Circled by a path of crushed limestone. Most of this circuit is flat, but there is one incline near "Scotland Bank" (indicated on the site access map) which may be a challenge to some wheelchair users.
- **The Reg Hookway Arboretum**
Running down to the Adventure Play Area, and featuring some unusual varieties of birch.
- **The Wilderness Woodland**
A woodland area, crossed by a number of informal crushed limestone paths. This is a shady area [bluebells in spring] and path edges are partially obscured by leaves during autumn and winter.
- **Abbey Lawn and Sheep Meadow**
Mown grassland, fairly flat, where younger visitors can let off steam. Picnics welcome. Family picnic tables provided in section nearest lake path.
- **The Lime Tree Avenue**
a historic avenue of limes leading from the ornate Western Gates to the Abbey's west front.
- **The Adventure Play Area**
Suitable for children of all ages and is accessible for wheelchair uses. Equipment includes, slides, climbing frames, swings, double zip wire, sand pit, a mound with tunnels, ground level trampoline, wonky mirrors, i-swing for wheelchair uses and accessible sandpit. The Adventure Play area is PiPA approved. There is also a catering cabin where you are able to get snacks and hot and cold drinks, open at peak times.
- **The Abbot's Maze**
A maze consisting of wooden posts set into the ground in a wheel design. Wide enough for most wheelchairs.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Mobility scooters are available for hire at £2 per hour [max 2 hour session so everyone gets chance to use them] from Visitor Information. Advance booking advised, telephone 01623 821338.
- Wheelchairs available for free loan. Reserve at Visitor Information.

Contact Information

Address

Rufford Abbey Country Park
Ollerton Nottinghamshire
NG22 9DF

Telephone

01623 821338

Email

General park information

ruffordabbey@parkwood-leisure.co.uk

Complaints or queries

ruffordabbey@parkwood-leisure.co.uk

Grid reference

SK644647

Hours of operation

10:00 - 17:00 every day
except Christmas Day 25 December

Local equipment hire

Mobility scooters available for loan from Information 01623 821338 please book in advance. £2 per hour.
One wheelchair available for loan.

Local accessible taxi

- AAA [Ollerton] 01623 835656
- ACE ABC [Mansfield] 01623 654321
- Abacus [Mansfield] 07789 008811

Local Public Transport

Please ring:

- Travel Line: 08712 002233
- Stagecoach: 01522 580515

Access Statement revised

6 June 2022 by R. Dolan



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