



Access Statement for Kent Wildlife Trust
Tyland Barn, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3DB

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Tyland Barn, a site of immense ecological interest and educative hub of the Kent Wildlife Trust's reserves.

Originally a flat field site, Tyland Barn dates back to the 17C and occupies a site of 1 hectare on the North edge of Maidstone, the County town of Kent.

It is situated at the foot of 'Bluebell Hill', through which the main A229 trunk road passes, linking Maidstone and the Medway towns. The building was renovated in the early 1990's.



Its compact site has been designed to replicate many differing habitat and environment types to be found across Kent.

These varying areas therefore, need to be and are, managed in different ways. They are home to a wide variety of life, applicable to the nature of the ground types and topography. Attention has been carefully paid to describe elements of fauna and flora on display in each.

A pond was specially excavated, which now hosts a wide variety of aquatic life. Special pond dipping platforms have been developed alongside. Dipping is undertaken under staff supervision.

continues . . .



Head Office: Kent Wildlife Trust, Tyland Barn, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3BD
Tel: 01622 662012
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PRE-ARRIVAL

Although on the edge of town, Tyland Barn is relatively easily accessed;

BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT:-

Maidstone East station is the closest main rail line station to Tyland Barn, a distance of approximately 2.2 miles away. The station is situated at the end of Week Street, Maidstone, from where the no. 150 'Farleigh Coaches' company mini-bus can be taken.

'Farleigh Coaches' is the operator providing the bus service. This service (no. 150 at the time of publication) alights at the rear of Tyland Barn, at the lower end of Old Chatham Road at intervals of approximately two hours (pic below), continuing on to Maidstone East rail station. All their mini-buses used are wheelchair accessible.



The Old Chatham Road bus stop shelter, rear of Tyland Barn

This conveniently sheltered and seated bus stop is approximately 50 metres from the Visitor Centre main entrance which is signposted and the pavement opposite the bus shelter leads round to the Visitor Centre car park and main entrance itself.

Enquiries for bus arrival and departure times and other enquiries about accessibility issues should be addressed by the visitor in advance to 'Farleigh Coaches' themselves on 01622 254000. For further information e-mail; 150bus@farleighcoaches.com

Other information about the company can be found through their website; www.farleighcoaches.com

Maidstone, the County town of Kent, is also well served with taxis. Numerous companies exist and are frequently found with contact details widely advertised at Maidstone East Rail station. Contact details can also be found on the internet. Another taxi pick-up point exists at the High Street end of King Street, less than half a mile from the Maidstone East rail station. A synopsis of taxi services for wheelchair users is as follows:-



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Express Taxis (01622 222222) use Hackney Carriages suitable for wheelchair users.

An i-Tunes and Playstore app is downloadable to enable text based booking using links from their website or Facebook page.

Go-Go Cars (01622 211111) use a vehicle with platform suitable for wheelchair users – must be specified by the user in advance if this is required. Their website allows booking by sending an e-mail to; info@gogocars.net

Streamline Cars (01622 750000) have wheelchair accessible vehicles – subject to availability, as school runs often take specifically set-up cars out of circulation – users need to ring in advance and be assured ramped or tail-lift vehicles are available at the time of travel desired. An i-Tunes app is downloadable to enable text based booking.

Cavalier Taxis (01622 754000) can accept wheelchair users virtually of their London Hackney carriage and tail ramp vehicles. However, due to school run and social services work, it is best if the user rings in advance to assure availability. At the time of writing, this company does not have an app or web/e-mail facility with which to book a taxi and is solely restricted to telephone contact.

Other Taxi companies in the area and region are, of course, available.

BY ROAD

By car, the approach road to the Visitor Centre spurs from the southbound A229 trunk road between Maidstone and the Medway towns. For departures, Tyland Barn's main exit leads to the A229 southbound and M20 network.

Cycle paths are to be found away from, but parallel to, the busy A229 trunk road.

Tyland Barn is open;

April to October: daily 10 a.m. - 5p.m. (including Bank Holidays)

November to Christmas Eve: Wednesday to Sunday 11 a.m. - 4p.m.

Christmas to February 15th: closed

February 16th to 31st March: Wednesday to Sunday 11 a.m. - 4p.m.

Guide dogs only are permitted into the Barn itself and round the site walk areas.

Regrettably, neither the internal classroom nor the mini marine area picnic accepts pet dogs and guide dogs themselves must be under control and on leads at all times.

CAR PARKING FACILITIES AND ARRIVAL

Tyland Barn is free to park, enter and browse. If the car park is full, there are designated parking bays on the adjacent roadside, external to the site. The car park was newly levelled, tarmaced and freshly marked out in late 2016. Two priority spaces for blue badge holders have been allocated in the car park closest to the Barn Visitor Centre.

Two lighting stanchions provide halogen lamp illumination to the area when required.



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Below: Tyland Barn main entrance – View to disabled car park spaces and main path into site.



Above: Tyland Barn main entrance viewed from visitor centre entrance, showing wide access path and bricked paved path to visitor centre entrance.

The car park leads quickly to a wide and stable, compacted gravel footpath, a surface which forms the majority of the main paths around the site (see pics above).

A brick paved path leads the visitor the final 12.5 metres to the double barn doors of the Visitor Centre main public entrance (pic below). There is one public, glazed double barn-door entrance to the Visitor Centre. One door open gives a width of 80 cms (800mm = 31.5 inches). The entrance is at ground level, without any steps or handrails.



Tyland Barn - public entrance door.

The building is a welcoming and traditional rustic timber-framed, Kentish barn with exposed beams and flat laid brick floor. This hosts a café complex featuring new furniture, producing



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healthy, locally sourced, hot and varying cold food menu options with a variety of other comestible goods and hot and cold drinks. Its serving counter is 89 cms above floor level.



Tyland Barn's café kitchen, seating, retail and gallery areas.

Internally the Barn has been attractively designed to accommodate the cafes' three table seating area (tables are 750mm high and host 3 or 4 seats of 450mm height), bordered by a wide ranging set of locally-produced, strongly wildlife themed, merchandise display shelves.

Goods are displayed at a height of 50cms upwards and members of staff are always on hand to help with higher level displayed goods purchases. Beyond the retail goods area, visitor centre space is given over to art exhibitions, usually environmentally themed, featuring local artists.

These exhibits are arranged without compromise to the visitor centre's core educative activities, undertaken in the complex's' classroom and in its covered outdoor classroom beyond the visitor centre itself. The barn complex's classroom is accessible for wheelchair users courtesy of an external ramp from the small bench and seated picnic area, via double opening doors.



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Left: Tyland Barn children's interactive education area. Right: External ramp to classroom entrance.

The exhibition space leads to another open area devoted to providing information in the form of well-lit visual displays and educative information for children and parents to engage with (maps with flora, fauna and geological feature overlays, for example). Educative goods and free informative leaflets are ranged close-by.

Newly refurbished indoor toilets are located via an open a corridor spurring from the main visitor centre retail and café seating area. An accessible baby-changing toilet room is the first encountered, followed by a Gentlemen's toilet and finally Ladies' toilets. All are well lit with ample hand washing and drying facilities, cleaned and checked daily with no steps between the visitor centre and toilets corridor.



Above:- Tyland Barn's toilet access corridor and, right, disabled and baby changing toilet facility

Every effort has been made to make facilities easily accessible for users. Staff are always on hand to support access if necessary.



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Lighting in the visitor centre is mainly by way of LED mini-spots augmenting its glazed double doors and other window installations which allow a good deal of natural light into its airy, high-roofed structure.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

An air-horn will sound should a fire be discovered and evacuation required.

From the public area within the barn, the two fire assembly points are;

At the entrance to the field on the far side of Old Chatham Road - with care to be taken when crossing the road

and;

At the grassy area at far end of the main car park.

Staff will be on hand to facilitate this and sweep the building, paying close attention to and priority for those with hearing or other disabilities.

It should be noted the Barn is not fitted with a hearing induction loop.

EXTERNALLY

The illustrations below show the Trust's Tyland Barn Site in plan view.

Figure 1 shows its developed features.

Figure 2 shows pathway and other publicly accessed area dimensions and suitability of access.



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Fig 1. Tyland Barn – Site Design Features

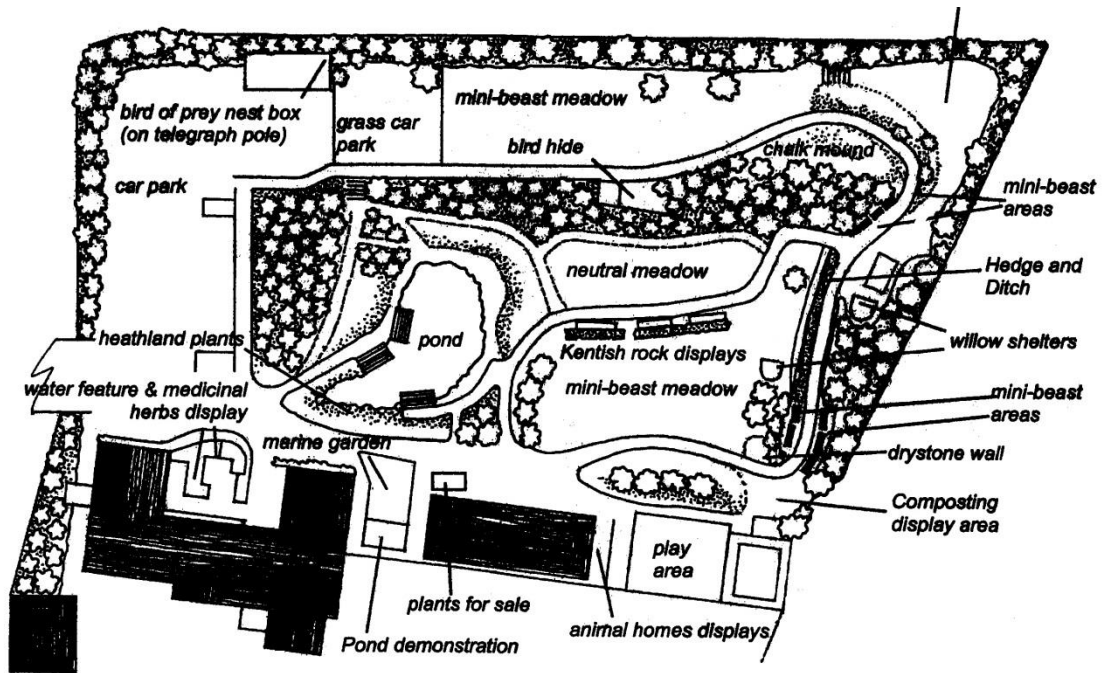
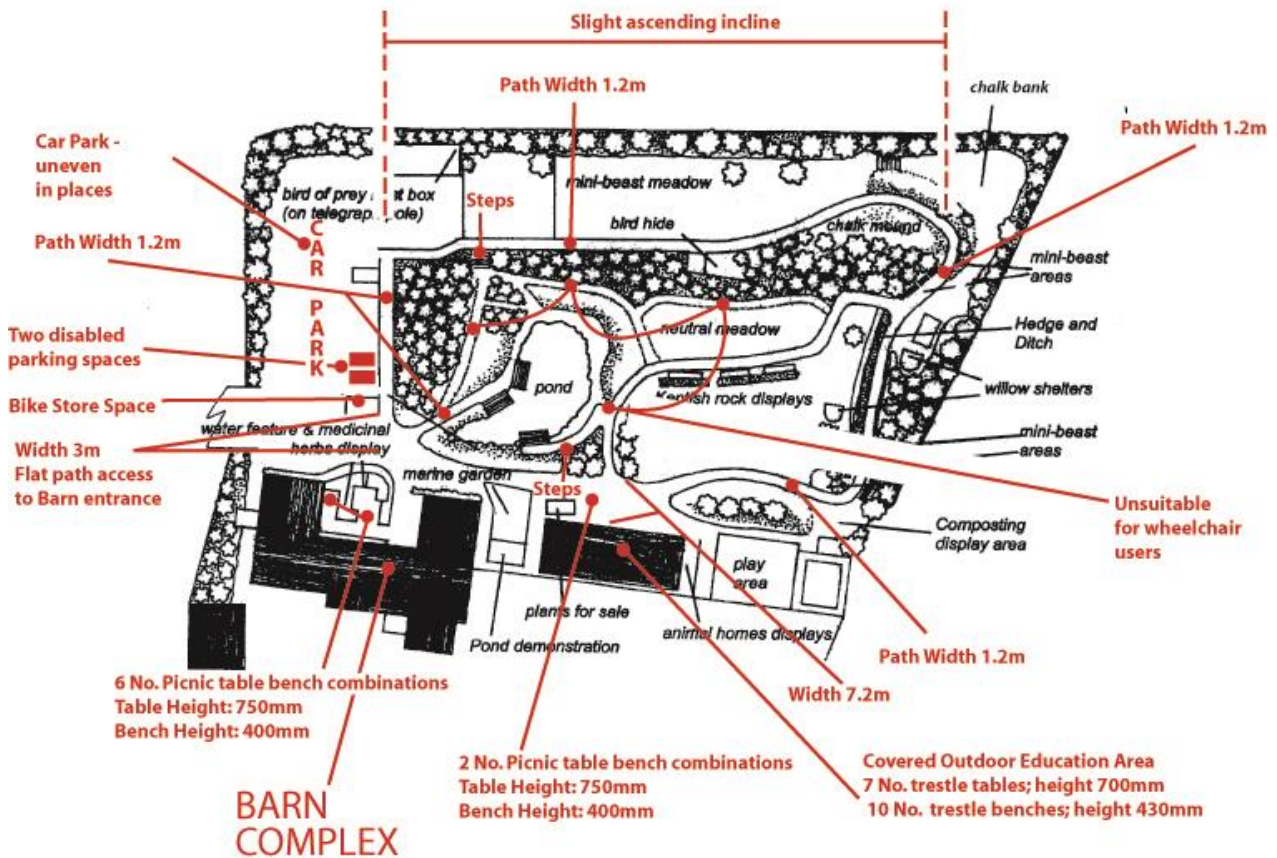


Fig 2. Tyland Barn - Accessibility Detail

Kent Wildlife Trust - Tyland Barn - Public Area Accessibility Detail



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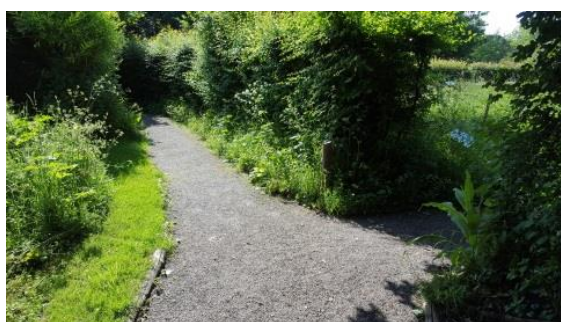


View from Tyland Barn main entrance to seated picnic area showing the wheelchair user-friendly picnic table (right) and incorporating a ramped access to the internal classroom beyond.



View toward Tyland Barn picnic seating area and small marine area.

Whether leaving the visitor centre or starting at the car park to explore the site, visitors can choose to inspect the site's features using the main 'circular' 1.2 m wide walk paths, passing the main pond either at the end or beginning of their explorations. In approximate terms, the site is akin to the size of a standard football field.



Tyland Barn – main path surface example



Tyland Barn – main pond and dipping platform areas



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Tyland Barn – main pond and dipping platform areas view towards main barn.

Bespoke anti-slip decking has been used to create pond dipping platforms to two edges of the pond, with associated bench seating of approximately 4 mtr. lengths and 550mm height. Edging rails have been fitted to the platforms. Disabled visitors can therefore use them with confidence alone or assisted. Two rescue poles have been installed beside the two main platform areas in case of emergency.



Tyland Barn outdoor covered classroom/picnic area.

The external open aspect classroom hosts 7 no. bench tables with 10 no. treble benches available for group education class visits, with a slight stepped floor edge of a few centimetres height only. Bench tables are 700mm high and the treble benches are 430mm high.



Tyland Barn – children's play area.



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A multiplay unit on a loose bark safer surface features in the compact children's play area which is adjacent to the outdoor classroom.

More centrally, there are undulating paths with inclines, traversing the central plot areas transitioning from stone to grass. These are probably not suitable for wheelchair users although portions of their ecological content can be seen at least partially from the main paths described as they are passed.

With appropriate guidance, visually impaired people can also derive much pleasure from Tyland Barn's land; the soundscape of birdsong; the textures of the materials used in the construction of mini-beast homes; the smells and feel and sounds of the many differing trees, plants, flowers, grasses and herbs which have been copiously planted and managed on-site and that have matured over time.

With the topographical and geological features Kent Wildlife Trust has incorporated on site during its development and the historic nature of the building, there are naturally certain issues and limitations regarding access for all. However, the Trust always works to improve its facilities and access for all. Their helpful staff are always on hand to welcome and provide assistance as required and necessary and it positively welcomes any feedback and comment visitors may have to help it achieve this aim.

CONTACT

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MAP CO-ORDINATES

Latitude - Longitude:

51.305684,0.513668-+



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