

## Woodhorn Museum Access Guide

Situated on the outskirts of Ashington, less than 20 miles from Newcastle, Woodhorn Museum combines a historic colliery setting (with scheduled ancient monument status) and the stunning contemporary architecture of 'the Cutter' building. This is a purpose-built home to permanent and temporary exhibitions including the Ashington Group of Pitmen Painters, and to the Northumberland Archives, Northumberland County Council's Archive service, repository to over 800 years of the county's history.

This Access Guide sets out key points of information for a visit to the museum, followed by a more in-depth guide to the physical layout of the site and what to expect during your visit.

We look forward to welcoming you at the museum, but if you have any queries ahead of your visit or require any assistance or further information please phone 01670 624455 or email [hello@museumsnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:hello@museumsnorthumberland.org.uk).

### 1. Key Points for your Visit

- **Admission:** Disabled visitors get charged at the concessionary rate and any carers get in free of charge.
- **Wheelchair Access:**
  - **The five original colliery buildings** currently open to the public are accessible at ground level.
  - **'The Cutter' main museum building** is set out over 2 floors, but is built into the hillside, allowing ground level access to both floors. There is a long access ramp between the upper and lower ground floors hung with iconic Miner's banners.
  - **The shop and café**, located in the Cutter, are also fully accessible on ground level.
- **Accessible toilets:** These are located in the Admin & Security Building tourist info point in the car park, and on both floors of the Cutter Building. There is also an accessible toilet in the Workshop galleries, when the building is open to the public. Toilets will be cleaned regularly through the day.

- **Changing Places Toilet:** A Changing Places toilet has been installed at Woodhorn earlier this year so people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and/or other physical disabilities can visit our museum in safety and comfort.
- **Baby change facilities:** Are available on the upper floor of the Cutter building. An additional baby change facility is available in the Workshop Galleries when the building is open to the public. Baby Changing facilities will be cleaned regularly through the day.
- **Social Story:** A visual social story guide showing what you can expect to see on a visit to Woodhorn is available to download and print on our website.
- **Audio & Subtitles:** Most of our public buildings and exhibitions have audio and/or subtitled interpretation available. Please ask our visitor hosts for help if you encounter any problems.
- **Braille 3D plan:** There is a 3D plan of the Cutter building available at the Cutter entrance foyer. This gives an idea of the building's layout.
- **Drop-off access and disabled parking:** If you have arrived by car and would like to be dropped off nearer to the Winding House or Cutter Building please speak to the visitor host at the entrance hut. There are Easy-Access parking spaces available in the main car park and at the Cutter building.
- **Wheelchairs and Scooter available:** We know that our museum site is quite spread out and can take a while to get around. We have 2 wheelchairs and an electric scooter available for our visitors' use - please ask at the entrance hut when you arrive.
- **Hearing Loops:** There are hearing loops throughout our main Coal Town Exhibition and at our staffed welcome desks.
- **Assistance Dogs:** We welcome assistance dogs throughout the museum buildings.
- **Seating:** There are benches and seats available both indoors and outdoors across the whole museum site. Staff can provide additional seating if required when queuing.
- **Ear Defenders:** Visitors can borrow a pair of ear defenders from the main welcome desk. Please ask a member of staff. These will be sanitized after each use.
- **Quiet Space:** If you require a quiet space during your visit, we can make one available. Please ask a staff member for the duty manager, who will be able to help during your visit. If you know in advance of your visit that you might need a quiet space, please let us know and we can direct you to where it is on arrival.
- **Early Bird Opening:** During special exhibitions we usually offer a regular early bird timeslot for visitors with an autistic spectrum condition to enjoy the exhibition

or activity without big crowds and noise. Please see our website for more detail or call us to find out more on 01670 624455.

- **Assistance During your Visit:** Our friendly visitor hosts are on hand throughout the museum and wider site should you require any assistance.
- **Tours and demonstrations:** We offer a range of tours throughout the day. Please ask a member of staff for more information. If you are unable to attend one of our set times and you wish to have a guided tour, please speak to a member of staff who may be able to offer a tour at your convenience.
- **Regular Events and Activities:** In addition to our permanent exhibitions we put on regular events and offer a varied programme of temporary exhibitions - please see our website [www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk) for further details, or call the museum on 01670 624455 and ask for the duty manager.
- **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower:** our staff are trained in and support the Sunflower lanyard scheme. If you require any assistance during your visit, please ask a visitor host.

## 2. Pre-Arrival on Site

For full details and maps of how to reach us please see the visit section of our website. Alternatively, you can plan your journey by car or public transport using [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) simply enter your postcode and ours, which is NE63 9YF to get directions.

If you are using a satnav to find us do not enter our postcode as it will take you to the wrong location. Instead look up the museum as a place of interest, or alternatively just watch out for the brown and white signs as you get close and then Woodhorn's large, bright entrance banners.

Woodhorn is located within the QEII Country Park, 1.4 miles from Ashington town centre and bus station.

- **Walking to Woodhorn:** To make your way to Woodhorn from Ashington Bus Station is 15-20 minute walk, most of which is through the QEII Country Park. If you decide to walk, here are the directions:
  - turn right out of the bus station, and right again at the roundabout along the A197.
  - Go straight over the mini roundabout, and after about 600 metres go through the white gates on the left-hand side.
  - Bear right and follow the path through the QEII Country Park to the Woodhorn car park.

- **By Train:** The nearest railway station is Morpeth, which is 9.5 miles away or Cramlington which is 9 miles away and a more direct route but has a less frequent train service. From there you can get a taxi to Woodhorn.
- **By Taxi:** Taxis are available locally. If you require an accessible taxi you can book this in advance - by Phoenix Taxis on 01670 817900. Accessible taxis are available; please mention this requirement when you book.
- **By Car:** The entrance drive from the main road (A189) is about 0.4 miles long. It is quite winding, edged with trees on each side and has no pavement and so we asked drivers to observe given speed limits. Directions are listed above.

### 3. Car Parking

- From the museum access road, follow the signs down to the main car park.
- There are two parts to our car park – on the right a tarmacked area nearest the museum entrance which is best for visitors with mobility problems, wheelchairs, buggies and pushchairs, and on the left a larger gravelled area.
- Five car park bays on the tarmac area are allocated to visitors with blue badges - these bays are clearly marked to the far right of the car park as you enter, next to the main entrance path. On busy event days we reserve all the tarmac car park for accessible parking.
- The car park is situated at a short distance outside the main museum site, with a level concrete path leading to the main entrance.
- The car park is well lit at night with lighting at both high and ground level.
- If required, we will allow drop off/pick up of visitors with mobility issues closer to the main museum entrance. Please do ring us in advance 01670 624455 to discuss further or speak to the member of staff at the entrance hut when you arrive, and we will help arrange this for you.
- Because the site is pedestrianized and for the safety of all our visitors this must be arranged in advance with the visitor host at the entrance hut and a member of our staff will accompany your vehicle in and out.
- Accessible toilet facilities are available in the Tourist info point, located just inside in the right-hand entrance of the Admin and security building, which is the building adjacent to the tarmacked car park area.

### 4. Arrival onto the Main Museum Site

- On arrival you may find a queue to access the entrance hut.
- You will be greeted at our entrance hut at the main gates by a visitor host. They will be working behind a Perspex screen, which may affect how they can be heard. If you are having difficulties hearing them through the screen, please let them know. The visitor host will give you a leaflet which includes a site map.
- Museums Northumberland operate an Annual Pass for all our visitors. Details can be found on our website, where you can also purchase admission in advance of your visit.
- If you have any special requirements or concerns about your visit, please do let the visitor host know and we will do our utmost to facilitate your needs.
- There is an induction loop in the entrance hut.

## **5. Getting around Our Buildings**

- The site map will help guide you around the one-way route around the site. If you follow the main entrance path it will take you into the main pit yard, and from there you can visit the two open colliery buildings, the café, or the modern Cutter Building, which houses our permanent and temporary exhibitions, shop and toilets as well as the Northumberland County Archives Service (access by appointment only).
- The Cutter museum building has an entrance (bottom floor) and an exit (upper floor), both with level access and automatic doors. The doors are both 200cm wide.
- The entrance to our historic buildings is at ground level. The doors to the buildings are kept propped open to allow easy access during public opening hours
- Our historic buildings still have their original floors. The Heapstead contains an internal ramp to a lower level. The floor surface inside the stables and at the south side of the Heapstead is uneven.
- If you require any assistance during your visit, there are members of staff on duty throughout the site.

## **6. Cutter Building Main Entrance and Reception Area**

- The main entrance area of the museum is situated on the ground floor with step free, level access, throughout.
- There are some cushioned seats in this area.

- The floor surface is carpet tiles.
- The area is evenly and well-lit with overhead lighting from fluorescent lights.
- There is a lowered section of the welcome desk. This is covered with Perspex screens, which may affect how the staff at the desk can be heard. If you are having difficulties hearing them through the screen, please let them know.
- Markers on the floor will indicate directions of travel to access toilets, shop, and exhibition.
- There is a hearing loop system installed at the desk, and at the entrance desk to our large temporary exhibition space in the Workshop Galleries.
- A magnifying glass, pen and pad of paper are available at each counter, and we have ear defenders available to borrow.
- There is a Braille map of the main museum building located in the main entrance area of the Cutter building.
- Wheelchair and mobility scooter loan is available, free of charge, on request at both entrance doors to the museum and in the car park.
- Our visitor host staff (visible in grey uniform) are on hand to assist and advise in the entrance areas.

## **7. Displays and Exhibitions**

- Visitor hosts are stationed around the site to assist visitors with interpretation and information on exhibitions, information and heritage.
- There are interactive touch screen guides available in the Ashington Group gallery; these are handheld.
- Interpretation boards are all in large text and have more visual photographs and images where applicable. All are at a maximum top height of 165cm.
- Some objects are uncased and able to be touched, and hand sanitizer will be provided nearby if you wish to use it.
- In most public buildings on site interpretation is available in both audio, film and text panel formats.
- There are laminated printed transcripts of all exhibition audio inter-actives available from the welcome desk at the museum entrance. These will be sanitized after each use.
- Large print versions of temporary exhibition interpretation panels which give detail of the information and displays in the museum are also available.
- Our main permanent exhibition Coal Town has a hearing induction loop fitted throughout.

- Film footage in Coal Town has subtitles as standard.
- The Pitmen Painters permanent exhibition has interactive iPads guides available to provide visitors with additional interpretation, and hand sanitizer is available across the site if you wish to use it. If these are not immediately available upon arrival in the gallery, please ask a member of staff.
- Where historic buildings are not fully physically accessible, information and photographs of interiors are available.
- The building floors are concrete screed, vinyl, carpet tiles or wood.
- Our Winder in Winding House No. 2 can be viewed from the ground floor.

## **8. Public Toilets**

- Public toilets are located at the tourist information point in the car park, the Workshop Galleries (open for temporary exhibition and events) and on both ground and upper ground floors of the Cutter Building. Toilets will be cleaned regularly through the day.
- All toilets have level access.
- These toilets have a unisex accessible toilet at each location and doors are 900mm/35.5ins wide.
- The toilet height is 400mm/15.7ins.
- There are vertical rails either side of both basin and toilet.
- There is a horizontal rail on the side wall adjacent to the toilet.
- In the Cutter building there is colour contrast with critical surfaces; walls are red, and toilet and washbasins are white.
- A flashing light when the fire alarm sounds.
- There is an emergency alarm pull cord in each toilet.
- The toilets are well lit with fluorescent tube overhead lighting with a low-level light switch.
- The flooring is non-slip vinyl.
- There are lever taps on the sinks.
- There are baby change facilities in the Workshop Galleries (open for temporary exhibition and events), on the upper ground of the Cutter building and on the ground floor of Winding House No. 1 (functions and education centre).
- Please ask a member of staff if you need directions or require assistance with these facilities.

## **9. Catering**

- The museum café is situated on the ground floor and has step free level access from the entrance through an automatic sliding door from the outside, you can also access the café via an entrance in the Cutter Building. Floors are level throughout.
- The entrance doors to the restaurant and café are 130cm wide.
- Tables in the restaurant and café are well spaced apart. They have a clear height from the floor of 609mm/24ins, and a mixture of upright chairs without arms.
- Lighting in all areas is natural daylight, with additional overhead lighting.
- The flooring in the café is slip resistant vinyl. Floor markers indicate direction of travel and two metre distances.
- Where possible all our food produce is locally sourced. You may find some of our food is pre-packed, and beverages are available in disposable cups if required. Please discuss with staff if you have any questions.
- We do our best to cater for any dietary requirements; please contact us in advance to check any specific requests you may have.
- The cafe is self-service from a counter; however, staff can assist with table or tray service on request.
- Large print menus are available.
- All staff can assist by running through menus with you.

## **10. Shop**

- There is a shop with a range of unique souvenirs, gifts, local crafts and books etc located directly at the main entrance area in the Cutter building.
- There are two sets of glass doors to the shop, both are 200cm wide and are automatic.
- The shop is level throughout.
- A low-level area at the counter is provided. This is surrounded by a Perspex screen.
- There is ample room within the shop for a large wheelchair or mobility scooter to manoeuvre and turn.
- There are tall display racks and low tables accessible from a seated position.
- The counter has a hearing loop system installed and staff have been trained in its use.
- Staff at the shop desk can offer assistance if required.

## **11. Museum Grounds**



- Woodhorn has extensive external grounds and is located next door to QEII Country Park and lake, which is accessible via a footpath from our main car park. There is a level pathway all the way round the lake.
- Around the buildings and main pit yard there are either concrete paths or compacted gravel.
- There is signage and interpretation at low levels around all buildings for visitor information and orientation.
- There are two picnic areas, one on a paved area on the events field, the other on a paved area next to the Cutter building upper ground floor entrance. Picnic benches and wooden tables are available. Regrettably we are currently unable to offer indoor picnic space.
- General waste and recycle waste bins are located at the picnic areas and inside all buildings.
- There are wooden benches for visitor use all around the museum site and country park.
- The main site concrete pathways are between 190-250cm in width.
- Around the main museum site and on the events field, there are grassed areas which can be uneven underfoot; caution should be taken in these areas.
- The colliery buildings are a scheduled ancient monument and as a historic site should be accessed with due care and attention by all our staff and visitors.

## **12. Additional Information:**

- All our staff receive regular customer service training that includes disability awareness.
- We are here to help you make the most of your visit to Woodhorn, so please do contact us in advance of your visit if you require any specific assistance or information.
- We have a set of evacuation procedures – should you require it someone will assist you with evacuation either out of the building or to a refuge.
- All our information brochures, evacuation procedures etc. are available in large print.
- We welcome trained assistance dogs.
- Clear signage is used throughout the attraction using Arial font and large lettering.
- Hand sanitizer gel is available across the site.
- We can offer a list of nearby accommodation and details of their Access Statements for information, where available.

- Please also see our website for public events and exhibition programme.

### **13. Future Plans**

- Along with our sister museums in Morpeth, Hexham and Berwick we intend to increase our community outreach and project work - going out to groups who can't easily come to us.
- Please do get in touch if you are interested in a visit or workshop or see our website for opportunities to participate in our upcoming projects.
- Woodhorn is committed to making the museum accessible to all our visitors and in 2015/16 commissioned an Access Audit of the museum site and services. We are currently working through the findings and priorities raised in the audit and will incorporate recommendations into our business planning over the next 3-5 years.
- Where feasible we intend to improve our facilities and experiences through consultation with local disability awareness groups - this includes offering early bird quiet visit opportunities, and Dementia friend training for all our staff. If you have any suggestions for improving accessibility at Woodhorn, please do get in touch.

### **14. Contact Information Address:**

Woodhorn Museum,  
QEII Country Park  
Ashington  
Northumberland  
NE63 9YF  
Tel: 01670 624455  
Email: [hello@museumsnorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:hello@museumsnorthumberland.org.uk)  
Web: [www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk)

### **15. Opening Hours:**

10am-4pm Wednesday to Sunday  
We are also open every day during school holidays and bank holidays (except Christmas and New year). Please see our website for further details.

### **16. Local Carers:**

Carers Northumberland  
Suite 17  
Wansbeck Business Centre  
Rotary Parkway

Ashington  
Web: <http://www.carersnorthumberland.org.uk>  
Tel:01670 518204

Local Equipment Hire:

Cramlington Mobility Hire  
16 Silverdale Road  
Cramlington  
NE23 3LW  
Tel: 01670 737 249  
Web: [www.CramlingtonMobilityHire.co.uk](http://www.CramlingtonMobilityHire.co.uk)

CMH hires mobility equipment and delivers within a 50-mile radius of Cramlington.

Equipment for hire: Mobility Scooters, Ramps, Wheelchairs, Rollators, Zimmer Frames, Walking Aids. Scooters and wheelchairs come with a complimentary waterproof and Hi-Viz waistcoat. New equipment also supplied.

Local Accessible Taxi:

Phoenix Taxis 01670 817900

### **Local Public Transport:**

Ashington Bus Station  
Ashington  
Northumberland  
NE63 9AA

Please note that the bus station is unmanned but operators are listed below:

Arriva 0844 800 4411

Go North East 0845 6060260

National Express 08717 818181

Please note: 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.