



HIGHGROVE

Accessibility Guide to Highgrove Gardens

Highgrove welcomes visitors with disabilities and wants everyone to have an enjoyable time. This guide offers general advice on the physical accessibility of the gardens. For more information, and to discuss how else we can help, please contact Customer Services at: customerservices@highgrovegardens.com

Tickets and entry

- We offer free access companion tickets for disabled visitors who need help – please book through Customer Services before buying visitor tickets through the website.
- Recognised service dogs are welcome in the gardens and in the Orchard Room, which houses our visitor reception area, toilets and restaurant, and in the shop. Please contact Customer Services in advance if you are bringing a service dog, as dogs are generally not allowed onto the estate. Service dogs should wear a lead or harness that identifies them as working dogs.
- As well as tickets, please bring proof of identity (eg a passport, driving licence, library / bus pass with a photograph).

Transport, arrival and parking

- Public transport is limited locally and most people arrive by car or coach. Highgrove is in Doughton, near Tetbury in Gloucestershire, post code **GL8 8TQ**. Not all satellite navigation systems locate us accurately – please only use them as a general guide. For further information see: <https://www.highgrovegardens.com/pages/directions>
For **What3Words** users, please use **presuming.episodes.talent**
- We generally ask visitors to arrive no more than 15 minutes before their garden tour – please arrive earlier if you need extra time, for example to transfer into a wheelchair.
- Highgrove is a royal residence and the first people you see at the entrance are the police, who may visibly be carrying guns.
- Staff at the entrance will check your tickets and direct you to the car park. Staff at the car park will help you park and direct you to the Orchard Room, where garden tours begin.
- The car park slopes in parts and has gravelled and grassed parking areas. There are two Blue Badge parking spaces next to the Orchard Room. These cannot be booked in

advance, but if they are full, staff will help you find the best place to park. A sloping, 120cm wide flagstone path leads from the Blue Badge spaces to the Orchard Room.



Gravelled parking



Grassed parking



Blue Badge parking

- Coaches may drop passengers off in the car park and return to pick them up after their garden tour – they cannot park on site as we have limited space.

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters

- You are welcome to bring a mobility scooter to use on your garden tour. Scooters cannot be taken into the Orchard Room or the shop, but please ask if you need to borrow a wheelchair to transfer from a scooter, eg to visit the toilets.
- We do not have wheelchairs to lend to visitors for garden tours, but wheelchairs and mobility scooters can be hired locally from Optimum Mobility, ready for when you arrive. Telephone them in advance on 01666 840060 or at www.optimummobility.co.uk
- Wheelchairs and mobility walkers are allowed inside the Orchard Room, shop and gardens.

- Wheelchairs with heavy-duty tyres designed for outdoor use are preferable to lightweight models.
- Wheelchair-users should be accompanied by a strong companion. Free tickets for access companions are available – please book through Customer Services before buying visitor tickets through the website.

Garden terrain and facilities

- The gardens are level, but paths are made of different materials, including bound and loose gravel, flagstones, irregular paving, cobblestones, grass and earth.
- Most paths vary in width from 70cm to 200cm. One path is 50cm wide, but there is an alternative route for wheelchair-users. Puddling can occur in wet weather and paths can be slippery. Please dress for the weather and wear sensible clothing and footwear.
- Visitors go around the gardens in groups, with a guide. Tours cover around a mile, and last between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on the time of year.
- There are no visitor seats in the garden. You may find it helpful to bring a folding stool or shooting stick to use when your guide is speaking.
- There are no toilets in the garden.
- If a visitor feels unwell or wants to leave their garden tour mid-way, their guide will contact staff to collect them – guides and staff carry two-way radios and help can be called for at any time.
- Garden tours begin in the Orchard Room, from where there is level access into the garden.
- There is a detailed description of the garden route later in this guide.

The Orchard Room

- The Orchard Room houses the visitor reception area, toilets and restaurant. All the facilities are on one level, with level access from the car park. The shop is in an adjacent building which can be accessed from the restaurant and is on a lower level. There are two shallow steps down to this level, as well as a ramp (for a detailed description see information on the garden route later in this guide).
- The Orchard Room entrance has heavy, double, multi-paned glass doors. These open into a porch which is wide enough to allow wheelchairs to turn. The doors are each 107cm wide, and the porch turning space is 145cm deep and 180cm wide.



Doors into the Orchard Room



Porch and visitor reception area

- The reception area has a flagstone floor, partly covered by loose-fitting rugs. Seating is also available.
- Walls and doors have high colour contrast. Some parts of the building have low, atmospheric lighting and background music.



Visitor reception desk

- Staff greet visitors, scan their tickets, and explain where garden tours begin. Please ask if there are other ways we can help you to enjoy your visit. The desk is 110cm high, with open, side access allowing wheelchair-users to speak to staff more easily.
- ***Please note, in the 2023 season the reception area will temporarily be used as the shop. Staff will direct visitors to our temporary reception area outside the Orchard Rooms.***
- Our only visitor toilets are off the reception area. These include a 46cm high unisex accessible toilet which has transfer rails, as well as a low basin with grab rails, and a baby-changing table. The door opens outwards and is 97cm wide. The room measures 163cm wide by 229cm deep. There is a 150cm deep turning space in front of the toilet.



Accessible toilet outside



Accessible toilet inside

- A heavy 104cm wide door opens from the reception area into the restaurant. The restaurant is bright and spacious and has a wooden floor. There is soft background music. Please ask if you would like to be seated in a quiet corner.
- Tables and chairs can be easily moved to accommodate wheelchairs. Tables are 77cm high. Chairs are armless and 46cm high.



Door into the restaurant



Tables and chairs in the restaurant

- Full-height, multi-paned French windows give level access onto the Terrace. Additional French windows lead to the courtyard, where garden tours end. The courtyard is lower than the Orchard Room. There are two stone steps leading down to it, as well as a stone ramp (for a detailed description see the next section of this guide).
- The restaurant has table service. Menus are available in large print, and large-handled mugs and cutlery can also be provided.
- We cater for vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free diets. Other diets can be catered for – please contact Customer Services at least seven days before your visit.

The garden tour

Garden tours include up to 26 people, led by a garden guide. Please tell your guide if they can help you in any way, eg by keeping you close to them to help with hearing or lip-reading.

Mobile phones, cameras and similar electronic recording devices cannot be used in the gardens to receive or transmit calls or data, or to take electronic notes. Please switch any devices off or put them on airplane mode until you return to the Orchard Room. This rule does not apply to electronic medical equipment for personal use.

Guides and staff carry two-way radios for use in emergencies in the garden.

The gardens are generally peaceful and alive with the natural sound of birds and insects. Gardeners may sometimes be heard using machinery, and for safety's sake the visitor route may change if heavy equipment is being used.

The gardens are level, but paths are made of different materials, including bound and loose gravel, flagstones, irregular paving, cobblestones, grass and earth. They can be slippery in wet weather.

The following notes describe the physical details of the walking route. They are explained in the order that garden tours usually operate, but the order can change, and not all areas of the garden are open at all times of the year.

Please note, the photographs were taken in January, when planting has died back and it's easier to see the garden structure.

- Flagstone and then gravel path, 109cm wide, from the Orchard Room to the garden entrance. The entrance gate is 105cm wide.



Route from Orchard Room



Garden entrance

- Meandering grass path through the Cottage Garden, between 70cm and 170cm wide.



Stone path in Cottage Garden



Grass path in Cottage Garden

- Straight but irregular and uneven stone paving through the 'T' shaped Rose Pergola. One section is 130cm wide, and another 100cm wide.



Irregular paving in the Pergola



Uneven paving in the Pergola

- Route around the house and over the Thyme Walk is across grass and uneven paving.



Grass path around house



Uneven paving across Thyme Walk

- Through a gate, 110cm wide, across stone paving in the Sundial Garden.



Paving into Sundial Garden



Out of Sundial Garden



Gravel at front of the house

- Through a gate, 124cm wide, onto bound gravel at the front of the house.
- Curved flagstone path around Sundial Garden 90cm wide, then straight flagstone path along the Hornbeam Avenue 120cm wide.



Path around Sundial Garden



Path along Hornbeam Avenue

- Through a 105cm wide gate onto a bound gravel path 110cm wide. Another gate, 105cm wide, then leads into the Azalea Walk. The path here is 175cm wide and straight, but the planting overhangs.



Path along Serpentine Walk



Path into Azalea Walk

- Half-way point of the tour.
- Through a 125cm wide gate into the Kitchen Garden. Paths are wide and straight, around 250cm wide and made of loose gravel.



Gate into Kitchen Garden



Path in Kitchen Garden

- Through a 115cm wide gate into the Arboretum. Paths curve and are a minimum 110cm wide, with overhanging shrubs and trees. Made of earth, gravel and stone rubble, paths can be muddy, and can puddle in wet weather.



Gate into Arboretum



Path in Arboretum



Path in Arboretum

- Through a double gate into the Winterbourne Garden and around the Wildflower Meadow. Paths curve gently and are around 180cm wide, and made of gravel.



Winterbourne Garden gate



Path around Wildflower Meadow

- Through a 150cm wide arch into the Stumpery. Some paths are cobbled and uneven, and care should be taken in wet weather. Other paths are gravel. Paths meander, and are a minimum 70cm wide, with overhanging trees and shrubs. There is an alternative route to allow wheelchair-users to keep to the wider paths.



Entrance to the Stumpery



Path in Stumpery



Path in Stumpery

- A straight, 200cm wide gravel path leads across the meadow to the Gladiator statue and the Lily Pool Garden, and onto grass.



Path across meadow



Grass by the Gladiator statue

- A cobbled 50cm - 70cm wide path meanders through the Laurel Tunnel. This can be slippery, and planting overhangs. There is an alternative route for wheelchair-users.



Path in the Laurel Tunnel



Alternative route

- A 190cm wide grass path leads through the Buttress Garden and through a 150cm wide arch back to where we entered the gardens at the start of the tour.



Buttress Garden path



Arch from the Buttress Garden

- On summer tours only, the final stop is the Carpet Garden. There is level access into the garden through a 115cm wide double door, but the garden also has 150cm wide steps up to a higher level which cannot be accessed by wheelchairs or mobility scooters. Paths are 100cm wide, straight and paved with terracotta tiles. Paths can be slippery in wet weather.



Gate into Carpet Garden



Steps in Carpet Garden



Path in Carpet Garden

- Garden tours end in the Courtyard, which has a straight, 180cm wide flagstone path across the gravel. Access back into the Orchard Room is either via two stone steps or a gently sloping, flagstone ramp. The ramp is 160cm wide.



Path in the Courtyard



Ramp in the Courtyard



Detail of steps in Courtyard

For more information, and to discuss how else we can help you to make the most of your visit to Highgrove, please contact Customer Services at: customerservices@highgrovegardens.com